



**UNIVERSITY OF
GEORGIA**

School of Public and International Affairs
Department of Political Science

POLS 1101: American Government

Monday/Wednesday 8:15-9:35

Room: 307 Baldwin Hall

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 11:30 – 12:30

Course 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.

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Text

Please make sure to match the ISBN to the book that you purchase. There is a link in ELC and the UGA Bookstore should have the correct version. You need to purchase the book along with the accompanying online access which is called Connect. The cost of the online textbook plus access to Connect should be \$90. If you want a physical copy of the book, the cost of the book plus online access to Connect should be \$120.

The book is Thomas E. Patterson, [*We the People*](#) from McGraw-Hill. If you purchase the access code the ISBN should be 9781266820045. If you purchase online through McGraw-Hill, the ISBN should be 9781265396268. If you purchase the book plus Connect the ISBN should be 9781265771577.

Readings on ELC/Connect:

- The Declaration of Independence
- The Articles of Confederation
- The US Constitution
- The Bill of Rights in the US Constitution
- Federalist Papers
- The Gettysburg Address
- Emancipation Proclamation
- Georgie State Constitution and Bill of Rights
- Martin Luther King's Letter from a Birmingham Jail

Student Learning Objectives

1. Students will learn to articulate competing positions on political topics in assignments.
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, and communicate their findings in written, verbal, and graphical formats.
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.
4. Students will learn the philosophical and constitutional foundations of the US political system, including the state of Georgia, and examine primary sources over time, including the Declaration of Independence, Federalist Papers, the US and Georgia Constitutions, among others.
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.

TOPICAL OUTLINE

The U.S. Constitution
The Georgia Constitution
Federalism
Civil Rights
Civil Liberties
Congress
The Presidency
The Bureaucracy
The Legal System
Public Opinion

Voting, Campaigns, and Elections
Political Parties
Interest Groups
The News Media
Domestic Policy
Foreign Policy

Grading

SmartBook Questions: 20%
Project: 20%
Final: 30%
Letter: 10%
Public Forum: 10%
Pop Quizzes: 10%
Class Participation: +/-

Students who text, browse social media, shop online, or otherwise disrupt the class will receive a reduction in their overall grade. If a student is disrupting the class through the use of electronics, the student will be asked to leave and may be withdrawn from the class. No electronic devices may be used when we have a guest speaker.

Grading Scale:

A = 94-100
A - = 90-93
B+ = 86-89
B = 83-85
B- = 80-82
C+ = 76-79
C = 73-75
C- = 70-72
D+ = 66-69
D = 63-65
D- = 60-62
F = 0-59

Important Class Dates

Classes Begin: January 12
MLK Day: Jan 19
Withdrawal Deadline: April 9
Spring Break: March 9-13
Classes End: April 27
Final Exam: May 4, 8-11am
SmartBook Questions Due: April 27
Project Due: April 13
Letter to Public Official Due: April 13
Public Forum Due: April 13

Syllabus Policy

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

I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus if necessary. It can be difficult to project how long sections will take to cover. Other situations may indicate the need for changes in the assignments, so please pay attention in class. If you have questions, please ask.

Late Work

Assignments turned in late will be assigned a penalty for each day that an assignment is late (including weekends). The typical late penalty is ten points per day, but it may vary depending on circumstances. Assignments turned in after the deadline but on the day it is due will be given a partial penalty.

Honor Code

As a University of Georgia student, you have agreed to abide by the University's academic honesty policy, "A Culture of Honesty," and the Student Honor Code. All academic work must meet the standards described in "A Culture of Honesty" found at: <https://honesty.uga.edu>. Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation. This means I expect you to follow the rules of this course and not use outside assistance on any quizzes, writing assignments, presentations, tests, or other work unless authorized by the assignment. Please ask if you have questions.

Under the honor code, you have agreed to the statement below:

"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.

