



**UNIVERSITY OF
GEORGIA**

School of Public and International Affairs

POLS 1101: American Government Fall 2025

Instructor: Andrew L. Stone

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Office Hours: Baldwin 101W

1. Course Description and Objective

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.

Objective: This course introduces students to the history, processes, and institutions of American Government. Students will learn how laws are made, enforced, and interpreted by the three branches of the U.S. government, as well as the importance of political parties, interest groups, and civil rights and civil liberties in the American political system. Similar topics will be studied regarding Georgia's state government, with particular attention to the Georgia state constitution. Throughout the course, students will demonstrate their understanding through a critical examination of the facts and principles of American government, they will learn theories about American government and how to evaluate them, they will practice their critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and they will learn to apply these skills to ethical problems in the community. Students may be evaluated based on examinations, research papers, class discussion, presentations, and/or homework.

2. Meeting Times & Locations

Location: Baldwin 301

Days: Monday, Wednesday, Friday

Time: 12:40 to 1:30pm

3. Office Hours

Location: Baldwin 101W
Days: Wednesday
Time: 1:30pm to 3:30pm

4. Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend every class session in-person. Attendance counts for five percent of a student's grade. For each unexcused absence, two percent will be taken off the student's final grade. Excused absences for illness, family emergencies, and other similar circumstances will not count against a student's attendance grade. For an absence to be considered excused, the student must notify the instructor prior to the day's session that they will not be in attendance and the reason why.

5. Required Text

While there is no textbook required for the course. Students will be expected to read assigned original source documents prior to each class session. Such pieces will be accessible via links in the syllabus if not through the UGA library. The specific documents are listed with their respective class day in the course schedule.

6. Grading Breakdown & Grading Scale

Grade Distribution: 200 points in total

- Attendance: 10 points
- Quizzes: 5 points each, 40 points in total
 - o Eight short answer questions per quiz
 - o Questions pertain to assigned readings and lecture content up to that point
 - o Your three lowest quiz grades will be dropped
- Exams: 50 points each, 100 points in total
 - o One midterm exam, one final exam
 - o Each consists of fifty multiple choice questions
 - o Exam content is NOT cumulative
- Representation Project: 50 points
 - o Write an essay in which you do the following things
 - Select and describe a district in the US House of Representatives (Educational attainment, racial demographics, major industries, etc.)
 - Describe the personal background of that district's member of Congress (Professional experience, prior offices held, etc.)
 - Answer the following three questions
 - What have been this representative's priorities in Congress?
 - In what ways are they representing their district well?
 - In what ways are they representing their district poorly?
 - o Length: 5 pages (slightly more or less is acceptable)
 - o Font: Times New Roman, 12 point
 - o Margins: 1.5 inches
 - o Spacing: Double
 - o Students will sign up for one of nine staggered due dates (Course Schedule)

Grade Scale:

A = 93 - 100%

A- = 90 - 92%

B+ = 87 - 89%

B = 83 - 86%

B- = 80 - 82%

C+ = 77 - 79%

C = 73 - 76%

C- = 70 - 72%

D = 60 - 69%

F = ≤ 59%

Extra Credit:

In class, students will be expected to regularly contribute to in-class discussion. These contributions are expected to be sincere and substantive, reflecting genuine engagement and not simply filling space. Students who, over the course of the semester, have contributed substantially to in-class discussion will have five points added to their existing total.

6. Important Course Policies and Resources

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 honesty.uga.edu

In this course specifically, students will not plagiarize the works of fellow students or other authors in the completion of their own assignments. The use of Generative AI (GAI) tools is **not** permitted in this course. This is because such tools are unnecessary for the completion of the assignments this class, are prone to inaccuracy, and constitute plagiarism in this context. If you are uncertain about using a particular tool to support your work, please consult with me before using it. We do conduct regular checks of papers to determine whether an assignment was created using generative AI. If we believe a violation of A Culture of Honesty may have occurred, we have a responsibility to report to the Office of Academic Honesty. The same is true for any tutor services. The tutor is NOT supposed to write the Representation Project for or with you. That project is supposed to be 100% your work.

Accommodations for Disabilities

If you need to request accommodations for a disability, please register with the Accessibility and Testing. 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.

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 & Outreach (SCO) in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-8479 or visit sco.uga.edu. Student Care & Outreach helps students navigate difficult circumstances by connecting them with the most appropriate resources or services. They also administer the [Embark@UGA](#) program which supports students who are 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
- Student Care and Outreach: sco.uga.edu
- University Health Center: healthcenter.uga.edu
- Counseling and Psychiatric Services: caps.uga.edu or CAPS 24/7 crisis support at 706-542-2273
- Health Promotion/Fontaine Center: healthpromotion.uga.edu
- Accessibility and Testing: accessibility.uga.edu

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

Grade Appeals

If you have a question regarding your grade, you should contact me within one week of receiving your grade. Keep in mind that when I review your grade, it can go up or down. In your written appeal, make sure to elaborate on how exactly my assessment of your grade appeared incorrect, with citations supporting your answer being appreciated.

