



UNIVERSITY OF  
**GEORGIA**

School of Public and International Affairs  
Department of Political Science

## **POLS 1101: Introduction to American Government Spring 2025**

MWF 8:00 – 8:50am

Room: Baldwin 102

Instructor: Dr. John Newton

Contact: [jmnewton@uga.edu](mailto:jmnewton@uga.edu)

Office Hour: After Class and by appointment

### **Course Description and Objective**

This course will cover the fundamental elements of government. This includes elements of history, philosophy, and structure of the United States government and the government of Georgia. The objective is that you will leave the class with a better understanding of our system of government along with the ability to think critically about how it functions.

## **Text**

*We the People* 14<sup>th</sup> Edition by Ginsberg, Lowi, Weir, Tolbert, Campbell, and Francis. ISBN 978-1-324-03461-2. Please be careful to purchase the correct book as there are online assignments that will be part of your grade. You should be able to purchase access to the textbook and the online resources from the link in ELC. If you purchase a hard copy, make sure it has a valid registration code.

## **Grading Breakdown by Percentage:**

InQuizative Questions: 30%

Project: 20%

Final: 30%

Letter: 10%

Public Forum: 10%

Class Participation: +/-

**Students who text, browse social media, shop online, or otherwise disrupt the class will receive a reduction in their overall grade. If a student is disrupting the class through the use of electronics, the student will be asked to leave and may be withdrawn from the class. No electronic devices may be used when we have a guest speaker.**

## **Grading Scale:**

A = 94-100

A - = 90-93

B+ = 86-89

B = 83-85

B- = 80-82

C+ = 76-79

C = 73-75

C- = 70-72

D+ = 66-69

D = 63-65

D- = 60-62

F = 0-59

## **Important Class Dates**

First Day of Class: Monday, January 6, 2025

Drop and Add Deadline: Friday, January 10, 2025

MLK Day: January 20, 2025 – No Class

Withdrawal Deadline: April 3, 2025

Spring Break: March 3-7, 2025

Last Day of Class: Monday, April 28, 2025

Final Exam: Friday, May 5, 2025 – 8am-11:00am

## **Syllabus Policy**

I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus if necessary. It can be difficult to project how long sections will take to cover. Other situations may indicate the need for changes in the assignments, so please pay attention in class. If you have questions, please ask.

## **Late Work**

Assignments turned in late will be assigned a ten point per day penalty for each day that an assignment is late (including weekends). Assignments turned in after the deadline but on the day it is due will be given a partial penalty determined by the instructor.

## **Honor Code**

As a University of Georgia student, you have agreed to abide by the University's academic honesty policy, "A Culture of Honesty," and the Student Honor Code. All academic work must meet the standards described in "A Culture of Honesty" found at: <https://honesty.uga.edu>. Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation. Questions related to course assignments and the academic honesty policy should be directed to the instructor.

**UGA Student Honor Code:** "I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others." A Culture of Honesty, the University's policy and procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonesty, can be found at <https://ovpi.uga.edu>.

## **Disability Resource Center**

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

## **Withdrawal Policy**

UGA's withdrawal policy can be found at <http://www.reg.uga.edu/policies/withdrawals>.

## **Attendance Policy**

UGA's attendance policy can be found at <https://provost.uga.edu/policies/academic-affairs-policy-manual/4-06-class-attendance>.

## **Prohibition on Recording Lectures**

In the absence of written authorization from the UGA Disability Resource Center, students may not make a visual or audio recording of any aspect of this course. Students who have a recording accommodation agree in writing that they:

- Will use the records only for personal academic use during the specific course.
- Understand that faculty members have copyright interest in their class lectures and that they agree not to infringe on this right in any way.
- Understand that the faculty member and students in the class have privacy rights and agree not to violate those rights by using recordings for any reason other than their own personal study.
- Will not release, digitally upload, broadcast, transcribe, or otherwise share all or any part of the recordings. They also agree that they will not profit financially and will not allow others to benefit personally or financially from lecture recordings or other course materials.
- Will erase/delete all recordings at the end of the semester.
- Understand that violation of these terms may subject them to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct or subject them to liability under copyright laws.

## **Artificial Intelligence Software**

Artificial intelligence (AI) is a tool that will be part of the future. We will discuss in class how it may be used. If AI is used on an assignment, it should be explicitly stated and an explanation of how it was used should be included. Failure to include that AI was used and how it was used will constitute academic dishonesty.