Accessibility and Testing

If you anticipate needing classroom or exam 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 at <https://accessibility.uga.edu>

Withdrawal Policy

UGA's withdrawal policy can be found at <http://www.reg.uga.edu/policies/withdrawals>.

Attendance Policy

Class participation is a very important part of the learning process in this course. Although not explicitly graded, you will be evaluated on the QUALITY of your contributions and insights. Quality comments possess one or more of the following properties:

- Offers a different and unique, but relevant, perspective;
- Contributes to moving the discussion and analysis forward;
- Assists in the learning process
- Demonstrates an understanding of the assigned material
- Includes evidence, argumentation, or recognition of contrasting values or tradeoffs (ie critical thinking)
- Demonstrates analytical thinking – especially using information or expertise learned outside of this class

Your participation is especially helpful for borderline grades. While your participation grade is subjective, it will not be random or arbitrary. And, clearly, more frequent quality comments are better than less frequent quality comments.

The decision to excuse an absence is the responsibility of the class instructor. Under certain circumstances, the Office of Student Care and Outreach may certify the legitimacy of absences.

The Office of Student Care and Outreach does not excuse or verify routine absences. The decision to excuse an absence, allow make-up work, or reschedule or make up an exam is entirely at the discretion of each faculty member or instructor.

Students who miss a significant amount of class (generally more than one week) and have documentation that helps provide verification of the legitimacy of the absences may provide that documentation to the instructor. If there are compelling privacy concerns, Student Care and Outreach will review the documentation at the request of the student and/or instructor. If the documentation appears sufficient to establish verification of the legitimacy of the absences, Student Care and Outreach will send a memo to the student's instructor(s) notifying the instructor(s) that the student has provided sufficient documentation of legitimate reasons for the absence. This memo will inform the instructor's decisions regarding whether to and/or how to accommodate or excuse any absences. The decision to excuse an absence, allow make-up work, or reschedule or make up an exam is entirely at the discretion of each faculty member or instructor.

The attendance policy can be found at <https://policy.uga.edu/policies/#/programs/SJTfnNAUp>.

Prohibition on Recording Lectures

In the absence of written authorization from the UGA Disability Resource Center, students may not make a visual or audio recording of any aspect of this course. Students who have a recording accommodation agree in writing that they:

- Will use the records only for personal academic use during the specific course.
- Understand that faculty members have copyright interest in their class lectures and that they agree not to infringe on this right in any way.
- Understand that the faculty member and students in the class have privacy rights and agree not to violate those rights by using recordings for any reason other than their own personal study.
- Will not release, digitally upload, broadcast, transcribe, or otherwise share all or any part of the recordings. They also agree that they will not profit financially and will not allow others to benefit personally or financially from lecture recordings or other course materials.
- Will erase/delete all recordings at the end of the semester.
- Understand that violation of these terms may subject them to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct or subject them to liability under copyright laws.

Artificial Intelligence Software

Artificial intelligence (AI) is a tool that will be part of the future. We will discuss in class how it may be used. If AI is used on an assignment, it should be explicitly stated and an explanation of how it was used should be included. Failure to include that AI was used and how it was used will constitute academic dishonesty. AI is not allowed for book questions, quizzes, or other assignments unless expressly authorized.

Preferred Name and Pronouns

Please let me know how you would like me to refer to you and/or what to call you. I'm happy to oblige to your preference of name and pronouns. My pronouns are he, him, his. As a student in this class, it is most appropriate to refer to me as Dr. Newton.

