



**UNIVERSITY OF
GEORGIA**

School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA)

**POLS 1101E:
Introduction to American Government
Spring 2026**

Instructor: Professor Alexa Bankert

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Course Description and Student Learning Outcomes

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.

In practical terms, this means you will:

1. Apply theoretical framework, such as federalism, separation of powers, and pluralism to analyze the organization and functioning of American government, its political institutions, and processes.
2. Familiarize yourself with the constitutional and philosophical foundations of the U.S. political system, including the Declaration of Independence, Federalist Papers, the U.S. and Georgia Constitution, among others.
3. Critically assess the effects of media and public opinion, using analytical tools to interpret data such as public opinion surveys, election results, and demographic trends.
4. Learn to articulate competing positions on political topics in written and verbal format.
5. Demonstrate the ability to engage in respectful discussion and civil debate on American politics.

Class Format

This class includes an online lecture (between 1 hour – 1.5 hours) each week which I will post to eLC every Monday morning. You are expected to watch these lectures every week. There will also be weekly readings and discussion or reflection assignments due each Friday.

This course has one main instructor (me—Dr. Bankert) and six Teaching Assistants (TAs). Each TA is responsible for two of the twelve sections (see below). You can identify your section by checking your Athena registration. Your TA will grade your assignments, papers, exams, and quizzes, so please be sure you know who your TA is and contact them if you have questions.

Section CRN	Teaching Assistant	Email
46233	Aidan Gonzalez	Aidan.Gonzalez1@uga.edu
52797	Aidan Gonzalez	Aidan.Gonzalez1@uga.edu
52800	Shang Yat Lam	ShangYat.Lam@uga.edu
52799	Shang Yat Lam	ShangYat.Lam@uga.edu
52801	Bonkyu Lim	Bonkyu.Lim@uga.edu
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52803	Dotun Seyingbo	aseyingbo@uga.edu
52804	Dotun Seyingbo	aseyingbo@uga.edu
52805	Chaeli Solomon	Chaeli.Solomon@uga.edu
52806	Chaeli Solomon	Chaeli.Solomon@uga.edu
52807	Hasan Sourav	Hasan.Sourav@uga.edu
54569	Hasan Sourav	Hasan.Sourav@uga.edu

Required Text

We the People (15th essentials edition) – by Benjamin Ginsberg, Theodore J. Lowi, Margaret Weir, Caroline J. Tolbert, and Robert J. Spitzer **with access to InQuizitive**

I encourage you to buy the textbook in an electronic format with the InQuizitive code at a more affordable rate here: <https://digital.wwnorton.com/wethepeople15ess>

Required Technology

Because this is an online course, a reliable internet connection is required. I strongly discourage completing quizzes or assignments on a phone or using public Wi-Fi (e.g., at airports). There are three main technologies we use in this class: eLC, the eBook, and InQuizitive.

eLC

This course is primarily administered through eLC. All course materials—including online lectures, assignments, exams and quizzes, as well as links to the eBook and InQuizitive—will be available there, so please check eLC regularly.

eBook

Each week's assigned chapter will be available through eLC and includes comprehension questions. Please note that you must purchase the eBook to access these materials.

InQuizitive

InQuizitive is an adaptive learning tool that accompanies the textbook. Weekly InQuizitive assignments will be posted on eLC. The first time you access InQuizitive through eLC, you will need to enter a registration code, which can be purchased with the eBook at:

<https://digital.wwnorton.com/wethepeople15ess>

The ebook and inquizitive are linked to our gradebook in elc, so please access them only through elc by using the links posted on elc.

Communication: How to Keep Up with the Important Stuff

My primary method of communication will be announcements posted on eLC. Please make sure you are set up to receive eLC announcements via email: **Go to our course on eLC, click your profile in the upper right corner, select Notifications, then Instant Notifications, and then check “Announcements”.**

Please note that – due to privacy and confidentiality concern – we can only reply to emails sent from your UGA account.

Please give us at least 24 hours to reply to your email.

You cannot reply to an email we send out via eLC (ending in @uga.view.usg.edu). If you do, the email will bounce back, and we will not receive it.

Finally, please be professional and polite when you email me or your TA. It is not just a sign of respect but also a reflection of you.

Virtual Student Drop-In Hour

I will strive to make sure that the course is understandable, and that assignments and exams are manageable. Your TA and I are here to help, so if you need support or if you have difficulty with the course materials and/or assignments, please reach out. We are available for in-person and Zoom meetings. I will also hold a virtual drop-in hour every Wednesday from 1pm – 2 pm. You can enter the Zoom waiting room, using [this link](#). The meeting ID is: 914 4298 0165 and the passcode is 764095. Your TA’s office hours are listed on their eLC page.