Incompletes

A final grade of “Incomplete” will only be given in this course under exceptional circumstances and is solely at the discretion of the instructor. If an incomplete is given, it is the student’s responsibility to complete the necessary requirements as early in the following semester as possible.

Excused Absences from Quizzes & Exams

Quizzes cannot be made up. If you are absent for a quiz, that quiz will count towards one of the three that are dropped in your final grade. If you are absent for an exam, please contact me to schedule a makeup session as soon as possible.

Quizzes & Exams for Students Registered with Accessibility and Testing (formerly the Disability Resource Center)

If you are registered with Accessibility and Testing and you need extended exam and quiz time, you are required to take the exam/quiz at Accessibility and Testing. It is your responsibility to contact Accessibility and Testing at least 48 hours before the exam/quiz date. For quizzes, please schedule a time to take the quiz at Accessibility and Testing on the same day of the quiz either before or after regular class time. For exams, please schedule a time on the same day of the exam, any time after the starting time of the exam. Make sure you to inform me so that I know your quiz/exam is not missing. Please note that you are still required to attend your class session if you take the quiz at Accessibility and Testing.

Late Submissions

Late paper submissions will be docked by 10% per day, for each day that a paper is late (including weekends). Extensions can be granted in exceptional circumstances, but you are required to contact me prior to the deadline if one is needed.

Syllabus Policy

I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus if necessary. I will give you fair notice (at least a week) if something, such as a reading assignment, is to change.

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. Please review the policy here:

<https://reg.uga.edu/general-information/policies/withdrawals/>

Preferred Name

Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to me with the student's legal name. I am eager to address you by your preferred name. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

11. Course Schedule

Week 1 – Introductions & Principles of Government

- Day 1 – August 13

Topic: Introduction to the Course

Readings: Syllabus

- Day 2 – August 15

Topic: The Why of Our Government

Readings: [Tragedy of the Commons: What It Is & 5 Examples](#) & [Types of Governments](#)

Week 2 – The Founding

- **Day 3 – August 18**
Topic: Colonial Roots
Readings: [The Puritans in America Favored the Rule of Law Based on the Bible](#) & [1619: Virginia's First Africans](#)
- **Day 4 – August 20**
Topic: Declaration of Independence
Readings: [English Bill of Rights](#) & [Declaration of Independence](#)
- **Day 5 – August 22**
QUIZ #1
Topic: Articles of Confederation
Readings: [Articles of Confederation](#)

Week 3 – The Constitution

- **Day 6 – August 25**
Topic: Creating the Constitution
Readings: [Federalist No. 10 \(pp. 37-49\)](#)
- **Day 7 – August 27**
Topic: The Bill of Rights
Readings: [The Bill of Rights](#)
- **Day 8 – August 29**
Topic: The Georgia Constitution
Readings: [The Georgia Constitution](#)

****NO CLASS SEPTEMBER 1 – LABOR DAY****

Week 4 – The Legislative Branch

- **Day 9 – September 3**
Topic: Congress
Readings: [The U.S. Constitution \(Article I\)](#) & [Going Nowhere: A Gridlocked Congress](#)
- **Day 10 – August 29**
QUIZ #2
Topic: The Georgia Legislature
Readings: [Georgia housing groups pessimistic over prospects of Legislature reining in investor price squeeze](#)

Week 5 – The Executive Branch

- **Day 11 – September 8**
Topic: The President
Readings: [The U.S. Constitution \(Article II\)](#) & [On the Expansion of Executive Power: An Overview](#)
- **Day 12 – September 10**
Topic: The Cabinet
Readings: [U.S. House impeaches homeland security secretary](#)
- **Day 13 – September 12**
PAPERS GROUP SIGN-UP BY 11:59pm
Topic: The Georgia Executive Branch
Readings: [Carr secures additional \\$20M to fight opioid crisis in GA](#)

Week 6 – The Judicial Branch

- **Day 14 – September 15**
Topic: Federal Court Structure
Readings: [Appeals court upholds block against Trump's effort to end birthright citizenship](#)
- **Day 15 – September 17**
Topic: Federal Court Power
Readings: [The U.S. Constitution \(Article III\)](#) & [The Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade in 2022. Here's the state of abortion rights now in the US](#)
- **Day 16 – September 19**
PAPERS DUE 11:59pm – Group 1
QUIZ #3
Topic: Georgia Courts
Readings: [Gov. Kemp Appoints Court of Appeals Judge Benjamin Land to the Georgia Supreme Court](#)

