

POLS 1101S: Introduction to American Government with Service-Learning
University of Georgia
Spring 2025

Instructor:

Dr. Brittany Bramlett¹
bbram@uga.edu

Class meets:

Tuesday & Thursday at 8am, Baldwin 0101D

Course description

This course aims to introduce students to the foundations and organization of American government through service-learning.

Course objectives

- Study the origins and workings of American government
- Analyze American government, considering democratic ideals
- Develop a working knowledge of current events in American politics
- Learn the course material by working individually and as a team through service-learning
- Improve critical thinking and communication skills by considering various political perspectives, reflecting on the development of personal views, and communicating those views effectively

Course texts

Required:

American Government: Roots and Reform by Karen O'Connor & Larry J. Sabato (**older versions are fine!**)

Referenced but not required:

Georgia Politics in a State of Change (2nd Edition), Charles S. Bullock and Ronald Gaddie.

Other assigned readings will be made available to you via E-Learning Commons
(<https://uga.view.usg.edu/>)

¹ Instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus as needed.

Assignments and grading

Attendance and participation (20%)

I take attendance every class mostly so I learn students names but also to have a record of absences. It's important to attend class for your own benefit. Additionally, your peers and instructor value your presence as well. You are allowed two unexcused absences, no questions asked. However, after two absences, I begin to deduct points from your attendance and participation grade. If you are not present, you cannot participate. If you have doctor's notes, you can send them my way for excused absences.

Short online quizzes (6% each, 30% total, lowest grade dropped)

There will be 6 quizzes with the lowest quiz score dropped. The final quiz grade includes 5 quizzes, each counting 6%. Students will complete the quizzes individually via eLC and outside of class. However, students will take the quiz during our normal class time, lasting 30 minutes on the assigned day. Anything from the class material is considered fair game to show up on the quizzes, and students may use their books and notes. Each quiz is non-cumulative, only covering recent material.

Service-learning reflection (2 short, 5% each; final, 10%; 20% total)

Reflection is a critical component of service-learning. Students will be asked to do this individually, by responding to a written prompt, and collectively, through class discussion. Each individual will complete 2 short written reflections, and one longer final written reflection. The three shorter written reflections will be due the week after service-learning projects are due.

Service-learning assignments (10% each, 30% total)

Students will work in small groups (2 or 3) for these assignments. These service-learning activities will take place during the course of the semester. There will be time set aside for group work in-class and sometimes out of class. The targeted audience for our service-learning includes University of Georgia students. Our focus is voter education. More details to come!

Administrative Items

ELearning

Students must become acquainted with eLearning Commons for this class (<https://uga.view.usg.edu/>). Sign into eLC using your UGA MyId and password. If registered for the class, the course link should show up on the student's eLC homepage. Significant content will be available via eLC. Students must check in to eLC multiple times a week. Students will submit all assignments via eLC.

Missed deadlines

A student who has a conflict with a due date should let the professor know ASAP. Communication is very important for getting back on track in the course.

Disability resource center

If the student anticipates needing classroom or exam accommodations due to the impact of a disability or medical condition, they must register for services with the Disability Resource Center. Additional information can be found here: <http://drc.uga.edu/>

Withdrawal policy

Undergraduate students can only withdraw from four courses and receive a withdrawal-passing (WP) grade while enrolled at the University. Students can drop any class without penalty during the drop/add period at the beginning of every semester. Dropped courses during the drop/add period do not qualify as withdrawals. Instructors have the ability to withdraw a student from the class due to excessive absences. Please carefully review the policy in its entirety here: <http://www.reg.uga.edu/policies/withdrawals>

UGA culture of honesty policy

The policy is in place to encourage academic honesty among students, faculty and other members of the university community. Students and faculty are responsible for knowing and complying with the policy and procedures. Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism, cheating and much more. Unauthorized use of artificial intelligence software or word mixing software to write your paper or disguise plagiarized work is considered unauthorized assistance in this course.

Use of artificial intelligence or word mixing software to write your paper or disguise plagiarized work is considered unauthorized assistance in this course. Suspected unauthorized assistance, or other violations of UGA's "A Culture of Honesty," will be reported to the Office of Academic Honesty.

