

FALL 2026: POLS 1101E-AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

Instructor: Dr. Gbemende Johnson

Contact: gbemende.johnson@uga.edu or gj87340@uga.edu

Office: Baldwin 305B

Office Hours: Tuesday 2:00pm-3:30pm (in-person/virtual) and by appointment

Pre-Requisites: None

This course applies to Area V Social Sciences requirements of UGA's General Education Curriculum. It also satisfies the USG graduation requirements for demonstrating knowledge of both the U.S. and Georgia Constitutions.

Course Overview

The purpose of this course is to give students an introduction to the features of the American political system, and Georgia Politics. The study of American Government involves learning about the rules and processes that govern American institutions. In addition, learning about American government involves understanding individual and group conflict over resources, policy and political power. These conflicts shape the development of American government, continue to influence the decision-making of political leaders, and the distribution of political and economic resources.

This course will trace the development and foundations of the main institutions of American government as envisioned by the founders and expressed in the U.S. Constitution. Students will also learn how these institutions, such as Congress and federal courts, have developed procedures to adapt to modern-day issues and challenges. Additionally, students will gain an understanding of how elections, interest groups, and organizations facilitate public engagement with the American political system. We will also discuss the Georgia state political and institutional environment.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- 1) **FACTUAL KNOWLEDGE:** Throughout the course we will examine and analyze the history, conflicts, institutional structures, partisan components, and overall features of American government. **Facts matter** and students will **develop an informed factual foundation**, which is essential for effectively navigating the world of American politics (and the world in general).
- 2) **ANALYSIS:** Beyond acquiring knowledge about American politics, students will be able to **apply the principles and concepts** learned in this course to **develop reasoned and informed opinions** about current issues in American government.
- 3) **CLEAR COMMUNICATION:** Students should also be able to **articulate and express their opinions with logical arguments in a clear, effective, and persuasive manner**. Throughout the semester we will cover complex, controversial, salient, and "difficult" issues and students will be able to express their knowledge and opinions in written form. I also expect that students will respect the voices and perspectives of their peers.
- 4) **CREATIVITY:** Students should be able to think beyond the current state of American politics to consider ways in which to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of American governmental institutions. Students are encouraged to think "creatively" and "outside of the box," and will be able to **envision alternative policy solutions and institutional frameworks**.

Overall, I hope that students end the course with an appreciation of the value and importance of understanding how their government operates and affects their daily lives.

Course Format & Contact Information:

I serve as the main instructor for the course along with four teaching assistants. The teaching assistant for your section is listed below. Be sure to save their email information. In addition to communicating key information related to the course, responsibilities of 1101E teaching assistants include grading assignments and exams. When emailing your TA, be sure to include your Section CRN in your email.

Teaching Assistant	Section CRN	Email
Maddox Fenell	26578	maddoxfenell@uga.edu
Maddox Fenell	26579	maddoxfenell@uga.edu
Bonkyu Lim	26581	Bonkyu.Lim@uga.edu
Bonkyu Lim	26582	Bonkyu.Lim@uga.edu
Bonkyu Lim	26583	Bonkyu.Lim@uga.edu
Bonkyu Lim	26584	Bonkyu.Lim@uga.edu
Hasan Sourav	26585	Hasan.Sourav@uga.edu
Hasan Sourav	40431	Hasan.Sourav@uga.edu
Hasan Sourav	44861	Hasan.Sourav@uga.edu
Hasan Sourav	44862	Hasan.Sourav@uga.edu
Aleida Stevens	48783	Aleida.Stevens@uga.edu
Aleida Stevens	48786	Aleida.Stevens@uga.edu

When emailing me, please use gbemende.johnson@uga.edu or gj87340@uga.edu. **Please do not email me using gj87340@uga.view.usg.edu or any email address with @uga.view.usg.edu.** I do not receive emails sent to this address.

When emailing me or the TAs, please use respectful language in all communications. Please allow for at least 24 hours for a reply to emails sent Monday-Friday.

eLC and Content Posting

[This course is asynchronous with deadlines and a posting schedule.](#) All lecture and assignment instructions will be posted to eLC. Lectures will be posted by Monday morning of each week, with quizzes due on Friday by 11:59pm of each week. The schedule for submission of writing assignments appears on the syllabus and is also noted on eLC. All assignments will be submitted through eLC. Adequate and reliable internet access will be essential for effective participation in this course. I recommend that you avoid taking exams and quizzes on your phone.

