

POLS 1101: Introduction to American Government

University of Georgia
Spring 2025
CRN 65266

Instructor:

Mackenzie Vaughn
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Office meeting times:

Before/after class
By appointment (Zoom or in person)

Class time and location:

Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 3:00pm – 3:50pm
Baldwin 311

Course description

This is a college level introduction to American government and politics. It will introduce students to the foundations of U.S. and Georgia government, the organization of power within and between levels of government, and the ways in which The People and particular actors influence the institutions of government over time.

Course objectives

- Understand the socio-political origins of the Constitution and its interpretation over time.
- Understand the development of federalism and government institutions since ratification.
- Analyze how government may reconcile (or not) issues of collective action at the federal, state, and local levels.
- Enhance skills for evaluating current political issues and sources of information.
- Grasp the importance of the public's influence in politics, as well as disconnects between public opinion and realized outcomes in government policy.

Course texts

Required:

Kernell, Samuel, et al. 2022. *The Logic of American Politics* (10th edition).
ISBN: 9781071815977

Referenced, with chapters provided on eLC:

Bullock, Charles and Ronald Gaddie. 2013. *Georgia Politics in a State of Change* (2nd edition).
ISBN: 9780205864676

Supplementary material may be made available to you via eLC throughout the course.

Graded Evaluation

Quizzes (50%)

There are 6 online quizzes on eLC over the course of the semester. Your lowest quiz score will be dropped. The remaining 5 quizzes account for 10% of your final grade each, for a total of 50%. Quizzes must be completed individually, but you are permitted to use your notes and readings. That said, there will be a time limit for the quizzes, with penalties associated with exceeding the limit at my discretion, making preparation and familiarity with material important for success. Quizzes are not cumulative, only covering the content since the last quiz (or beginning of class, in the case of quiz 1). On days when there is a quiz, there will be no class. Quizzes will become available in the morning and will close in the evening, for students' convenience. Thus, discussion of the contents of the quiz until the following day is strictly prohibited. Once an attempt is begun, it must be completed in that sitting. Only one attempt is permitted.

Assignments (45%)

There will be 3 short-to-medium length assignments, due on February 27th, March 27th, and April 25th, respectively. Each assignment accounts for 15% of your final grade, for a total of 45%. The assignments will become available roughly a month before they are due, after I address details in class. At that time, assignment details will also be posted to eLC for your reference throughout the month. The window for submission will remain open until the due date at 11:59pm.

Participation (5%)

There will be multiple points throughout the course where discussions are facilitated during class. Your participation in those discussions is important for your learning, and so will account for the remaining portion (5%) of your final grade.

While I will not keep a dedicated attendance record, chronic absences on days with class discussion will be a liability for your participation grade. Therefore, you should attend class, barring cases of extenuating circumstances.

For the sake of helping me keep up with participation, it is a requirement that you upload a picture of yourself to your eLC profile. Otherwise, you will receive a 0 for your participation grade at the end of the course. This should be completed by the 2nd week of class.

Grading Breakdown and Schedule

Quizzes – 50% (drop lowest quiz grade)

- Quiz 1: Monday, January 27th
- Quiz 2: Monday, February 10th
- Quiz 3: Monday, February 24th
- Quiz 4: Monday, March 17th
- Quiz 5: Friday, April 4th
- Quiz 6: Monday, April 28th

Protest Assignment – 15%: Thursday, February 27th

Public Meeting Assignment – 15%: Thursday, March 27th

Media Literacy Assignment – 15%: Friday, April 25th

Participation – 5%

Grading Scale

A = 94-100	C+ = 77-79
A- = 90-93	C = 74-76
B+ = 87-89	C- = 70-73
B = 84-86	D = 60-69
B- = 80-83	F = 0-59

Class Policies and Administrative Items

Make-up Policy

Make-up work will only be available to students who deal with extenuating circumstances preventing them from meeting due dates. Whether a circumstance qualifies under this policy, and whether proof will be required for verification, will be up to my discretion. If able, students should notify me ahead of time of possible conflicts or delaying circumstances.

