

Introduction to American Government

POLS 1101, Summer 2025 (Online Section)

June 5 - July 30

Instructor: Dr. Justin J. Norris

Email: norr77@uga.edu

Office Hours: By Appointment

Course Description

This course shall provide students with the information necessary for developing a broad understanding of the structure, processes and functions of the American government. To this end, we shall examine the origins, development, and functions of the three branches of government: the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. In addition to discussing how the branches of government function independently, we shall also discuss how the branches of government interact with one another within the separation of powers system. Finally, the course shall also discuss the roles of federalism, institutions, state and local government, public opinion, political parties, the media, elections, and voting behavior within the American political system.

Course Goals: The primary goal of this course is to provide students with the tools they need for understanding and critically evaluating the political information widely disseminated by politicians, pundits, friends and family, social media, and the mass media. If we accomplish our goal, by the end of the semester students will be discerning consumers of political information, and they will know how to participate in the political process if they so choose.

Required Texts

Kernell, Jacobson, Kousser, Vavreck and Johnson. 2021. *The Logic of American Politics*, 10th Edition. Washington D.C., CQ Press. (LOGIC)

Bullock and Gaddie. 2013. *Georgia Politics in a State of Change*. Pearson Custom Edition, New York, Pearson. (GA READER)

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the UGA Disabilities Services office will be accommodated according to university policy. For more information, contact Disabilities Services at 542-8719.

Academic Honesty

Students are expected to maintain academic integrity in all of their course related work. Cheating, plagiarism, and dishonesty will not be tolerated. Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with University policies related to academic honesty, which are posted here: <http://www.uga.edu/honesty/>. Penalties for violating these policies are severe, and ignorance of said policies is not an acceptable excuse.

Student Responsibilities

Students are expected to carefully read the assigned course materials, watch the assigned video lectures and other materials, participate in class discussions, and complete all assignments, quizzes and exams. Since this is an online class, all assignments and exams are open book. Moreover, since this is a Summer course I recognize that everyone likely has varied schedules and varied responsibilities. Accordingly, all of the course materials will be available for students on the first day of class so that people can work at their own pace. And though there are no set due dates for the module exams and quizzes, they must all be completed, and they must be completed by 11:00 PM on the last day of class. However, there are 2 written assignments students must complete for this course, and these assignments **DO** have set due dates. The instructions and the due dates for these assignments are posted in eLC.

Students shall be respectful of one another during class discussions. Students shall not bully their peers, or use derogatory language. Such behavior will not be tolerated. If students have questions about the syllabus, or any of the class materials they are encouraged to ask questions. This cannot be emphasized enough. Not only is this an online class, it is also a Summer class. That means that you will be expected to go through the materials quickly. So please, ask as many questions as you need. Though I will not be holding regular office hours, I am available through email, and I can arrange to meet on campus if necessary.

Course Grade

Your course grade is based on your performance in the following components:

- Assignments and/or Quizzes 35%
- Module Exams 65%

Final course grades are assigned as follows:

- 100-93: A, 90-92: A-
- 87-89: B+, 83-86: B, 80-82: B-
- 77-79: C+, 73-76: C, 70-72: C-
- 60-69: D
- 0-59: F

Tentative Schedule

Note: topics may be subject to change

Module 1: Introduction

Ch. 1 LOGIC

Module 2: The Constitution

Ch. 2 LOGIC

Ch. 4 GA READER

Module 3: Federalism

Ch. 3 LOGIC

Ch. 8 GA READER

Module 4: Civil Rights

Ch. 4 LOGIC

Ch. 9 GA READER

Module 5: Civil Liberties

Ch. 5 LOGIC

Module 6: Congress

Ch. 6 LOGIC

Ch. 5 GA READER

Module 7: The Presidency

Ch. 7 LOGIC

Ch. 6 GA READER

Module 8: The Judiciary

Ch. 9 LOGIC

Ch. 7 GA READER

Module 9: Voting & Elections

Ch. 11 LOGIC

Module 10: Political Parties

Ch. 12 LOGIC

Ch. 11 GA READER

Module 11: The Media

Ch. 14 LOGIC

July 30 Last Day of Class