

POLS 1101E – AMERICAN GOVERNMENT  
Asynchronous and Online  
Three Credits  
Summer 2025, Session 1

## INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

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Email is the best way to contact me. You must include "POLS 1101" in the subject line or you will not get a response. Please allow 24 hours for a response.

## UNIVERSITY COURSE DESCRIPTION

Fundamentals of the American government, including the philosophical and constitutional foundations, political institutions and main actors, such as Congress and the presidency, democratic practices such as voting, political participation, and civil rights and liberties. Includes a closer look at the State of Georgia, its constitution, and political system.

## ADDITIONAL COURSE DESCRIPTION

The American governments at the state and federal started as great experiments; they were tests of whether or not Enlightenment theories and philosophies about government structure could lead to long-term, well-functioning democratic republics that spanned thousands of miles and millions of people. Those experiments continue today – while the broad designs remain mostly intact, politics and time have shifted and changed constitutions and expectations to meet societal needs throughout American history. Today, the federal government and its state counterparts shape many parts of our lives, from the economy to the school system to the way we interact with people. Understanding how the government works and how citizens interact with it is thus crucial for successfully navigating society and life.

In this class, we will discuss the American government in both historical and political terms. We will talk about both state and federal constitutions' evolutions from theoretical documents to works in progress to guiding principles; the formation of political institutions and their role in government today; and the forces that shape people's perceptions of American politics, from parties to interest groups to the media. By the end of this class, you should understand why the American government is designed the way it is, how it works, and how people contribute to its outcomes.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, you should:

1. Understand the philosophical and constitutional foundations of the American political system, including the state of Georgia
2. Understand the basic structures and features of American political institutions and how they have changed over time
3. Understand the basic features of American public opinion and political behavior and how they affect policy and politics
4. Know how to apply theoretical frameworks like federalism and the separation of powers to analyze the organization and function of the American government
5. Feel comfortable reading and using primary sources like the Federalist Papers and the American and Georgia Constitutions to explain the American political system
6. Demonstrate the ability to engage in a knowledgeable, respectful discussion about American politics in written and spoken forms

## COURSE MATERIALS

Please obtain a copy of the following book:

- Kernell, Samuel, Gary C. Jacobson, Thad Kousser, Lynn Vavreck, and Timothy R. Johnson. 2024. *The Logic of American Politics*. 11<sup>th</sup> Edition. Thousand Oaks, California: CQ Press.
  - Physical version: 9781071861257
  - eBook: 9781071861271

Please note that either digital or physical copy is fine. I am teaching out of the 11<sup>th</sup> Edition, but feel free to use the 10<sup>th</sup> Edition if you like paperback copies because it is significantly cheaper.

Additionally, you are required to read the following primary sources throughout the semester (as outlined in the reading schedule at the end of the syllabus):

- The Constitution and Bill of Rights, <https://constitution.congress.gov/constitution/>
- The Declaration of Independence, <https://tinyurl.com/sn2tp5aj>
- Articles of Confederation, <https://tinyurl.com/4uajncfy>
- Federalist 10, <https://tinyurl.com/9uu2h5m9>
- Federalist 51, <https://tinyurl.com/ez7mzw6a>
- Emancipation Proclamation, <https://tinyurl.com/4n7awnz9>
- Gettysburg Address, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbpe.24404500/?st=text>
- Letter from Birmingham Jail, <https://tinyurl.com/2w73wpm3>
- Georgia Constitution, <https://tinyurl.com/24vedfjw>

All other course material will be placed on eLC.

## TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ONLINE COURSE

Online lectures will be provided via YouTube links on eLC. Lecture slides, links to readings not in the textbook, exams, and assignment instructions are also located on the eLC site for this course. Please ensure you have access to eLC at the beginning of the semester. You can look for help with eLC [here](#), or reach out to eLC for help [here](#).

To participate in learning activities and complete assignments, you will need:

- Access to a working computer that has a current operating system with updates installed, plus speakers or headphones to hear lecture presentations (closed captioning provided)
- Reliable internet access and a UGA email account
- A current internet browser that is compatible with eLC
- Microsoft Word as your word processing program
- Reliable data storage for your work, such as a USB drive or Office365 OneDrive cloud storage

Lectures and course materials (which are inclusive of my presentations, tests, exams, outlines, and lecture notes) are my production. You are encouraged to take notes and utilize course materials for your own educational purpose. However, you are not to reproduce or distribute this content without my expressed written permission.

## COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENTS

Your grade will be determined using the following weights:

Area	Weight
Course Pre- and Post-Tests	10%
Multiple Choice Exams	50%
Written Response Exams	30%
Reflection	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **COURSE PRE- AND POST-TESTS (10%):**

At the beginning of the semester, you will be asked to complete a multiple-choice test that will ask you about your knowledge of the American government and your comfort levels with different topics and types of coursework. You will take the same test again at the end of the semester. These tests will establish your baseline knowledge of the course material and show how much you learned/retained by the end of the semester.

These tests will be graded for completion and effort only (i.e., you get full credit as long as you complete it and it looks like you thought about the answers). You will learn the right answers to many of the questions by the end of the course.

The Course Pre-Test will be available on eLC starting at 9 AM on Thursday, June 5<sup>th</sup> and must be completed by 9 PM on Friday, June 13<sup>th</sup>.

The Course Post-Test will be available on eLC starting at 9 AM on Tuesday, June 24<sup>th</sup> and must be completed by 9 PM on Wednesday, July 2<sup>nd</sup>.

You must complete BOTH the pre- and post-tests to get credit.

### **MULTIPLE CHOICE EXAMS (50%):**

Over the course of the class, you will be taking three online multiple choice exams in eLC. Each multiple choice exam will have 20 questions, all some combination of multiple choice and true/false questions. These multiple choice exams will not be cumulative. The first multiple choice exam will cover the material from Module 1, the second will cover the material from Module 2, and the third will cover the material from Module 3.

Multiple choice exams will open at 9 AM on the first day of the module and must be completed by 9 PM on the last day of the module. This means you can take the multiple choice exam anywhere within that period. Module dates are as follows:

- Module 1: 6/5 to 6/13
- Module 2: 6/14 to 6/23
- Module 3: 6/24 to 7/2

You will have 1 hour to complete each multiple choice exam. Once you start the multiple choice exam, you have to finish it (i.e., you cannot start, walk away for two hours, and then come back to finish it), so please make sure you give yourself one uninterrupted hour to take it. All multiple choice exams will be open book and open note. I do expect that you will do them on your own, without the assistance of others. Additionally, you will be tested on the material covered in lectures and in the readings, not in what you (or generative AI) finds on the internet.

### **WRITTEN RESPONSE EXAMS (30%):**

You will be taking three online written response exams in eLC. Each written response exam will have two questions and you will be expected to provide short (8-10 sentence) answers to each of the questions. The core of each of the questions asked in each written response exam will focus on the material covered in each module (e.g., the questions in Module 1 will focus on topics covered in Module 1), but some concepts transcend their module (e.g., political parties get discussed in Modules 2 and 3), so you might have to address older concepts in your answers.

Written response exams will open at 9 AM on the first day of the module and must be completed by 9 PM on the last day of the module. This means you can take the written response exam anywhere within that period. Module dates are as follows:

- Module 1: 6/5 to 6/13
- Module 2: 6/14 to 6/23
- Module 3: 6/24 to 7/2

You will have 1 hour to complete each written response exam. Once you start the written response exam, you have to finish it (i.e., you cannot start, walk away for two hours, and then come back to finish it), so please make sure you give yourself one uninterrupted hour to take it. All written response exams will be open book and open note. I do expect that you will do them on your own, without the assistance of others. Additionally, you will be tested on the material covered in lectures and in the readings, not in what you (or generative AI) finds on the internet.

### **REFLECTION (10%):**

At the end of the course, I want you to reflect on a major concept by answering the following prompt in an essay:

Compare the U.S. Constitution and the Georgia Constitution. What principles do they share (e.g., separation of powers, protection of liberties)? What is one key difference between the two documents that reflects Georgia's unique political culture or history?

In one double-spaced page, I want you to answer this question using evidence from the course. Show me that you can pull together the big concepts and make an evidence-based argument (and that you learned something in the class too!).

You will submit this reflection to a dropbox on eLC. It should be completed in Times New Roman, 12 pt. font, double spaced, with one-inch margins, and it must be submitted as a PDF.

*Your reflection is due at 9 PM on Wednesday, July 2<sup>nd</sup>.*

I will provide more details about this, including the grading rubric, in a separate document posted on eLC.

### **GRADING SCALE**

I will use the following scale to assign course grades:

Percentage	Grade
93-100%	A
90-92%	A-
87-89%	B+
83-86%	B
80-82%	B-
77-79%	C+
73-76%	C
70-72%	C-
67-69%	D+
63-66%	D
60-62%	D-
59 or less%	F

Percentages greater than or equal to 0.5 will be rounded up to the next highest whole percentage (Example: 86.5% will round up to an 87%).

## GRADE APPEALS

If you receive a grade and see that it contains an arithmetic error (i.e., I mis-calculated your grade), please inform me of the problem. If you have a question or concern about your performance on any course work, please email me. All concerns must be stated in writing (paper or email), beginning with a statement that concisely explains why you believe your grade should be altered.

