POLS 1101E:
Introduction to American Government
Spring 2026

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

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. Lean 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 in a timely fashion. There will also be weekly reading and discussion/reflection assignments that will be due every Friday. Since this is an online class, a reliable internet connection is a necessity. I would discourage you from completing quizzes or assignments on your phone or public Wi-Fi spots like the airport.

Please note that this class has a main instructor (that's me – Dr. Bankert! ☺) and six Teaching Assistants (TA). Each TA is responsible for two of the twelve sections in this class (see their names, email addresses, and sections below). You can identify your sections by checking your Athena registration for this course. Your TA is responsible for grading your assignments, paper, exams, and quizzes, so please make sure you know who your TA is in case you have questions.

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**

Please note that you can also buy the textbook in an electronic format with the InQuizitive code at a more affordable rate here: **https://digital.wwnorton.com/wethepeople15ess**

Required Technology & Communication
There are three main technologies we use in this class: eLC, and InQuizitive.

<u>eLC</u>
Our course is mainly administered through eLC. You will find all our course materials on this website, so please check it on a regular basis.

My primary means of communication with the class will be through announcements posted in eLC. Makes sure you receive eLC updates for our class automatically via email (eLC > Click on your profile > Notifications > Instant Notifications).

<u>InQuizitive</u>
InQuizitive is an adaptive learning tool that accompanies your textbook. We will post weekly InQuizitive assignments to eLC. The first time you access InQuizitive, you will need to enter a registration code that can be purchased with your textbook. InQuizitive is linked to our gradebook in eLC, so please access "InQuizitve" only through eLC.

Feeling Lost? Here is How To Reach Us!
This class has multiple sections. Every section is assigned to a specific teaching assistant (short: TA). Please identify your section and your TA by checking Athena. This is an important step since your TA is responsible for grading your participation, assignments, quizzes, and exams.

Email Etiquette

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. Just as a heads-up: You cannot reply to an email I send out via eLC (ending in @uga.view.usg.edu). If you do, the email will bounce back, and I 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: 949 4185 2071 and the passcode is 023167. Your TA's office hours are listed on their eLC page.

How We Evaluate Your Work: Quizzes, Exams, and Other Assignments

Multiple-Choice Exam: There will be one cumulative online open-book/open-note exam that will primarily consist of multiple-choice questions with varying levels of difficulty. Some of the test questions may be challenging, but that is necessary when in an open-book and open-note course. We cannot provide make-up exams for travel on the exam day unless it qualifies as an official excuse under UGA policy.

Readings and Quizzes: The required readings typically include one chapter of the textbook per week. If any additional readings are assigned, they will be accessible electronically either vial eLC or via the UGA library system (https://www.libs.uga.edu/). It is important that you stay current with these readings so that you can follow along with lectures and participate in online discussions. I would strongly recommend you finish the readings before you complete any assignments. Over the course of the semester, there will be 4 short quizzes on eLC (3-5 questions) based on prior lectures and assigned readings so make sure you are familiar with each chapter's key terms.We cannot provide make-up exams for travel on the exam day unless it qualifies as an official excuse under UGA policy.

Quizzes & Exams for Students Registered with the DRC

If you are registered with the DRC 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.

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. Please note that if you miss a quiz while taking one of your freebies, you won't be eligible for a makeup quiz.

Weekly InQuizitive: "InQuizitive" tests your comprehension of the assigned readings. To access it on eLC, you will need to enter the code that comes with your textbook. These assignments must be completed via eLC and are due every Friday at 11:59pm of each week. If you complete the assignments through an external website, we will not be able to give you any credit for it. So please access "InQuizitive" only through eLC. (Note that bookmarking the InQuizitive website does not work either. You need to use the link I post on eLC every Monday).

Weekly Discussion Assignments: There will be weekly discussion assignments that should demonstrate your critical reflection on the material covered in your readings and in the lectures. There are certain standards that your discussion posts need to meet to be given a high participation grade. To help you create high quality posts, I specified these standards in the list below:

1) When writing your post, please pay attention to grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
2) Be polite and professional, especially when you disagree with an author, a piece of scholarship, or a classmate.
3) A paragraph entails about 4-5 sentences.
4) Discussion posts need to address all components of the assignment prompt.
5) Discussion posts need to entail references to the assigned readings and/or lecture materials. This can be in-text citations or general references such as "According to the lecture…/According to the textbook on page XX". A "work cited" list is only required if you consult outside sources that I did not assign.
6) After you post your discussion contribution, please respond to at least one other student's post in the discussion forum.

Unless explicitly stated, artificial intelligence-based technologies, such as ChatGPT, must not be used to generate responses for assignments.

Online Research Survey: You are required to participate in an online research survey. The study will take approximately 20-25 minutes and will provide you with an understanding of political science research. The survey consists of multiple questions about your political opinions. All answers remain completely anonymous.

Grading Breakdown by Percentage
Midterm Exam: 20%
Final Exam: 30%
Quizzes: 15%
InQuizitive: 15%
Weekly Discussion Assignments: 15%
Participation in 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.

When To Expect Grades
You can expect grades for your quizzes and exams 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. We will provide a mid-semester update on your participation. 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 <u>within two weeks</u> 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.

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. <u>If you are uncertain about using a particular tool to support your work, please consult with me before using it.</u> We do conduct AI checks of <u>every</u> 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

Week 1
Topic: Introduction to the Class
Readings: Read the syllabus *carefully*. You can find it on eLC under "Course Documents".

Week 2
Topic: The Citizen & The Government
Readings: Chapter 1 in "We The People" & Constitution of the United States of America
Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 1 on InQuizitive

Week 3
Topic: The Founding and the Constitution
Readings: Chapter 2 in "We The People" & Declaration of Independence & Georgia Constitution
Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 2 on InQuizitive

Week 4
Topic: Federalism
Readings: Chapter 3 in "We The People" & The Federalist Papers
Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 3 on InQuizitive

Week 5
Topic: Civil Liberties
Readings: Chapter 4 in "We The People" & Georgia Bill of Rights
Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 4 on InQuizitive

Week 6
Topic: Civil Rights
Readings: Chapter 5 in "We The People" & Emancipation Proclamation & Letter from Birmingham Jail & Gettysburg Address
Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 5 on InQuizitive

Week 7
Topic: Public Opinion
Readings: Chapter 6 in "We The People"
Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 6 on InQuizitive

Week 8
Topic: The Media
Readings: Chapter 7 in "We The People"
Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 7 on InQuizitive

Week 9
Topic: Political Parties and Interest Groups
Readings: Chapter 8 in "We The People"
Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 8 on InQuizitive

Week 10
Topic: Participation, Campaigns, and Elections
Readings: Chapter 9 in "We The People"
Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 9 on InQuizitive

Week 11
Topic: Congress
Readings: Chapter 10 in "We The People"
Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 10 on InQuizitive

Week 12
Topic: The Presidency
Readings: Chapter 11 in "We The People"
Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 11 on InQuizitive

Week 13
Topic: The Bureaucracy (it is not going to be as boring as it sounds)
Readings: Chapter 12 in "We The People"

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 12 on InQuizitive

Week 14
Topic: The Federal Courts
Readings: Chapter 13 in "We The People"
Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 13 on InQuizitive

Week 15
Topic: Domestic Policy
Readings: Chapter 14 in "We The People"
Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 14 on InQuizitive

Week 16
Topic: Foreign Policy
Readings: Chapter 15 in "We The People"
Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 15 on InQuizitive

Other Important 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.