## **Preferred Name and Pronouns**

Please let me know how you would like me to refer to you and/or what to call you. I'm happy to oblige to your preference of name and pronouns. My pronouns are he, him, his. As a student in this class, it is most appropriate to refer to me as Dr. Newton.

## **Email/Contact Etiquette**

I want to help you succeed and achieve greatness. UGA students are enormously capable, and I am constantly impressed with what you all accomplish. However, I don't know you and my impression of you is based on our interactions and how you communicate with me. For that reason, it is a good idea to be respectful in our communications. Here are my suggestions:

- Please email me from your UGA email address. This helps me know who you are and connect you with this class.
- Please do not email me through ELC. I have missed those emails in the past and I am afraid I might not see your email. It is best to email me from your UGA email account.
- Please understand that I may post your email and my response on ELC. I started this practice because many students have similar questions. I don't post every email on ELC, because the email may not pertain to class questions. If you email me questions about tests, what we are supposed to be reading, about concepts or anything we are learning – I may post your question and my reply to benefit others in the class.
- It is best to be respectful of everyone. You never know when that may come in handy for a recommendation, a suggestion, or something else. Talk to other people in the class (and in all your classes). Take a moment to say something nice to someone and be supportive of each other. We are stronger together.

## **UGA Well-Being and Involvement**

UGA has a number of resources to assist you. I encourage you to take a moment to visit <https://well-being.uga.edu> to familiarize yourself with what is available. A few to highlight:

- Student Care and Outreach – you have questions and they have answers. They are the hub to connect you to the resources you need. [Sco@uga.edu](mailto:Sco@uga.edu) or 706-542-7774.
- UGA Health Center – <https://healthcenter.uga.edu> - physical and mental health. They even have healthy cooking classes.
- Rec Sports – <https://recsports.uga.edu> - stay healthy and have fun. I encourage you to maintain a fitness routine as this is great for physical and mental health. Also – if you go on an outdoor trip, I would love to hear about it so I can live vicariously through you.
- Georgia Museum of Art – not part of the well-being initiative, but you should visit. Take a break and walk around. It is free, on campus, and a great place to spend some time. <https://georgiamuseum.org>.
- UGA Involvement Network – <https://uga.campuslabs.com/engage>

## **Emergencies**

In the case of an emergency in class we will take the following actions. If there is a tornado warning, we will proceed to the lowest floor in the building for shelter. If there is a fire, we will quickly exit the building. The class will reconvene in the walkway behind the cemetery next to Baldwin Hall in an attempt to make sure everyone exited the building. If there is a medical emergency, I will ask students to flag down the emergency vehicles outside the building and lead them to our room. As needed, I may ask a student to get the nearest AED which is outside room 101D. Students are encouraged to make sure their information in UGA Alert is accurate and to download the UGA Safe app.

## **Exam/Assignment make-ups**

Makeup exams will not be offered unless previously scheduled because of extenuating circumstances or in the event of a verifiable emergency. Similarly, the due dates for assignments such as papers are not

negotiable unless a true emergency warrants further consideration. Turning in a late paper will significantly reduce the grade. Late work may not be accepted. If any late work is accepted, the reduction in grade is at the sole discretion of the instructor.

### **Class Project:**

You will be required to complete a project this semester. Please ask if you have questions. The project will be to choose a topic from the topics provided and produce some type of work (see the types of work) that could persuade an audience to favor one side over the other. In other words, you are creating persuasive work based on the topic and side of the topic you choose.

This should be your original work. Downloading a presentation by someone else, photos by someone else, artwork by someone else, etc does not count. If you are unsure, please ask! Submit your project in the assignments section on ELC.

### Type of work:

Narrated PowerPoint (narrated by you in your voice and with a video of you). Limit of 7 minutes.

- This is probably what I would do because I am a very linear thinker. You are basically recording yourself doing a presentation. Microsoft has support articles on how to do this and Microsoft Office 365 is free for you as a UGA student.

Podcast in your voice (limit of 7 minutes)

- This can be done by you alone or you can work with classmates.

Video with you in it (limit of 7 minutes)

- This could be you alone or a debate with classmates.

Artwork with a written explanation

- Think of something like Francisco Goya's *The Third of May, 1808* or something by Jacques-Louis David. You must provide me with a written explanation.

Song with a written explanation

- Protest songs are numerous. Almost all songs have some sort of meaning or purpose. If there are enough people in the class to form a band this could count for the entire group that performs the song.