All concerns, arithmetic or otherwise, must be raised within 72 hours of that assignment/quiz's release to students. It is your responsibility to pay attention to grade releases; the 72-hour clock starts when I release the grade in the eLC gradebook. If you do not raise your question within this 72-hour period, you forfeit your ability to appeal your grade.

## LATE POLICY

Absolutely no late work will be accepted. In extenuating circumstances (death in the family, hospitalization, military service, religious holiday, etc.), students may receive a short extension. If you miss an assignment for one of these reasons, you must contact me in writing as soon as is possible and provide documentation of your absence to make alternative arrangements. All claims must, when possible, be made prior to the exam that you will miss. Failure to follow these guidelines will result in a grade of "0" being awarded for that assignment. I reserve the right to give an alternative assignment if this situation arises.

## STATEMENTS ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

"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 procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonesty, can be found at [honesty.uga.edu](http://honesty.uga.edu).

According to UGA, "academic dishonesty" means cheating, attempting to cheat, or assisting someone else in cheating, even if unintentional. Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to:

1. Plagiarism – using another's work as your own without correct citations
2. Unauthorized assistance – giving or receiving help for assignments without prior approval from your instructor
3. Lying/tampering – giving false information related to academic work or in connection with a facilitated discussion, continued discussion, meeting with multiple violations review board, or appeal
4. Theft – stealing any information related to academic work

Absolutely no form of academic dishonesty will be tolerated. Anyone found guilty of cheating, plagiarism, or any other violation of academic integrity will receive an automatic grade of 0.0 for the

assignment. Additionally, all other penalties within the University will be pursued to the fullest extent.

For more information about academic dishonesty and UGA's policy regarding them, see UGA's [Academic Honesty Policy](#). It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with these policies.

## ACCOMMODATIONS FOR DISABILITIES

If you plan to request accommodations for a disability, please register with the Disability Resource Center. They can be reached by visiting Clark Howell Hall, calling 706-542-8719 (voice) or 706-542-8778 (TTY), or by visiting [accessibility.uga.edu](https://accessibility.uga.edu).

## UGA WELL-BEING RESOURCES

UGA Well-being Resources promote student success by cultivating a culture that supports a more active, healthy, and engaged student community.

Anyone needing assistance is encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach (SCO) in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-8479 or visit [sco.uga.edu](https://sco.uga.edu). Student Care and Outreach helps students navigate difficult circumstances by connecting them with the most appropriate resources or services. They also administer the [Embark@UGA](mailto:Embark@UGA) program, which supports students experiencing, or who have experienced, homelessness, foster care, or housing insecurity.

UGA provides both clinical and non-clinical options to support student well-being and mental health, any time, any place. Whether on campus or studying from home or abroad. UGA Well-being Resources are here to help.

- Well-being Resources: [well-being.uga.edu](https://well-being.uga.edu)
- Student Care and Outreach: [sco.uga.edu](https://sco.uga.edu)
- University Health Center: [healthcenter.uga.edu](https://healthcenter.uga.edu)
- Counseling and Psychiatric Services: [caps.uga.edu](https://caps.uga.edu) or CAPS 24/7 crisis support at 706-542-2273
- Health Promotion/Fontaine Center: [healthpromotion.uga.edu](https://healthpromotion.uga.edu)
- Disability Resource Center and Testing Services: [accessibility.uga.edu](https://accessibility.uga.edu)

Additional information, including free digital well-being resources, can be accessed through the UGA app or by visiting <https://well-being.uga.edu>.

## A NOTE REGARDING COURSE DESIGN

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### **MODULE 1: FOUNDATIONS OF AMERICAN GOVERNMENT**

**Due 9 PM on Friday, June 13<sup>th</sup>**

#### Lecture 1 – Introduction to the Course

- Read:
  - The Constitution and Bill of Rights, <https://constitution.congress.gov/constitution/>
  - The Declaration of Independence, <https://tinyurl.com/sn2tp5aj>
  - Articles of Confederation, <https://tinyurl.com/4uajncfy>
  - *Federalist 51*, <https://tinyurl.com/ez7mzw6a>
- Lecture:
  - Part 1: <https://youtu.be/zO4PRnJGs20>

#### Lecture 2 - The Constitution

- Read:
  - *The Logic of American Politics*, Chapter 2
- Lectures:
  - Part 1: <https://youtu.be/P8OM1ugKEbU>
  - Part 2: <https://youtu.be/iWDoVRnuKSA>
  - Part 3: <https://youtu.be/kCNIjxNHVA0>

