

POLS 1101: Introduction to American Government

The University of Georgia

December 18, 2025

Instructor:	Dr. Jeff Auerbach
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Office:	305E Baldwin Hall
Class Times:	Tuesday & Thursday 8:15am OR 9:55am
Office Hours:	Wednesday & Thursday 12-1pm

Welcome!

This course is an introduction to the study of American politics and a gateway to more advanced political science courses offered by the Political Science Department. There are no prerequisites. It fulfills a core requirement of the Political Science major.

This course will introduce you to a fundamental theoretical framework for explaining behavior in the American political system. This course will allow for a better understanding of how the American political system works, who the important players are, and how the structure of the system changes the incentives on those within the system.

The purpose of this course is to provide an analytical basis for understanding American politics. It is a social science course, not a course on current events or history - even though we will frequently be discussing current and historical events. The emphasis is on rigorous and critical thinking about politics and policy choices.

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, this includes the use of AI for any and all writing assignments.

Required Readings

- The Logic of American Politics 12th Edition
- **The Following Will be On eLC:**
- The Declaration of Independence
- The Articles of Confederation
- The US Constitution
- The US Bill of Rights
- Federalist Papers
- The Gettysburg Address
- Emancipation Proclamation
- Georgia State Constitution and Bill of Rights
- Letter From Birmingham Jail

Ground rules

You are responsible for being self-motivated, self-directed, active learners. I expect you to comply with university policy and use common sense. You should complete all of the course assignments and participate fully in all of our activities. Speech in the classroom must be civil and respectful

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 & 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 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
 - Disability Resource Center and Testing Services: drc.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>.

The Student Learning Outcomes

Students will apply theoretical frameworks, such as federalism, separation of powers, and pluralism, to analyze the organization and functioning of American government, its political institutions and processes.

Students will learn the philosophical and constitutional foundations of the U.S. political system, including the state of Georgia, and examine primary sources over time, including the Declaration of Independence, Federalist Papers, the U.S. and Georgia Constitutions, among others.

Students will critically assess the effects of media and public opinion on political processes using analytical tools to interpret data related to the American political system, including public opinion surveys, election results, and demographic trends, and communicate their findings in written, verbal, and graphical formats.

Students will learn to articulate competing positions on political topics in assignments.

Students will demonstrate an ability to engage in respectful discussion and civil debate on American politics that are associated with multiple points of view.

How will you be graded?

Grading Scale

The following is the grade scale I will use in this class. Yes, I do round.

Make-up exams will be given only with a university approved excuse.

Table 1: Assignments

Item	Prop. of grade
Midterm 1	25%
Midterm 2	25%
Final Exam	25%
Reading Responses(3)	10%
Attendance	15%

Table 2: Grade Scale

Item	Prop. of grade
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+	[67,69)
D	[60,66)
F	[0,59)

Course Schedule

Week 1 1/12

- Tuesday: Syllabus
- Thursday:

Week 2 (1/19)

- Tuesday & Thursday: Chapter 1 & The Declaration of Independence

Week 3 (1/26)

- Tuesday & Thursday: Chapter 2, The Articles of Confederation, The US Constitution, The Georgia State Constitution (skim)

Week 4 (2/2)

- Tuesday & Thursday: Chapter 3

Week 5 (2/9)

- Tuesday & Thursday: Chapter 4

Week 6 (2/16)

- Tuesday & Thursday: Chapter 5 & Bill of Rights

Week 7 (2/23)

- Tuesday: Midterm 1
- Thursday: No Class - Emancipation Proclamation Reading Response

Week 8 (3/2)

- Tuesday & Thursday: Chapter 6

Week 9 (3/9)

- SPRING BREAK

Week 10 (3/16)

- Tuesday & Thursday: Chapter 7

Week 11 (3/23)

- Tuesday & Thursday: Chapter 8

Week 12 (3/30)

- Tuesday: Chapter 9
- Thursday: No Class - Letter From Birmingham Jail Reading

Week 13 (4/6)

- Tuesday: Chapter 9
- Thursday: Midterm 2

Week 14 (4/13)

- Tuesday & Thursday: Chapter 11

Week 15 (4/20)

- Tuesday & Thursday: Chapter 12

Final Exams

- 8am Class - Thursday, Dec. 4th - 8-11am
- 9:35am Class - Tuesday, Dec. 9th - 8-11am