Communication with Me

Please use your UGA email address to email me, rather than contacting me through eLC. Throughout the course, I will be sending emails to the class through eLC for the sake of convenience. Do not reply to these emails if you have a question or concern, but instead send me an email through your UGA email. I typically respond to emails within a day.

ELC

This course relies heavily on eLC, so students should get acquainted with using it, if they are not already (<https://uga.view.usg.edu/>). Quizzes and assignments will both be facilitated on the course eLC page, and it will be the only place where students can keep track of their grades as the course progresses.

Disability Accommodations

Neither physical nor cognitive abled-ness should factor into your success in this course. If you plan to request classroom or assignment/quiz accommodations for a disability, please register with the Disability Resource Center (DRC). The DRC can be reached by visiting Clark Howell Hall, by calling 706-542-8719 (voice) or 706-542-8778 (TTY), or by visiting <http://drc.uga.edu>.

Academic Honesty

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 www.uga.edu/ovpi. You are responsible for knowing these policies and what constitutes academic dishonesty. The consequences for cheating, plagiarism, etc. are severe, and I am obligated to report any incidents of violations. Failing the class would be the least of your worries.

AI

Use of artificial intelligence (e.g., ChatGPT) or word mixing software on assignments or quizzes is considered unauthorized assistance (cheating) 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. *Don't use AI as a crutch.* It does not constitute legitimate learning in this course environment.

Students will be expected to provide timely responses to emails from me requesting explanations for answers or parts of assignments that are suspicious for AI utilization.

Syllabus Policy

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary. Notice will be provided in advance if changes become necessary.

Drop/Add and Withdrawal Policy

Students can drop the class without penalty anytime during the drop/add period at the start of semester. After that, students may withdraw from class through the withdrawal process prior to the withdrawal deadline. Instructors also can withdraw a student for excessive absences. The full policy for withdrawal can be found at <https://reg.uga.edu/general-information/policies/withdrawals/>

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.

Peer Tutoring

The Division of Academic Enhancement (DAE) offers free peer tutoring in over 200 of UGA's most rigorous courses, including writing tutoring. To engage with a Peer Tutor, download the Penji app, available on iOS and Android, and sign in through SSO using your MyID. Need help? Visit [our website](#) for more information on how to engage with a Peer Tutor or email us at tutor@uga.edu. In addition to peer tutoring, the DAE also provides Academic Coaching, Student Success Workshops and more. The DAE is committed to the success of all students at the University of Georgia. For more on these and other resources, please visit www.dae.uga.edu.

Tentative Course Schedule

Week 1: January 5 – 11

Monday, January 6th

- Introduction/syllabus

Wednesday, January 8th

- Why are politics and government necessary? (*Logic* chapter 1)

Friday, January 10th

- Constitution, part 1 (*Logic* chapter 2)
- **Drop/add ends**

Week 2: January 12 – 18

Upload a profile picture (a headshot of yourself) to your eLC profile by the end of this week.

Monday, January 13th

- Constitution, part 2 (*Logic* chapter 2)

Wednesday, January 15th

- Constitution, part 3 (*Logic* chapter 2)

Friday, January 17th

- Federalism, part 1 (*Logic* chapter 3)
- *Georgia Politics* Chapter 4 – The Georgia Constitution

Week 3: January 19 – 25

Monday, January 20th – MLK Day: **No class**

Wednesday, January 22nd

- Federalism, part 2 (*Logic* chapter 3)

Friday, January 24th

- Federalism, part 3 (*Logic* chapter 3)

Week 4: January 26 – February 1

Monday, January 27th

- **Quiz 1** on eLC.

