

**AMERICAN GOVERNMENT-HONORS**  
**POLS 1101H**  
**[CRN: 64829]**  
**Spring 2026**

**Instructor:** Professor Hood  
**Office:** Baldwin Hall 103 D  
**Phone:** 706-583-0554  
**E-Mail:** [th@uga.edu](mailto:th@uga.edu)  
**Course Website:** [ELC](#)  
**Office Hours:** M-F by appointment

**Required Reading Materials**

Required Texts (Available at Off-Campus, Baxter Street Books, or Campus Bookstore):

- The Logic of American Politics, 12<sup>th</sup> ed. (978-1-0719-2953-7) [KJKVR]
- *Checks and Balances? How A Parliamentary System Could Change American Politics* [M&C]
- *U.S. Constitution* [C] (Appendix 3 in KJKVJ)

**Course Overview**

Students will gain a more complete understanding of the basic organization and functions of the United States and Georgia governments through a series of assigned readings and lectures. Emphasis will be placed on learning basic concepts and ideas concerning how our government actually works (or fails to work). After successfully completing this course you will hopefully be able to comprehend, and meaningfully participate in, the American political process.

In addition to covering the *basics* of the American political system, two additional themes will be examined in greater detail:

- The unique structure of the U.S. political system and resulting consequences
- A second topic to be analyzed will be voted on by the class from a list of possibilities I will provide.

Monday and Wednesday meetings will normally be reserved for lectures on general topical areas, while Friday sessions will be used to focus on the themes outlined above. Students are expected to read the assigned materials prior to the class meeting and be prepared to engage in a discussion of the topic at hand.

**Course Requirements/Expectations**

*Exams:* You are expected to take all three of the regularly scheduled exams as well as the final. The grade earned on the final exam, in addition to counting for the assigned 16% of a student's grade, may also be substituted for the lowest grade earned from Exams 1-3. In the event that a student misses one of the exams scheduled during the semester (Exams 1-3), the normal procedure will be to substitute the final exam grade (Exam 4) for the missed exam.

*Essays:* Students will be required to complete two essays during the course of the semester. The first will focus on the structure of the U.S. system of government and will directly relate to our Friday discussions of *Checks and Balances? How A Parliamentary System Could Change American Politics*. The second essay will be centered on the presidential election system in the United States. The second essay will be determined based on the topic selected by the class.



**Course Outline<sup>3</sup>**

| <b>Date</b> | <b>Topic</b>   | <b>Required Readings</b>   |
|-------------|--|--|
| 1/12        | Why do we need government?                             | KJKVJ, Ch. 1   |
| 1/14        | Obstacles to Collective Action                         | KJKVJ, Ch. 1   |
| 1/16        | The U.S. and Georgia Constitutions                     | KJKVJ, Ch. 2; C, Articles V & VII  |
| 1/19        | <b>MLK Holiday</b>                                     |  |
| 1/21        | The U.S. and Georgia Constitutions Cont.               | KJKVJ, Ch. 2   |
| 1/23        | The American System—Too Unresponsive?                  | M&C, Ch. 1   |
| 1/26        | Federalism   | KJKVJ, Ch. 3; C, Article VI, Article I, Section 8, 10 <sup>th</sup> and 14 <sup>th</sup> Amendments        |
| 1/28        | Federalism Cont.                                       | KJKVJ, Ch. 3   |
| 1/30        | Comparing the American and British Systems             | M&C, Ch. 2   |
| 2/2         | <b>Exam 1</b>  |  |
| 2/4         | Public Opinion   | KJKVJ, Ch. 10  |
| 2/6         | The Contract with America                              | M&C, Ch. 3   |
| 2/9         | Public Opinion Cont.                                   | KJKVJ, Ch. 10  |
| 2/11        | The Role of the Media                                  | KJKVJ, Ch. 14  |
| 2/13        | The Founders' Viewpoint                                | Readings from the <i>Federalist Papers</i> [Electronic]  |
| 2/16        | The Role of the Media Cont.                            | KJKVJ, Ch. 14  |
| 2/18        | Political Parties                                      | KJKVJ, Ch. 12  |
| 2/20        | Reform Ideas for the American System                   | M&C, Ch. 5   |
| 2/23        | Political Parties Cont.                                | KJKVJ, Ch. 12  |
| 2/25        | <b>Exam 2</b>  |  |
| 2/27        | <b>Essay 1 Due;</b> Discussion of Your Counterfactuals |  |
| 3/2         | Campaigns and Elections                                | KJKVJ, Ch. 11; C, 15 <sup>th</sup> , 19 <sup>th</sup> , 24 <sup>th</sup> , and 26 <sup>th</sup> Amendments |