How We Assess Your Learning: Quizzes, Exams, and Assignments

Midterm Exam: There will be one midterm exam, which will primarily consist of multiple-choice questions of varying difficulty. The exam is currently scheduled for Friday, February 27 and will be available from 8:00 a.m. to 11:59 p.m. Please note that make-up exams cannot be provided for travel on the exam day unless the absence qualifies as an official excuse under UGA policy.

Final Exam: There will be one final open-book/open-note exam that will consist of two parts: A section with multiple-choice questions that cover the second half of the semester's material as well as a final essay that will ask you to integrate and synthesize what you learned about American government. The exam is currently scheduled for Friday, May 1 and will be available from 8:00 a.m. to 11:59 p.m. Please note that make-up exams cannot be provided for travel on the exam day unless the absence qualifies as an official excuse under UGA policy.

Quizzes: There will be 4 short quizzes on eLC (3-5 questions) based on the online lectures and assigned readings. Quizzes are currently scheduled for Fridays on January 30, February 13, March 20, and April 10 and will be available from 8:00 a.m. to 11:59 p.m. Please note that make-up quizzes cannot be provided for travel on the exam day unless the absence qualifies as an official excuse under UGA policy. Good news: We will drop the worst quiz grade at the end of the semester.

- **Quizzes & Exams for Students Registered with Accessibility & Testing**

If you are registered with the Accessibility & Testing and you need extended exam and quiz time, please make sure to email your TA at least 24 hours before the exam/quiz date.

- **Quizzes & Exams for Student-Athletes**

If you are a student-athlete and you need an extension on quizzes or exams due to your training and competition schedule, please make sure to email your TA at least 24 hours before the exam/quiz date.

Weekly eBook and InQuizitive assignment are due every Friday at 11:59pm of each week. Both are linked to the eLC gradebook, so you must access them through eLC in order to receive credit. If you see an error message asking for a student set ID, you are likely not using the eLC links. Please note that bookmarking the InQuizitive website will **not** work.

Discussion or Reflection Assignments: In most weeks, you will complete discussion or reflection assignments designed to demonstrate your critical engagement with the readings and lectures. Each assignment will include a detailed rubric outlining the expectations for successful completion.

Online Research Survey: You will participate in an online research survey, which will take approximately 20–25 minutes to complete and will introduce you to political science research. The survey includes multiple questions about your political opinions, and all responses are completely anonymous. The survey will be made available at the end of March.

Grading Breakdown by Percentage

Midterm Exam: 20%

Final Exam: 20%

Quizzes: 20%

Discussion Assignments: 20%

eBook & InQuizitive: 15%

Online Research Study: 5%

Grading Scale for Final Semester Grades

100-94 A 79-77 C+

93-90 A- 76-74 C

89-87 B+ 73-70 C-

86-84 B 69-60 D

83-80 B- 59-0 F

****Please note that there is no standard rounding policy. Rounding decisions can be made on a case-by-case basis and are largely determined by your TA.****

Excused Absences from Quizzes & Exams

Legitimate excuses for absence from an exam or quiz (e.g., religious holiday, medical emergency, or illness, student-athlete responsibilities) must be presented to the teaching assistant and accepted prior to the exam/quiz when feasible. If you need to make up a quiz or an exam, it is your responsibility to schedule a date with your TA within one week of the original quiz/exam date.

When To Expect Grades

You can expect grades for your quizzes, exams, and discussion assignments within one week of submission. To improve your InQuizitive score, you can re-do the assignment until its weekly deadline on Friday 11:59 PM. If you do not receive your grades within these time frames, please contact your TA.

Grade Appeals

Any questions you have regarding grades should be directed to the teaching assistant. If you are unable to resolve the matter with them, you may appeal the grade to me within two weeks of receiving your grade. Keep in mind that I will re-grade your entire quiz or exam. Therefore, there is no guarantee that your grade will improve. Your grade can go up, stay the same, or even go down if my assessment differs from your TA's.

Transparency on eLC

I want to be transparent about how we monitor course engagement on eLC, so you know what we see. eLC lets us see how often you check the course website, whether you access the online lectures, how much time you spend watching them, and how much time you spend

composing quiz and exam answers. We check these metrics regularly to make sure everyone is staying on track. In addition, all written assignments are reviewed for the use of artificial intelligence, so please be mindful and ensure your work reflects your own thinking. My goal in sharing this is not to police you, but to keep the course fair and transparent for everyone.