Photo or series of photos with a written explanation

- There are so many famous photos that caused change. This could be photos of people not able to vote, photos of weddings, photos of religious events, etc. This should be photos that you take not photos that you collect off of the internet.

Something else that I did not think of with approval.

Be creative in your type of work. You cannot write an essay or research paper. Choose a form of expression and make an argument for the side you want.

### Topics:(You can be for or against)

A wedding photographer should be able to refuse service for same sex and/or interracial couples based on religious beliefs.

The death penalty should be abolished because it is unfairly used against minority groups.

Companies like Facebook, Google, X, YouTube, TikTok and others should not be able to discriminate or limit users content based on political views, hate speech, or obscenity. These are public forums and limiting speech violates our value of free speech.

The University of Georgia should offer automatic admission to any Georgia student that finishes in the top three percent of his/her graduating high school class.

The University of Georgia should eliminate the Office of Institutional Diversity.

The state of Georgia should use an independent committee to determine the boundaries of voting districts to avoid gerrymandering similar to what is used in Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Michigan, Montana, New York, and Washington.

Georgia should repeal SB 202 known as the Election Integrity act of 2021. This bill removed 24/7 voting drop boxes, eliminated mobile voting units, and decreased the availability of absentee ballots. [You can argue for any changes to Georgia voting laws – increase the available voting hours, increase or decrease voter ID laws, increase voter security, etc]. For criticism of Georgia see <https://dpo.org/party/resolutions/2021-resolutions/resolution-2021-06-regarding-georgias-voter-suppression-law/>.

UGA students should be allowed to carry guns of any type in the dorms, at sporting events, and any places on campus where students are legally allowed to be.

Political Science 1101, Introduction to American Government, should not be a mandatory class at UGA.

Businesses in Georgia must limit the pay of their highest paid employees to no more than 100 times the pay of the lowest full-time employee of that company.

The federal government should adopt a flat tax. [You can advocate for any taxation change you might want].

Georgia should adopt a minimum wage of \$15/hour. This minimum wage should be adjusted for inflation each year.

The federal government should eliminate the Department of Education. This is primarily a state government function. This would decrease the size of government and save taxpayer money.

The Electoral College should be eliminated. The President of the United States should be elected based on popular vote.

The most pressing issue facing the federal government is the national deficit. Entitlement programs such as social security, Medicare and Medicaid should be limited and greatly reduced in order to decrease the deficit.

The United States should greatly reduce all tariffs to increase free trade.

The United States should end all aid to Israel until an independent Palestinian State is established.

## **Public Forum**

Students are required to attend a public forum either in person or virtually. The purpose of this is for the students to experience civic engagement.

Each student will choose a public forum to attend. This should be a local or state government forum. Examples of this are local commission meetings, local planning meetings, police oversight meetings, local budget meetings, etc. Students can choose to attend any local or state forum in any jurisdiction. All commission meetings for Athens-Clarke County are streamed live. For more information go to <https://www.accgov.com/176/Mayor-Commission-Meetings>.

To get credit for attending a meeting, students will answer questions using the form link posted on ELC. The form will ask questions such as the date/time/location of the forum, a significant issue discussed at the forum, the different sides of the issue, etc. To get full credit for this assignment, students need to be able to explain an issue discussed during the forum and explain the different sides of the issue demonstrating an understanding of the issue.

To get credit you must fill out the survey prior to 5:00pm on 4/19/2025. To fill out the survey, go to <https://forms.office.com/r/KD1v6kH9je>. The link is also on ELC.

### **Write Your Public Official**

You must write a letter to a member of the Georgia Legislature. You do not have to send the letter. You may write about any issue. In the letter you should advocate for your public official to take a position on some issue that is within their authority and related to their elected position. The public official must be someone for whom you are a constituent (ie Georgia Legislature, Congressperson, Senator, etc). Letter should be submitted on ELC.

A few tips for the letter:

- Make sure it is aimed at the appropriate level of government. If you are writing about a local issue, the letter should be addressed to a local official. If you are writing about a state issue, the letter should be addressed to a state official, etc.
- Make sure it is a letter. You can check out some letter style examples at [Examples of business letter format. – The Writing Center – UW–Madison.](#)
- If you don't know what interests you, consider looking at the social media of your representative and seeing what issues they have posted about. You may find you agree or disagree with them.
- Make sure to explain the issue in your letter.
- Make sure you are explicit about what you want your elected representative to do. There are a wide variety of reasons to write a letter. You may want your elected official to vote on a bill, write a piece of legislation, contact someone on your behalf, to make them aware of a problem, to oppose an appointment, etc.