Required Texts:

Kernell et al. *The Logic of American Politics*, 12th edition (TLAP).

I recommend the eBook version of the text.

<https://collegepublishing.sagepub.com/products/the-logic-of-american-politics-12-287750>

Disclaimer

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

Topical Outline

The U.S. Constitution/Georgia Founding
Federalism
Congress/Georgia Legislative Branch
The Presidency/Georgia Executive Branch
The Bureaucracy
The Federal Judiciary/Georgia Judiciary
Civil Rights
Civil Liberties
Public Opinion
Voting, Campaign, and Elections
Political Parties

Grading Breakdown

<i>Assignments</i>	Percentage
Exam 1 (Midterm)	22%
Exam 2 (Final)	25%
Quizzes	19%
<i>Syllabus Quiz</i>	1%
<i>Weekly Quizzes (x12)</i>	18%
Short Writing Assignments ¹	24%
<i>Reflections (x3)</i>	15%
<i>Discussion Posts (x3)</i> ²	9%
2026 Senate Election Paper	10%

Grading

100-94 A	89-87 B+	79-77 C+	69-67 D+	59-0 F
93-90 A-	86-83 B	76-73 C	66-63 D	
	82-80 B-	72-70 C-	62-60 D-	

¹ Reflections and Discussion Posts are both uploaded to the eLC assignment portal. Discussion Posts are *also* uploaded to the eLC Discussion Forum.

² One of the Discussion Posts is the 2026 Senate Election Prediction.

Course Decorum

My goal as the instructor is to cultivate an active and respectful learning environment where participants feel that their input is valued. I ask that we “treat others how we want to be treated” as we discuss and share our perspectives in the discussion post assignments. Insulting and offensive language is not acceptable in discussion posts assignments.

Academic Honesty

"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. You are responsible for knowing and complying with the policy and procedures relating to academic honesty. I expect all students to abide by the University of Georgia Academic Honesty policy. Academic dishonesty can include plagiarism, unauthorized assistance on assignments, and falsifying academic work. For more detail about what constitutes academic honesty, and consequences for engaging in dishonest conduct be sure to revisit Academic Honesty Policy | Home (uga.edu).

Assignment Authorship and Generative AI

Unauthorized use of artificial intelligence software, such as ChatGPT or word mixing software to write your paper, portions of your paper, or disguise plagiarized work is considered unauthorized assistance in this course.

Proofreading Tools and AI

Students are allowed to use proofreading tools to aid in improving the clarity of their original work. However, proofreading tools should **not** be used to generate “original content on your behalf” (adapted from Sarah Shannon).

Important: Written assignments will be assessed using Turnitin. A Turnitin report of at least **40% AI** will require a meeting with the TA and author.

Late Assignments, Quizzes, Exams

Writing Assignments

Late writing assignments will be penalized by a full letter grade for every 12-hour period that they are late (i.e., a B becomes a C).

Quizzes

Quizzes will be available each week from Monday morning to Friday at 11:59pm. Once you begin the quiz you will have 75 minutes to complete the quiz (exceptions for formal accommodations). Quizzes cannot be re-opened after the submission period. Quizzes are multiple choice.

Exams

You are expected to take exams on the day/time they are assigned. Make-up exams will only be considered in cases of jury duty and documented emergencies. If you have a conflict with an athletic/school event and exam day, please let me know as soon as possible in advance of the exam. Exams are multiple choice. Once you begin the midterm you will have 90 minutes to complete the exam. Once you begin the final exam you will have 120 minutes to complete the exam (exceptions for formal accommodations).

Recording

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.

Student Accommodations

If you plan to request accommodations for a disability, please register with the Accessibility and Testing Center. They can be reached by visiting Clark Howell Hall, calling 706-542-8719 (voice) or 706-542-8778 (TTY), or by visiting <https://accessibility.uga.edu/>.

Mental Health and Wellness 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 & Testing: accessibility.uga.edu Additional information, including free digital well-being resources, can be accessed through the UGA app or by visiting well-being.uga.edu.