Week 7 – Political Parties

- **Day 17 – September 22**
Topic: The Purpose of Parties
Readings: [Are Republicans having trouble recruiting Senate candidates in the Trump era?](#)
- **Day 18 – September 24**
Topic: Party Systems

Readings: [Trump's gains with minority voters fuel GOP optimism](#)

- **Day 19 – September 26**

PAPERS DUE 11:59pm – Group 2

Topic: The Major Parties Today

Readings: [As Partisan Hostility Grows, Signs of Frustration With the Two-Party System](#)

Week 8 – We the People

- **Day 20 – September 29**

Topic: Demographics

Readings: [Most Americans say the declining share of White people in the U.S. is neither good nor bad for society](#)

- **Day 21 – October 1**

Topic: Civil Rights

Readings: [The Gettysburg Address](#) & [Letter from a Birmingham Jail](#)

- **Day 22 – October 3**

PAPERS DUE 11:59pm – Group 3

QUIZ #4

Topic: Civil Liberties

Readings: [Why the American Civil Liberties Union Defends Free Speech for Racists and Totalitarians](#)

Week 9 – Elections

- **Day 23 – October 6**

Topic: Primary Elections

Readings: [Why congressman James Clyburn was the most important politician of 2020](#)

- **Day 24 – October 8**

Topic: General Elections

Readings: [Memorable moments from political debates past](#)

****OCTOBER 10 – EXAM 1****

Week 10 – Public Opinion

- **Day 25 – October 13**

Topic: Importance of Public Opinion

Readings: [The Impact of Public Opinion on Public Policy: A Review and an Agenda](#)

- **Day 26 – October 15**
Topic: Problems of Public Opinion
Readings: [Americans are unhappy with the state of health care and insurance](#)
- **Day 27 – October 17**
PAPERS DUE 11:59pm – Group 4
QUIZ #5
Topic: How We Know Public Opinion
Readings: [Were the 2024 election polls wrong? UCR expert weighs in](#)

Week 11 – Interest Groups

- **Day 28 – October 20**
Topic: What are Interest Groups
Readings: [Top Interest Groups Giving to Members of Congress, 2024 Cycle](#)
- **Day 29 – October 22**
Topic: Lobbying Methods
Readings: [Why Every Organization Needs a Good Lobbyist](#)
- **Day 30 – October 24**
PAPERS DUE 11:59pm – Group 5
Topic: Special Interests vs. Public Opinion
Readings: [Public Opinion, Public Policy, and Organized Interests in the American States](#)

Week 12 – Civic Engagement

- **Day 31 – October 27**
Topic: Direct Participation in Politics
Readings: [Participatory Budgeting](#)
- **Day 32 – October 29**
QUIZ #6
Topic: Policy Advocacy Simulation

****NO CLASS OCTOBER 31 – FALL BREAK****

Week 13 – Implementing Policy

- **Day 33 – November 3**
Topic: The Budget
Readings: [FAQ: The One Big Beautiful Bill Act Tax Changes](#)

- **Day 34 – November 5**
Topic: Bureaucracy
Readings: [National Weather Service defends its flood warnings amid fresh scrutiny of Trump staff cuts](#)
- **Day 35 – November 7**
PAPERS DUE 11:59pm – Group 6
Topic: Federalism
Readings: [What does a state of emergency mean in the face of the coronavirus?](#)

Week 14 – Foreign Policy

- **Day 33 – November 10**
Topic: Diplomacy and Trade
Readings: [Nixon on China](#)
- **Day 34 – November 12**
Topic: Military Affairs
Readings: [The Iraq War](#)
- **Day 35 – November 14**
PAPERS DUE 11:59pm – Group 7
QUIZ #7
Topic: Foreign Policy Simulation

Week 15 – The News Media

- **Day 36 – November 17**
Topic: Political Socialization
Readings: [Traditional and “New Media” Forms and Political Socialization](#)
- **Day 37 – November 19**
Topic: Importance of Media
Readings: [The Pentagon Papers](#)
- **Day 38 – November 21**
PAPERS DUE 11:59pm – Group 8
Topic: Media Distrust and Misinformation
Readings: [Americans' Trust in Media Remains at Trend Low](#)

Week 16 – Politics as Entertainment

- **Day 39 – November 24**
QUIZ #8

Topic: New Media, Satire, and Memes

Readings: [Area Man Passionate Defender Of What He Imagines Constitution To Be](#)

****NO CLASS NOVEMBER 26 & 28 – THANKSGIVING BREAK****

Week 17 – Looking Towards the Future

- **Day 40 – December 1**

Topic: Dynamics of the 2026 and 2028 Elections

Readings: [Inside Trump's plan to keep control of Congress in 2026](#)

- **Day 41 – December 2**

Topic: Review/Q&A

- **December 5**

PAPERS DUE 11:59pm – Group 9

****December 10 – EXAM 2 at 12pm****