<sup>3</sup>I reserve the right to make minor modifications to this schedule throughout the semester as the need may arise.

|        |   |   |
|--------|---|---|
| 3/4    | Campaigns and Elections Cont.   | KJKVJ, Ch. 11   |
| 3/6    | TBA   |   |
| 3/9-13 | <b>Spring Break</b>   |   |
| 3/16   | Interest Groups Cont.   | KJKVJ, Ch. 13   |
| 3/18   | Interest Groups   | KJKVJ, Ch. 13   |
| 3/20   | TBA   |   |
| 3/23   | The Legislatures—U.S./Georgia   | KJKVJ, Ch. 6  |
| 3/25   | Legislatures—U.S./Georgia   | KJKVJ, Ch. 6; C, Article I  |
| 3/27   | TBA   |   |
| 3/30   | <b>Exam 3</b>   |   |
| 4/1    | The Executive—The President/The Georgia Governor                                  | KJKVJ, Ch. 7; C, Article II, 22 <sup>nd</sup> and 25 <sup>th</sup> Amendments |
| 4/3    | TBA   |   |
| 4/6    | The Executive—The President/The Georgia Governor Cont.                            | KJKVJ, Ch. 7  |
| 4/8    | Presidential Primaries and Elections<br><b>Midpoint Withdrawal Deadline (4/9)</b> | Electronic Readings   |
| 4/10   | TBA   |   |
| 4/13   | The Bureaucracy   | KJKVJ, Ch. 8  |
| 4/15   | The Bureaucracy Cont.   | KJKVJ, Ch. 8  |
| 4/17   | TBA   |   |
| 4/20   | The Judicial Branch—U.S./Georgia  | KJKVJ, Ch. 9; C, Article III  |
| 4/22   | The Judicial Branch—U.S./Georgia Cont.  | KJKVJ, Ch. 9  |
| 4/24   | <b>Last Day of Class; Essay 2 Due;</b><br>Discussion of Your Essays               |   |
| 5/4    | <b>FINAL EXAM</b> (Exam 4); 9:00-11:00 a.m.                                       |   |

### Primary Source Documents

Students should familiarize themselves with these key historical documents from American history. These documents or links to these documents are available on the ELC page for this course.

- U.S. Constitution and Amendments
- Georgia Constitution and Amendments
- Declaration of Independence
- Articles of Confederation
- Federalist Papers
- Gettysburg Address
- Emancipation Proclamation
- Letter from Birmingham Jail

### Institutional Competencies

- **Critical Thinking** [CT]: The ability to pursue and comprehensively evaluate information before accepting or establishing a conclusion, decision, or action.
- **Analytical Thinking** [AT]: The ability to reason, interpret, analyze, and solve problems from a wide array of authentic contexts.
- **Communication** [C]: The ability to effectively develop, express, and exchange ideas in written, oral, or visual form.

### Student Learning Outcomes

- **SLO No. 1:** Students will learn to articulate competing positions on various political topics. [CT, C]
- **SLO No. 2:** 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. [CT, AT]
- **SLO No. 3:** 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. [AT]
- **SLO No. 4:** Students will learn the philosophical and institutional foundations of the U.S. political system, including the State of Georgia, and examine primary sources over time, including the Declaration of Independence, the Federalist Papers, the U.S. and Georgia Constitutions, among others. [AT]
- **SLO No. 5:** Students will demonstrate an ability to engage in respectful discussion and civil debate on American politics that are associated with multiple points of view. [C]

### 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](http://honesty.uga.edu).

## 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](https://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](https://well-being.uga.edu)
- Student Care and Outreach: [sco.uga.edu](https://sco.uga.edu)
- University Health Center: [healthcenter.uga.edu](https://healthcenter.uga.edu)
- Counseling and Psychiatric Services: [caps.uga.edu](https://caps.uga.edu) or CAPS 24/7 crisis support at 706-542-2273
- Health Promotion/ Fontaine Center: [healthpromotion.uga.edu](https://healthpromotion.uga.edu)
- Disability Resource Center and Testing Services: [drc.uga.edu](https://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>.