Email/Contact Etiquette

I want to help you succeed and achieve greatness. UGA students are enormously capable, and I am constantly impressed with what you all accomplish. However, I don't know you and my impression of you is based on our interactions and how you communicate with me. For that reason, it is a good idea to be respectful in our communications. Here are my suggestions:

- Please email me from your UGA email address. This helps me know who you are and connect you with this class.
- Please do not email me through ELC. I have missed those emails in the past and I am afraid I might not see your email. It is best to email me from your UGA email account.
- Please understand that I may post your email and my response on ELC. I started this practice because many students have similar questions. I don't post every email on ELC, because the email may not pertain to class questions. If you email me questions about tests, what we are supposed to be reading, about concepts or anything we are learning – I may post your question and my reply to benefit others in the class.
- It is best to be respectful of everyone. You never know when that may come in handy for a recommendation, a suggestion, or something else. Talk to other people in the class (and in all your classes). Take a moment to say something nice to someone and be supportive of each other. We are stronger together.

UGA Well-Being and Involvement

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>.

My recommendation for additional resources that may be useful:

- Rec Sports – <https://recsports.uga.edu> - stay healthy and have fun. I encourage you to maintain a fitness routine as this is great for physical and mental health. Also – if you go on an outdoor trip, I would love to hear about it so I can live vicariously through you.
- Georgia Museum of Art – not part of the well-being initiative, but you should visit. Take a break and walk around. It is free, on campus, and a great place to spend some time. <https://georgiamuseum.org>.
- UGA Involvement Network – <https://uga.campuslabs.com/engage>
- The UGA Police – 706-542-2200: You can contact them 24/7. They work for UGA and can connect you to on call mental health, help fix broken lights, or whatever you might need. You can also use the UGA Safe app to text the police anytime.

Emergencies

In the case of an emergency in class we will take the following actions. If there is a tornado warning, we will proceed to the lowest floor in the building for shelter. If there is a fire, we will quickly exit the building.

The class will reconvene in the walkway behind the cemetery next to Baldwin Hall in an attempt to make sure everyone exited the building. If there is a medical emergency, I will ask students to flag down the emergency vehicles outside the building and lead them to our room. As needed, I may ask a student to get the nearest AED which is outside room 101D. Students are encouraged to make sure their information in UGA Alert is accurate and to download the UGA Safe app.

Exam/Assignment make-ups

Makeup exams will not be offered unless previously scheduled because of extenuating circumstances or in the event of a verifiable emergency. Similarly, the due dates for assignments such as papers are not negotiable unless a true emergency warrants further consideration. Turning in a late paper will significantly reduce the grade. Late work may not be accepted. If any late work is accepted, the reduction in grade is at the sole discretion of the instructor.

Class Project

You will be required to complete a project this semester. Please ask if you have questions. The project will be to choose a topic from the topics provided and produce some type of work (see the types of work) that could persuade an audience to favor one side over the other. In other words, you are creating persuasive work based on the topic and side of the topic you choose.

This should be your original work. Downloading a presentation by someone else, photos by someone else, artwork by someone else, etc does not count. If you are unsure, please ask! Submit your project in the assignments section on ELC.

Type of work:

Narrated PowerPoint (narrated by you in your voice and with a video of you). Limit of 7 minutes.

- This is probably what I would do because I am a very linear thinker. You are basically recording yourself doing a presentation. Microsoft has support articles on how to do this and Microsoft Office 365 is free for you as a UGA student.

Podcast in your voice (limit of 7 minutes)

- This can be done by you alone or you can work with classmates.

Video with you in it (limit of 7 minutes)

- This could be you alone or a debate with classmates.

Artwork with a written explanation

- Think of something like Francisco Goya's *The Third of May, 1808* or something by Jacques-Louis David. You must provide me with a written explanation.

Song with a written explanation

- Protest songs are numerous. Almost all songs have some sort of meaning or purpose. If there are enough people in the class to form a band this could count for the entire group that performs the song.

Photo or series of photos with a written explanation

- There are so many famous photos that caused change. This could be photos of people not able to vote, photos of weddings, photos of religious events, etc. This should be photos that you take not photos that you collect off of the internet.

Something else that I did not think of with approval.

Be creative in your type of work. You cannot write an essay or research paper. Choose a form of expression and make an argument for the side you want.