IMPORTANT DATES (See full Course Schedule Below)

Exam Dates

Midterm: 10-09-2026

Final Exam: 12-03-2026

Semester Dates

Drop/Add Deadline: 08-21-2026

Fall Break: 10-30-2026

Withdrawal Deadline: 11-11-2026

Thanksgiving Break: 11-23-2026-11-27-2026

Classes End: 12-01-2026

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments
			All quizzes, discussions posts, and Reflections are submitted through eLC.
WEEK 1 08-17-2026	Introduction: Syllabus Overview and Course Expectations	Review Syllabus in Detail	- Week 1 Syllabus Quiz due by 08-21-2026 11:59pm. - Reflection #1 Assignment: Political Autobiography Assignment <u>due following week by 08-28-2026 11:59 pm.</u>
WEEK 2 08-24-2026	Collective Action	TLAP: Chapter 1 The Georgia Constitutional Convention (on eLC)	- Week 2 Quiz due by 08-28-2026 11:59 pm. - Reflection #1: Assignment: Political Autobiography Assignment due by 08-28-2026 11:59 pm.
WEEK 3 08-31-2026	The Founding and the Constitution	TLAP: Chapter 2 (includes Federalist Papers) The Articles of Confederation, The Declaration of Independence (on eLC)	- Week 3 Quiz: due by 09-04-2026 11:59pm. - Reflection #2: Assignment: Founding Document Reflection <u>due following week by 09-11-2026 11:59pm.</u>
WEEK 4 09-07-2026 Note: Labor Day Monday	Federalism	TLAP: Chapter 3 Federalism in the News (on eLC)	- Week 4 Quiz due by 09-11-2026 11:59pm. - Reflection #2: Assignment: Founding Document Reflection due by 09-11-2026 11:59pm.
WEEK 5 09-14-2026	Congress	TLAP: Chapter 6 ctd Georgia Constitution: Legislative Branch (on eLC) Congressional Polarization (on eLC)	- Week 5 Quiz due by 09-18-2026 11:59pm. - Discussion Post #1: Congressional-Presidential Relations <u>due following week by 09-25-2026 11:59pm.</u>
WEEK 6 09-21-2026	Presidency	TLAP: Chapter 7 Conflicts with Presidential Power (on eLC) GA Constitution: Georgia Executive Branch (on eLC)	- Week 6 Quiz due by 09-25-2026 11:59pm. - Discussion Post #1: Congressional-Presidential Relations due by 09-25-2026 by 11:59pm.
WEEK 7 09-28-2026	Bureaucracy	TLAP: Chapter 8 Understanding Administrative Burden (on eLC)	Week 7 Quiz due by 10-02-2026 by 11:59pm.
WEEK 8 10-05-2026	MIDTERM EXAM	MIDTERM EXAM	MIDTERM EXAM : 10-09-2026

WEEK 9 10-12-2026	The Judiciary	TLAP: Chapter 9 Supreme Court Conflicts (articles on eLC) Georgia Constitution: Georgia Courts (on eLC)	• Week 9 Quiz due by 10-16-2026 11:59pm. • Discussion Post #2: McConnell-Warren Supreme Court Debate due by 10-16-2026 11:59pm.
WEEK 10 10-19-2026	Civil Rights	TLAP: Chapter 4 Emancipation Proclamation (eLC) Gettysburg Address (eLC) Letters from a Birmingham Jail (on eLC)	• Week 10 Quiz due by 10-23-2026 11:59pm.
WEEK 11 10-26-2026	Civil Liberties	TLAP: Chapter 5 U.S. Bill of Rights/GA Bill of Rights (on eLC) The 2026 Supreme Court Term (on eLC)	• Week 11 Quiz due by 10-30-2026 11:59pm. • Discussion Post #3: Senate Election Prediction <u>due following week by 11-02-2026 11:59pm.</u>***
WEEK 12 11-02-2026	Public Opinion	TLAP: Chapter 10	• Week 12 Quiz due by 11-06-2026 11:59pm. • Discussion Post #3: Senate Election Prediction due by 11-02-2026 11:59pm.
WEEK 13 11-09-2026	Voting, Campaigns, and Elections	TLAP: Chapter 11 and 2026 Midterm Election Recap	• Week 13 Quiz due by 11-13-2026 11:59pm. • Reflection #3: "What do you see?" <u>due following week by 11-20-2026 11:59pm</u>
WEEK 14 11-16-2026	Political Parties	TLAP: Chapter 12	• Week 14 Quiz due by 11-20-2026 11:59pm. • Reflection #3: "What do you see?" due by 11-20-2026 11:59pm
Thanksgiving Week 11-23-2026	HAVE A NICE BREAK!		
Final "Week" of Classes 11-30-2026	Course Review and Final Exam		FINAL EXAM : 12-03-2026
Final Paper Due 12-07-2026			Final Paper Due 12-07-2026 by 11:59pm.