#### Lecture 3 – Federalism

- Read:
  - *Federalist 10*, <https://tinyurl.com/9uu2h5m9>
  - *The Logic of American Politics*, Chapter 3
- Lectures:
  - Part 1: <https://youtu.be/QcMiUIo6nJE>
  - Part 2: <https://youtu.be/f76D2q6N1cg>

#### Lecture 4 - Civil Rights

- Read:
  - Emancipation Proclamation, <https://tinyurl.com/4n7awnz9>
  - Gettysburg Address, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbpe.24404500/?st=text>
  - Letter from Birmingham Jail, <https://tinyurl.com/2w73wpm3>
  - *The Logic of American Politics*, Chapter 4
- Lectures:
  - Part 1: [https://youtu.be/\\_rOjM8tetEc](https://youtu.be/_rOjM8tetEc)
  - Part 2: <https://youtu.be/VYclWq7KJYU>
  - Part 3: <https://youtu.be/z16tzGtbFjk>

#### Lecture 5 - Civil Liberties

- Read:
  - *The Logic of American Politics*, Chapter 5
- Lectures:
  - Part 1: <https://youtu.be/d6XJXbCumno>



- Part 2: [https://youtu.be/fsUo\\_zhVlxc](https://youtu.be/fsUo_zhVlxc)
- Part 3: <https://youtu.be/AkZsUIY0cGM>

## **MODULE 2: AMERICAN POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS**

**Due 9 PM on Monday, June 24<sup>th</sup>**

### Lecture 6 – Congress

- Read:
  - *The Logic of American Politics*, Chapter 6
- Lectures:
  - Part 1: <https://youtu.be/5zC9I3vpPQU>
  - Part 2: <https://youtu.be/c6hhyIjVHOw>
  - Part 3: <https://youtu.be/Oyui9M10BPs>

### Lecture 7 – Presidency

- Read:
  - *The Logic of American Politics*, Chapter 7
- Lectures:
  - Part 1: <https://youtu.be/1z6D-yHHFh4>
  - Part 2: [https://youtu.be/AOoVwP8I2\\_s](https://youtu.be/AOoVwP8I2_s)
  - Part 3: <https://youtu.be/eCgNeKRhV7Q>

### Lecture 8 – Bureaucracy

- Read:
  - *The Logic of American Politics*, Chapter 8
- Lectures:
  - Part 1: <https://youtu.be/vZQtN853asA>
  - Part 2: <https://youtu.be/PWQZz9Lm2FU>

### Lecture 9 – Judiciary

- Read:
  - *The Logic of American Politics*, Chapter 9
- Lectures:
  - Part 1: <https://youtu.be/1hLHNfyl-n0>
  - Part 2: <https://youtu.be/wwjs-KXlhyQ>
  - Part 3: <https://youtu.be/3dhojSFtMp0>

## **MODULE 3: AMERICAN POLITICAL BEHAVIOR**

**Due 9 PM on Wednesday, July 2<sup>nd</sup>**

### Lecture 10 – Public Opinion

- Read:
  - *The Logic of American Politics*, Chapter 10
- Lectures:
  - Part 1: <https://youtu.be/bgdAJCCXdT4>
  - Part 2: <https://youtu.be/X0Vq9JrDfJA>

### Lecture 11 – Voting, Campaigns, and Elections

- Read:
  - *The Logic of American Politics*, Chapter 11
- Lectures:
  - Part 1: <https://youtu.be/Q2s36nuU0tg>
  - Part 2: <https://youtu.be/lBenfo1rHAQ>
  - Part 3: <https://youtu.be/qddGVpRyeng>

### Lecture 12 – Political Parties

- Read:
  - *The Logic of American Politics*, Chapter 12
- Lectures:
  - Part 1: <https://youtu.be/pV56qc7pycw>
  - Part 2: <https://youtu.be/qNwOil3shu0>
  - Part 3: <https://youtu.be/eq4P73VQBGk>

### Lecture 13 – Interest Groups

- Read:
  - *The Logic of American Politics*, Chapter 13
- Lectures:
  - Part 1: [https://youtu.be/g0\\_Fp8GURyU](https://youtu.be/g0_Fp8GURyU)

### Lecture 14 – Media

- Read:
  - *The Logic of American Politics*, Chapter 14
- Lectures:
  - Part 1: <https://youtu.be/dfAli06O6R8>
  - Part 2: <https://youtu.be/2IO6UUpUb0s>
  - Part 3: <https://youtu.be/Rd9NYmU-W4M>

### Lecture 15 – Georgia Politics

- Read:
  - Georgia Constitution, <https://tinyurl.com/24vedfjw>
- Lectures:
  - Part 1: <https://youtu.be/JlIbrrkZ20c>
  - Part 2: <https://youtu.be/1e4hmUbUlgg>