Topics:(You can be for or against)

A wedding photographer should be able to refuse service for same sex and/or interracial couples based on religious beliefs.

The death penalty should be abolished because it is unfairly used against minority groups.

Companies like Facebook, Google, X, YouTube, TikTok and others should not be able to discriminate or limit users content based on political views, hate speech, or obscenity. These are public forums and limiting speech violates our value of free speech.

The University of Georgia should offer automatic admission to any Georgia student that finishes in the top three percent of his/her graduating high school class.

The University of Georgia should eliminate the Office of Academic and Community Engagement because it is just another name for an office of diversity which was supposed to be eliminated.

The state of Georgia should use an independent committee to determine the boundaries of voting districts to avoid gerrymandering similar to what is used in Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Michigan, Montana, New York, and Washington.

Georgia should repeal SB 202 known as the Election Integrity act of 2021. This bill removed 24/7 voting drop boxes, eliminated mobile voting units, and decreased the availability of absentee ballots. [You can argue for any changes to Georgia voting laws – increase the available voting hours, increase or decrease voter ID laws, increase voter security, etc]. For criticism of Georgia see <https://dpo.org/party/resolutions/2021-resolutions/resolution-2021-06-regarding-georgias-voter-suppression-law/>.

UGA students should be allowed to carry guns of any type in the dorms, at sporting events, and any places on campus where students are legally allowed to be.

Political Science 1101, American Government, should not be a mandatory class at UGA.

Businesses in Georgia must limit the pay of their highest paid employees to no more than 100 times the pay of the lowest full-time employee of that company.

The federal government should adopt a flat tax. [You can advocate for any taxation change you might want].

Georgia should adopt a minimum wage of \$15/hour. This minimum wage should be adjusted for inflation each year.

The federal government should eliminate the Department of Education. This is primarily a state government function. This would decrease the size of government and save taxpayer money.

The Electoral College should be eliminated. The President of the United States should be elected based on popular vote. (or any other voting method you want – proportional, etc)

The most pressing issue facing the federal government is the national deficit. Entitlement programs such as social security, Medicare and Medicaid should be limited and greatly reduced in order to decrease the deficit.

The United States should greatly reduce all tariffs to increase free trade.

The United States should end all aid to Israel until an independent Palestinian State is established.

Please let me know if there is a topic not listed that you would prefer.

Public Forum

Students are required to attend a public forum either in person or virtually. The purpose of this is for the students to experience civic engagement.

Each student will choose a public forum to attend. This should be a local or state government forum. Examples of this are local commission meetings, local planning meetings, police oversight meetings, local budget meetings, etc. Students can choose to attend any local or state forum in any jurisdiction. All commission meetings for Athens-Clarke County are streamed live. For more information go to <https://www.accgov.com/176/Mayor-Commission-Meetings>.

To get credit for attending a meeting, students will answer questions using the form link posted on ELC. The form will ask questions such as the date/time/location of the forum, a significant issue discussed at the forum, the different sides of the issue, etc. Students need to be able to explain an issue discussed during the forum and explain the different sides of the issue demonstrating an understanding of the issue.

Your answers should be thorough. I suggest reading the questionnaire prior to attending/watching the forum. The purpose of the survey is to let me know that you paid attention and understand the issues. You should also be able to explain the issues to me in a way that I understand the issue. There should be at least two sides and you should explain each side. I expect at least two paragraphs on the question that asks you to explain the different sides of the issue. Your grade is based on how well you explain the issues and how well you answer the questions. This assignment is not difficult, but students who put one sentence answers or who do not demonstrate an understanding of the issues should expect to receive low grades.

To get credit you must fill out the survey prior to the date and time listed on ELC. The link is on ELC.

Write Your Public Official

You must write a letter to a member of the Georgia Legislature. You do not have to send the letter. You may write about any issue. In the letter you should advocate for your public official to take a position on some issue that is within his/her authority and related to his/her elected position. This is interpreted broadly, but you should aim your letter at the appropriate level of government. The public official should be someone for whom you are a constituent (ie Georgia Legislature, Congressperson, Senator, etc). Letter must be submitted on ELC. You may use AI to write the letter and you may want to submit it to AI more than one time.

