

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT
POLS 1101E
Summer 2026

Instructor: Dr. Katelyn Stauffer
Office: Online
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Course Time: Asynchronous
Office Hours: Virtual, by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

- Understanding politics is an important part of being an American citizen. As we navigate an increasingly polarized environment, understanding politics is particularly important. No matter your future career path, politics will shape your life; indeed, politics have already shaped all of our lives! The goal of this class is to provide students with an introduction to the central topics of American politics. After completing this course students should be able to engage in questions about the government such as: How can citizens interact with political actors? How do we convey our interests to elected officials? Whose interests are represented? Whose are not? How do political institutions function?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Following completion of this course students should be able to do the following:

- Understand the basic structures and features of American political institutions
- Understand how these features have changed overtime
- Synthesize arguments and produce evidence to support (or refute) empirical claims
- Understand the basic features of American public opinion and political behavior
- Understand how institutional features structure the nature of public opinion/behavior

REQUIRED READINGS

The required text for this course is :

Barbour, Christine, and Gerald C. Wright. *Keeping the Republic: Power and Citizenship in American Politics (Brief): 11th edition.*

- Physical Copy ISBN: 9781071929858
- Electronic Copy ISBN: 9781071929872
- NOTE: It does not matter to me which version of the text you choose; pick whatever makes your life easiest

Additionally, you will be required to read one of the following texts (hyperlinked below):

1. [The Declaration of Independence](#)
2. [The U.S. Constitution](#)
3. [Federalist Papers 10, 14, 21, 22, and 51](#)
4. [The Emancipation Proclamation](#)
5. [The Civil Rights Act of 1964](#)
6. [The Georgia State Constitution](#)

GRADING

Exams (75%): Students will take three exams during the course. Exams will be evenly spaced out over the course. Each exam will be worth 25% of your final grade. Exams will consist of 25 multiple choice questions, and 5 written identification questions. These exams will cover the material presented following the previous exam (i.e. these exams are not cumulative). You may take exams at any time you choose, but the exam must be submitted **by 11:59pm on the date it is due (dates listed below)**. There is no time limit for completing the exam. However, once you begin the exam you must finish and submit it within a single sitting.

Exam Due Dates

- Exam 1: 7/15
- Exam 2: 7/23
- Exam 3: 7/31

Reading Responses (15%): Students will be asked to write three one-page response papers about a textbook chapter during the summer (one reading response per module). Responses should be no more than one page and should address the following: key questions/concepts of the chapter, something that you learned from reading the chapter, questions that you have about the chapter (these could be things that are unclear about the chapter's content, or questions that extend on the material presented in the chapter). You are free to write about any three chapters covered in class. Responses are due on the following dates:

- Response 1: 7/15
- Response 2: 7/23
- Response 3: 7/31

Reading responses should be uploaded to ELC; document's should be labeled following the following format: LASTNAME_chapterXX.

Founding Documents Reflection (10%): As part of this course, you will be asked to read one "Founding Document" and write a reflection essay. The relevant founding documents are listed under the "Required Readings" section of the syllabus. You are required to select one of the listed documents to use as the basis for your essay (though you are encouraged to read more!). Reflections should be two pages and address the following questions: 1) what are your initial reactions to this document, 2)

what do you think the author's goals were in writing this document, and 3) relate this document to content covered in class and **incorporate 2 bold faced terms from the textbook**. Reflections are due on 7/2.

COURSE POLICIES

Modules/Assignment submission: Class content is broken up into three modules. Each module will have assigned chapters for you to read and a series of companion lecture videos. You will also be expected to complete one reading response and exam per module. Modules must be completed by their assigned date (see below). All content will be available on the first day of class and you are free to work as far ahead as you like; however, it is important to make sure you complete modules by their assigned deadline. In other words, if you want to complete all exams/content within the first week you can. But you cannot wait until the final week to complete all modules.

- Module 1 deadline: 7/15
- Module 2 deadline: 7/23
- Module 3 deadline: 7/31

Emails: When emailing the instructor, please include POLS 1101 in the subject line. Due to the high volume of emails I receive, this helps me to keep track of course related emails. **Emails that fail to include POLS 1101 in the subject line may not receive a response.**

Electronic Materials: I will post a series of lectures, videos, and other online materials related to the course topics. **Please note, that recordings of my lectures are meant for your consumption only and should not be posted anywhere/shared outside of our class.**

Grade Disputes: If you disagree with a grade you received on an assignment (or have questions about why you received the grade that you did), you should make an appointment with me. I will not have an extended discussion regarding grades via email. Students wishing to dispute a grade, must write a half page response explaining why they believe they deserve a different grade. This response should be emailed prior to setting up an online meeting. Please note however, **that I reserve the right to adjust students grades up OR down** upon review.