Wednesday, January 29th

- Civil Rights, part 1 (*Logic* chapter 4)
- Protest Assignment introduction

Friday, January 31st

- Civil Rights, part 2 (*Logic* chapter 4)

Week 5: February 2 - 8

Monday, February 3rd

- Civil Rights, part 3 (*Logic* chapter 4)

Wednesday, February 5th

- Civil Liberties, part 1 (*Logic* chapter 5)

Friday, February 7th

- Civil Liberties, part 2 (*Logic* chapter 5)

Week 6: February 9 - 15

Monday, February 10th

- **Quiz 2** on eLC

Wednesday, February 12th

- Congress, part 1 (*Logic* chapter 6)

Friday, February 14th

- Congress, part 2 (*Logic* chapter 6)

Week 7: February 16 - 22

Monday, February 17th

- Congress, part 3 (*Logic* chapter 6)
- *Georgia Politics* chapter 5

Wednesday, February 19th

- The Presidency, part 1 (*Logic* chapter 7)

Friday, February 21st

- The Presidency, part 2 (*Logic* chapter 7)
- *Georgia Politics* chapter 6

Week 8: February 23 - March 1

Monday, February 24th

- **Quiz 3** on eLC

Wednesday, February 26th

- The Bureaucracy, part 1 (*Logic* chapter 8)
- Public Meeting Assignment introduction

Thursday, February 27th

- **Protest Assignment Due** on eLC @ 11:59 PM

Friday, February 28th

- The Bureaucracy, part 2 (*Logic* chapter 8)

Week 9: March 2 – 8 -> Spring Break, no classes

Week 10: March 9 – 15

Monday, March 10th

- The Judiciary, part 1 (*Logic* chapter 9)

Wednesday, March 12th

- The Judiciary, part 2 (*Logic* chapter 9)

Friday, March 14th

- The Judiciary, part 3 (*Logic* chapter 9)
- *Georgia Politics* chapter 7

Week 11: March 16 - 22

Monday, March 17th

- **Quiz 4** on eLC

Wednesday, March 19th

- Public Opinion, part 1 (*Logic* chapter 10)

Friday, March 21st

- Public Opinion, part 2 (*Logic* chapter 10)

Week 12: March 23 - 29

Monday, March 24th

- Media, part 1 (*Logic* chapter 14)

Wednesday, March 26th

- Media, part 2 (*Logic* chapter 14)

Thursday, March 27th

- **Public Meeting Project Due** on eLC @ 11:59pm

Friday, March 28th

- Media, part 3 (*Logic* chapter 14)
- Media Literacy Assignment introduction

Week 13: March 30 – April 5

Monday, March 31st

- Voting, Campaigns, & Elections, part 1 (*Logic* chapter 11)

Wednesday, April 2nd

- Voting, Campaigns, & Elections, part 2 (*Logic* chapter 11)

Thursday, April 3rd – Withdrawal deadline

Friday, April 4th

- **Quiz 5** on eLC

Week 14: April 6 – April 12

Monday, April 7th

- Political Parties, part 1 (*Logic* chapter 12)

Wednesday, April 9th

- Political Parties, part 2 (*Logic* chapter 12)

Friday, April 11th

- Political Parties, part 3 (*Logic* chapter 12)

Week 15: April 13 – April 19

Monday, April 14th

- Interest Groups, part 1 (*Logic* chapter 13)

Wednesday, April 16th

- Interest Groups, part 2 (*Logic* chapter 13)

Wednesday, April 18th

- Interest Groups, part 3 (*Logic* chapter 13)

Week 16: April 20 – April 26

Monday, April 21st

- Flex day/TBD/Media project workday

Wednesday, April 23rd

- Flex day/TBD/Media project workday

Friday, April 25th

- Flex day/TBD/Media project workday
- **Media Literacy Assignment Due** on eLC @ 11:59pm

Week 17: April 27 – May 3

Monday, April 28th

- **Quiz 6** on eLC

Good luck with finals and have a great summer break!