It's in the student's best interest to understand what constitutes dishonest work, as defined by the University. Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive an F for the course, and their names will be forwarded to the University. Please carefully review the policy in its entirety here: <https://ovpi.uga.edu/academic-honesty/academic-honesty-policy>

Mental Health and Wellness Resources:

If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit <https://sco.uga.edu>. They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services.

UGA has several resources for a student seeking mental health services (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) or crisis support (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies>).

If you need help managing stress anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit BeWellUGA (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) for a list of FREE workshops, classes, mentoring, and health coaching led by licensed clinicians and health educators in the University Health Center. Additional resources can be accessed through the UGA App.

Tentative Course Outline

Week 1.

Tuesday, January 7

- Course syllabus

Thursday, January 9

- *Roots & Reform* 1 (Introduction)

Week 2.

Tuesday, January 14

- *Roots & Reform* 2 (The Constitution), *Georgia Politics* 4

Thursday, January 16

- *Roots & Reform* 12 (Voting & participation)
- Service-learning projects introduction

Week 3.

Tuesday, January 21

- Class discussion & reflection (engagement & knowledge)

Thursday, January 23

- Quiz 1 via eLC
- Service-learning project workshop

Week 4.

Tuesday, January 28

- *Roots & Reform* 3 (Federalism)
- Class discussion & reflection (federalism)

Thursday, January 30

- *Roots & Reform* 4 (Liberties)

Week 5.

Tuesday, February 4

- *Roots & Reform* 5 (Civil rights)
- Class discussion & reflection – Rights & voting

Thursday, February 6

- Quiz 2 via eLC
- Service-learning project 1 due by midnight

Week 6.

Tuesday, February 11

- Service-learning project workshop
- Written reflection 1 due by midnight

Thursday, February 13

- *Roots & Reform* 6 (Congress)

Week 7.

Tuesday, February 18

- *Roots & Reform 6* (Congress), *Georgia Politics 5*
- Class discussion & reflection – Congress & voting

Thursday, February 20

- *Roots & Reform 7* (Presidency)

Week 8.

Tuesday, February 25

- Class discussion & reflection – Presidency & voting

Thursday, February 27

- Quiz 3 via eLC

Spring break (March 3 – 7)

Week 9.

Tuesday, March 11

- *Roots & Reform 8* (Bureaucracy)

Thursday, March 13

- *Roots & Reform 9* (Judiciary), *Georgia Politics 7*
- Class discussion & reflection – Courts & voting

Week 10.

Tuesday, March 18

- Quiz 4 via eLC
- Service-learning project workshop
- Service-learning project 2 due by midnight

Thursday, March 20

- *Roots & Reform 15* (Interest groups)
- Written reflection 2 due by midnight

Week 11.

Tuesday, March 25

- *Roots & Reform* 11 (Parties)
- Class discussion & reflection – parties

Thursday, March 27

- *Roots & Reform* 14 (Media)
- Class discussion & reflection – Media literacy & voting

Week 12.

Tuesday, April 1

- Quiz 5 via elc
- Service-learning project workshop

Thursday, April 3

- *Roots & Reform* 12 & 13 (Campaigns & elections)

Week 13.

Tuesday, April 8

- *Roots & Reform* 12 & 13 (Campaigns & elections)
- Class discussion & reflection – Campaigns & elections & voting

Thursday, April 10

- Service-learning project workshop
- Service-learning project 3 due by midnight

Week 14.

Tuesday, April 15

- *Roots & Reform* 10 (Public opinion)
- Class discussion & reflection – public opinion

Thursday, April 17

- *Roots & Reform* 10 (Political socialization)
- Class discussion & reflection – political socialization

Week 15.

Tuesday, April 22

- Quiz 6 via eLC

Thursday, April 24

- Writing workshop
- Final written reflection due by midnight

List of Important Dates

Quiz 1 – Thursday, January 23

Quiz 2 – Thursday, February 6

Quiz 3 – Thursday, February 27

Quiz 4 – Tuesday, March 18

Quiz 5 – Tuesday, April 1

Quiz 6 – Tuesday, April 22

Service-learning project 1 – Thursday, February 6

Service-learning project 2 – Tuesday, March 18

Service-learning project 3 – Thursday, April 10

Written reflection 1 – Tuesday, February 11

Written reflection 2 – Thursday, March 20

Final written reflection – Thursday, April 24