Office Hours: Office hours will be held virtually and by appointment. If you'd like to set up a meeting with me please email. I will then send you a link/instructions for our online meeting.

Late Assignments: Late assignments will NOT be accepted. Students who do not submit assignments on time will receive an automatic score of 0. In extenuating circumstances (death in the family, hospitalization, etc.) students may receive a short extension. In order to receive an extension, students must email the instructor **in advance of the deadline.**

Grading Scale: Grades are assigned based on the following percentages:

A: 93 and higher

A-: 90 - 92.9

B+: 87 - 89.9

B: 83 - 86.9
B-: 80 - 82.9
C+: 77 - 79.9
C: 73 - 76.9
C-: 70 - 72.9
D: 63 - 69.9
D-: 60 - 62.9
F: 59.9 and below

Did you read the syllabus? Prior to the start of the course I emailed the class asking you to read the syllabus before the start of class. If you followed my instructions please email me a picture of your favorite meme (with the subject line "POLS 1101 Extra Credit"). **Students who email me prior to 11:30am on 7/15 will receive 2 extra credit points on Exam 1.**

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The University of Georgia defines plagiarism as: "Using another's work as your own without correct citations." Examples include, but are not limited to:

- I. Directly quoting another's written or spoken words without quotation marks.
- II. Paraphrasing without attribution.
- III. Presenting someone else's original idea or theory as your own original work without attribution.
- IV. Using statistics, images, or data without recognizing who compiled them.
- V. Turning in work that another wrote as your own work.
- VI. Self-Plagiarism: Submitting an assignment for credit that has already been submitted, unless the current instructor authorizes its use prior to submission.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated, and any work that is plagiarized will receive an automatic 0. If you are unsure about what constitutes plagiarism or how to cite a particular source please contact me prior to turning in the assignment.

Cheating on exams will not be tolerated. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, looking at notes during the exam, copying or paraphrasing the answer of a fellow classmate, or relying on any materials/readings during the exam period. If students are caught cheating during any exam they will automatically receive a 0 for that exam.

You are also responsible for being aware of the other obligations/restriction outlined by the University of Georgia's Academic Honesty Policy. Additional information about the policy can be found here: https://honesty.uga.edu/Academic-Honesty-Policy/Prohibited_Conduct/.

STATEMENT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to establish eligibility through the Disability Resource Center. A memo of verification should be obtained from DRC. More information can be found here: <https://drc.uga.edu/>

If you have a disability that requires special arrangements please **register with DRC and inform me within the first week of class.**

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS RESOURCES

- If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit <https://sco.uga.edu/>.
- They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services.
- UGA has several resources for a student seeking mental health services (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) or crisis support (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies>).
- If you need help managing stress anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit BeWellUGA (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) for a list of FREE workshops, classes, mentoring, and health coaching led by licensed clinicians and health educators in the University Health Center.
- Additional resources can be accessed through the UGA App.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Module 1 (should be completed by 11:59pm on 7/15)

Introduction to the Course

Politics: Who Gets What, and How?

- Barbour and Wright, Chapter 1

American Citizens and Political Culture

- Barbour and Wright, Chapter 1

The Politics of the American Founding

- Barbour and Wright, Chapter 2

Federalism

- Barbour and Wright, Chapter 3

Civil Liberties

- Barbour and Wright, Chapter 4

Complete Exam 1

Complete Reading Response 1

Module 2 (should be completed by 11:59pm on 7/23)

Civil Rights

- Barbour and Wright, Chapter 5

Congress

- Barbour and Wright, Chapters 6

The Presidency

- Barbour and Wright, Chapters 7

The Bureaucracy

- Barbour and Wright, Chapter 8

The Courts

- Barbour and Wright, Chapter 9

Complete Exam 2

Complete Reading Response 2

Module 3 (should be completed by 11:59pm on 7/31)

Public Opinion

- Barbour and Wright, Chapter 10

Political Parties

- Barbour and Wright, Chapters 11

Interest Groups

- Barbour and Wright, Chapters 11

Voting, Campaigns, and Elections

- Barbour and Wright, Chapter 12

The Media

- Barbour and Wright, Chapter 13

Complete Exam 3

Complete Reading Response 3

Founding Documents Reflection due 7/31