Use of Generative AI Technology for Coursework

The use of Generative AI (GAI) tools is **not generally permitted** in this course but will be permitted for select assignments. Specific assignments will include details about whether use of GAI tools is allowable or not, and why. If you are uncertain about using a particular tool to support your work, please consult with me before using it. We do conduct AI checks of every paper and assignment 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. If we do, you will be informed of our report, so you can look out for an email from the Office of Academic Honesty who will schedule a facilitated discussion between you and your TA to review your case. The goal will be an agreement reached about what occurred, and if it involved dishonesty, an appropriate sanction. To protect your rights, we cannot discuss your case outside of that facilitated meeting.

Whenever an assignment **explicitly allows** for the use of GAI, please keep the following in mind: You may not represent output generated by a GAI tool as your own work. Any such use of GAI output must be appropriately cited or disclosed, including quotation marks and in-line citations for direct quotes. Including anything you did not write in your assignment without proper citation will be treated as an academic misconduct case. Suspected unauthorized assistance, plagiarism, or other violations of UGA’s “A Culture of Honesty,” will be reported to the Office of Academic Honesty. For full details on how to properly cite AI-generated work, please see the [APA Style article: How to Cite ChatGPT](#). Finally, GAI is highly vulnerable to inaccuracy and bias. You should assume GAI output is wrong unless you either know the answer or can verify it with another source. It is your responsibility to assess the validity and applicability of any GAI output used.

Course Schedule

Please note that this schedule does not include any additional readings I may assign, such as newspaper or magazine articles. These will be made available on eLC.

Week 1 (starting Jan. 12)

Topic: Introduction to the Class

Readings: Read the syllabus *carefully*. You can find it on eLC under “Course Documents”. Then complete the syllabus quiz on eLC.

Week 2 (starting Jan. 20 due to MLK Day)

Topic: The Citizen & The Government

Readings: Chapter 1 in “We The People” & Constitution of the United States of America

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 1 eBook and InQuizitive + Discussion Assignment

Week 3 (starting Jan. 26)

Topic: The Founding and the Constitution

Readings: Chapter 2 in “We The People” & Declaration of Independence & Georgia Constitution

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 2 eBook and InQuizitive

Week 4 (starting Feb. 2)

Topic: Federalism

Readings: Chapter 3 in “We The People” & The Federalist Papers

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 3 eBook and InQuizitive + Discussion Assignment

Week 5 (starting Feb. 9)

Topic: Civil Liberties

Readings: Chapter 4 in “We The People” & Georgia Bill of Rights

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 4 eBook and InQuizitive

Week 6 (starting Feb. 16)

Topic: Civil Rights

Readings: Chapter 5 in “We The People” & Emancipation Proclamation & Letter from Birmingham Jail & Gettysburg Address

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 5 eBook and InQuizitive + Discussion Assignment

Week 7 (starting Feb. 23)

Topic: Public Opinion

Readings: Chapter 6 in “We The People”

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 6 eBook and InQuizitive

Week 8 (starting March. 2)

Topic: The Media

Readings: Chapter 7 in “We The People”

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 7 eBook and InQuizitive + Discussion Assignment

Week 9 (starting March 9)

SPRING BREAK!

Week 10 (starting March 16)

Topic: Political Parties and Interest Groups

Readings: Chapter 8 in “We The People”

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 8 eBook and InQuizitive

Week 11 (starting March 23)

Topic: Participation, Campaigns, and Elections

Readings: Chapter 9 in “We The People”

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 9 eBook and InQuizitive + Discussion Assignment

Week 12 (starting March 30)

Topic: Congress

Readings: Chapter 10 in “We The People”

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 10 eBook and InQuizitive + Discussion Assignment

Week 13 (starting April 6)

Topic: The Presidency

Readings: Chapter 11 in “We The People”

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 11 eBook and InQuizitive

Week 14 (starting April 13)

Topic: The Bureaucracy

Readings: Chapter 12 in “We The People”

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 12 eBook and InQuizitive

Week 15 (starting April 20)

Topic: The Federal Courts

Readings: Chapter 13 in “We The People”

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 13 eBook and InQuizitive + Discussion Assignment

Week 16 (April 27)

Topic: Domestic Policy

Other Course Policies**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.

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.

Accessibility and Testing

If you anticipate needing accommodations due to the impact of a disability or medical

condition, you must register for services with Accessibility and Testing. Additional information can be found here: <https://accessibility.uga.edu/>

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/>

UGA Student Honor Code

You are required to commit to the 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 <https://honesty.uga.edu/>

Preferred Name

Class rosters are provided to the instructor 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.

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
- * Accessibility and Testing: 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>.