You can find your legislator at <https://pluralpolicy.com/find-your-legislator/> and <https://georgia.gov/who-represents-you>.

### **Final Exam**

The final exam will be a multiple choice exam on ELC and you can use any resource other than a human for the final exam. I'll make the final available for several days including May 5 which is our scheduled day for the final exam.

### **InQuizative Questions**

These are provided by your textbook. A link to them is on ELC. Complete the InQuizative questions for each chapter. Note the due date for all InQuizative questions is April 26, 2025.

### **Question Submissions for Extra Credit**

You may submit one question on ELC for the material covering Georgia. These are the sections on the Georgia Constitution, Georgia Judicial Branch, Georgia Executive Branch, and the Georgia Legislature. This is extra credit and not required. Questions should be submitted in the discussion section on ELC under the appropriate chapter/section. You may submit one question for each topic for a total of up to four questions. Your questions should be multiple choice and you must provide the answer as well as an explanation of the answer. For each question submitted,

you will receive an additional point on the final exam. You are not limited to the information provided to you on ELC from which to create questions.

If you submit a question, but you do not provide an answer, you will not get credit. If you submit a question, but you do not submit an explanation of the answer, you will not get credit.



## **Course Schedule**

### **Week 1 (starting January 6)**

*Topic: Americans and Their Political Values and The Founding and the Constitution*

*Readings: Chapters 1 & 2*

*Do the InQuizitive questions for chapters 1 & 2*

### **Week 2 (starting January 13)**

*Topic: Federalism*

*Readings: Chapter 3*

*Do the InQuizitive questions for chapter 3*

### **Week 3 (starting January 20) \*\*No Class January 20<sup>th</sup>\*\***

*Topic: Civil Liberties*

*Readings: Chapter 4*

*Do the InQuizitive questions for chapter 4*

*Bill to Govern POLS 1101 on January 22*

### **Week 4 (starting January 27)**

*Topic: Civil Rights*

*Readings: Chapters 5*

*Do the InQuizitive questions for chapter 5*

### **Week 5 (starting February 3)**

*Topic: Public Opinion and The Media and Political Information*

*Readings: Chapters 6 & 7*

*Do the InQuizitive questions for chapter 6 & 7*

### **Week 6 (starting February 10)**

*Topic: Political Participation and Voting and Political Parties*

*Readings: Chapters 8 & 9*

*Do the InQuizitive questions for chapters 8 & 9*

### **Week 7 (starting February 17)**

*Topic: Campaigns and Elections and Groups and Interests*

*Readings: Chapters 10 & 11*

*Do the InQuizitive questions for chapter 10 & 11*

### **Week 8 (starting February 24)**

*Topic: Congress and Georgia Legislative Branch*

*Readings: Chapter 12 and the material in the Georgia Legislature section on ELC*

*Do the InQuizitive questions for chapter 12*

### **Week 10 (starting March 10)**

*Topic: The Presidency and Georgia Executive Branch*

*Readings: Chapter 13 and the material in the Georgia Executive section on ELC*

*Do the InQuizitive questions for chapter 13*

**Week 11 (starting March 17)**

*Topic: The Bureaucracy and Georgia Constitution*

*Readings: Chapter 14 and the material in the Georgia Constitution section on ELC*

*Do the InQuizative questions for chapter 14*

**Week 12 (starting March 24)**

*Topic: The Federal Courts and Georgia Judicial Branch*

*Readings: Chapter 15 and the material in the Georgia Judicial Branch section on ELC*

*Do the InQuizative questions for chapter 15*

**Week 13 (starting March 31)**

*Topic: Economic Policy*

*Readings: Chapter 16*

*Do the InQuizative questions for chapter 16*

**Week 14 (starting April 7)**

*Topic: Social Policy*

*Readings: Chapter 17*

*Do the InQuizative questions for chapter 17*

**Week 15 (starting April 14)**

*Topic: Foreign Policy*

*Readings: Chapter 18*

*Do the InQuizative questions for chapter 18*

**Week 16 (starting April 21)**

*Topic: Catch up and Review*

*Readings: Catch up on anything you have missed*

*Catch up on anything not completed*

**Week 17 (April 28) – Monday Last Day of Class**

**Final Exam, Wednesday May 5, 2024 – 8:00am to 11:00am**