A few tips for the letter:

- Make sure it is aimed at the appropriate level of government. If you are writing about a local issue, the letter should be addressed to a local official. If you are writing about a state issue, the letter should be addressed to a state official, etc.
- Make sure it is a letter. You can check out some letter style examples at [Examples of business letter format. – The Writing Center – UW–Madison](#).
 - Make sure to include a mailing address that is in the district of the elected official
 - Include some easy contact information (ie email/phone) so your elected representative can get back to you about your issue
- If you don't know what interests you, consider looking at the social media of your representative and seeing what issues they have posted about. You may find you agree or disagree with them.
- Make sure to explain the issue in your letter.

- Your letter should be easy to read and follow. Elected officials get lots of letters and emails. The more difficult it is for them to understand your issue, the less likely they are to consider your views.
- Make sure you are explicit about what you want your elected representative to do. There are a wide variety of reasons to write a letter. You may want your elected official to vote on a bill, write a piece of legislation, contact someone on your behalf, to make them aware of a problem, to oppose an appointment, etc.

You can find your legislator at <https://pluralpolicy.com/find-your-legislator/> and <https://georgia.gov/who-represents-you>.

Final Exam

The final exam will be a multiple choice exam on ELC and you can use any resource other than a human for the final exam. I'll make the final available for several days including the day of the final exam.

SmartBook Questions

These are provided by your textbook. A link to them is on ELC. Complete the questions for each chapter. The due date for all questions is listed above in the important dates section.

Question Submissions for Extra Credit

You may submit one question on ELC for the material covering Georgia. These are the sections on the Georgia Constitution, Georgia Judicial Branch, Georgia Executive Branch, and the Georgia Legislature. This is extra credit and not required. Questions should be submitted in the discussion section on ELC under the appropriate chapter/section. You may submit one question for each topic for a total of up to four questions. Your questions should be multiple choice and you must provide the answer as well as an explanation of the answer. For each question submitted, you will receive an additional point on the final exam. You are not limited to the information provided to you on ELC from which to create questions. Your question should be unique and not duplicate a question posted by another student. You may not use AI for this assignment.

If you submit a question, but you do not provide an answer, you will not get credit. If you submit a question, but you do not submit an explanation of the answer, you will not get credit.

Course Schedule (changes announced in class)

Week 1 (starting January 12)

Readings: Chapters 1

Critical Thinking and Political Culture: Becoming a Responsible Citizen

Week 2 (starting January 19)

Readings: Chapter 2

Constitutional Democracy: Promoting Liberty and Self Government

Week 3 (starting January 26)

Readings: Chapter 3

Federalism

Bill to Govern POLS 1101 on January 22

Week 4 (starting February 2)

Readings: Chapters 4

Civil Liberties

Week 5 (starting February 9)

Readings: Chapters 5

Equal Rights

Week 6 (starting February 16)

Readings: Chapters 6

Public Opinion

Week 7 (starting February 23)

Readings: Chapters 7

Political Participation

Week 8 (starting March 9)

Readings: Chapter 8 & 9

Political Parties; Interest Groups

Week 9 (starting March 16)

Readings: Chapter 9

Interest Groups

Week 10 (starting March 23)

Readings: Chapter 10

Media

Week 11 (starting March 30)

Readings: Chapter 11

Congress

Week 12 (starting April 6)

Readings: Chapter 12

The Presidency

Week 13 (starting April 13)

Readings: Chapter 14

The Judiciary

Week 14 (starting April 20)

Readings: Chapter 15 & 16

Economic and Environmental Policy; Social Policy

Week 15 (starting April 27)

Readings: Chapter 17

Foreign Policy

Reading Day: April 28

Final Exam: