

POLS 1101: American Government Fall 2026

Instructor

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Office Hours: Tuesday
1:00PM – 2:30PM and by appointment

Class Schedule

Mondays and Wednesdays
12:00PM – 12:55PM
Instructional Plaza S306

Course Description

This course is an introduction to American politics and government. We will explore the origins, development, and functions of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government. An introduction to Georgia politics will also be provided. Whenever possible, we will use historical or current political issues and events to better explain the functions of government. Using a combination in-person lectures, in-person breakout sessions, and adaptive learning software, the course seeks to give students a better understanding and appreciation of the American political process. 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. For additional information on Student Learning Outcomes and Institutional Competencies covered by this course please see the course's entry in the [UGA Bulletin](#).

Required Book

The following books are required and should be available at the campus bookstore:

Bianco, William T. and David T. Canon. 2025. *American Politics Today*, Elections Update, 8th Essentials Edition, W.W. Norton and Company.

An Ebook version of this text is available at this [link](#). Links to the Ebook and supporting materials are also available on the course's eLC page.

We will also make use of *American Politics Today's* InQuizitive software as a graded part of the course. InQuizitive is an adaptive quizzing tool that will help students work through the concepts presented in each chapter of the textbook. You will need access to InQuizitive. You can purchase an Ebook from the publisher that includes access to InQuizitive. New copies of the textbook will be available from the campus bookstore and new copies will include an access code that allows students to access InQuizitive. If you purchase a used textbook, you will need to purchase access to InQuizitive separately.

In addition to the book and InQuizitive software, reading the news on a daily basis will be important for this course. The [New York Times](#) and the [Wall Street Journal](#) are two excellent news sources. University of Georgia students have full digital access to both of these papers through the UGA Libraries (see this [website](#) for details).

There will be additional readings assigned for the some of the weeks of the course. Some of these appear on the course syllabus now, and some will be assigned by your Friday breakout session leader. All of these readings will be provided to students via eLC.

Course Grading

Your grade in this class will be assigned according to the following:

1. **Quizzes** (15% of final grade): Students are required to complete online quizzes as part of their course grade. There will be a quiz to complete for each of the assigned textbook chapters using the InQuizitive system. These quizzes are adaptive and should help students both understand the course materials and prepare for exams. Additional information about InQuizitive can be found on the course's eLC page.
2. **Discussion Sections** (10% of final grade): Students are required to attend a Friday discussion section each week of the semester. Each section will be coordinated by one of the course's six teaching assistants. You are expected to participate, not just attend, during these discussion sections. This means that you need to be ready to discuss the readings or participate in the activity for that week. Your teaching assistant will keep track of attendance and participation grades in each of the discussion sections. Additional information about the location and schedule for discussion meetings can be found on the course's eLC page.
3. **Midterm Exams** (50% of final grade) Three midterm examinations (worth 16.66% each) will be given throughout the course. These exams will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions. Exams will cover material from both the course readings and lectures. The midterm examinations will be non-cumulative.
4. **Final Exam** (25% of final grade): The final exam will be administered in person. It will feature a mix of multiple choice and short answer questions. The final exam will be cumulative, covering materials from the entire course.

If a student is unable to take one of the exams on the scheduled date, they should contact their TA or the course instructor beforehand. Missed exams will only be excused in the most extraordinary circumstances. If you receive permission to take an exam at a time other than that listed on the syllabus, I reserve the right to alter the format and substance of any makeup exam (e.g. you may not get the same exam as everyone else).

Course grades will be assigned as follows: 93–100% = A, 90–93% = A-, 87–90% = B+, 83–87% = B, 80–83% = B-, 77–80% = C+, 73–77% = C, 70–73% = C-, 60–70% = D, 0–60% = F.

Other Issues (in no particular order)

1. **Syllabus Disclaimer:** The course syllabus is a general plan for the course. Deviations may be announced to the class by the instructor.

2. **Instructor Availability:** I am available to meet with students by appointment if anyone cannot attend my posted office hours. Please email me to schedule a meeting.
3. **Accessibility:** Students in need of accessibility resources of any kind are strongly encouraged to tell me at the beginning of the semester, so appropriate accommodations can be made. If you plan to request accommodations for this course, please register with Accessibility and Testing. They can be reached by visiting Clark Howell Hall, calling 706-542-8719 (voice) or by visiting their [website](#).
4. **Classroom Behavior:** Students should behave professionally throughout the course. Disruptive behavior in lectures and discussion sections will not be tolerated. Laptops and other electronic may be used to take notes in class, but not in a way that is disruptive to other students.

UGA is committed to creating a dynamic, diverse, and welcoming learning environment for all students and has a [non-discrimination policy](#) that reflects this philosophy. Our class will respect all students regardless of race, color, sex (including sexual harassment and pregnancy), sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity or national origin, religion, age, genetic information, disability, or veteran status.

5. **Cheating and Plagiarism:** All course work must meet the standards put forth in the University of Georgia's [Student Honor Code](#). See the [Academic Honesty Policy](#) for details on what is expected of you.
6. **FERPA Notice:** The Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) grants students certain information privacy rights. See the registrar's explanation at their [website](#).
7. **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 their [website](#). 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: <https://well-being.uga.edu>
- Student Care and Outreach: <https://sco.uga.edu>
- University Health Center: <https://healthcenter.uga.edu>
- Counseling and Psychiatric Services: <https://caps.uga.edu> or CAPS 24/7 crisis support at 706-542-2273.
- Health Promotion/ Fontaine Center: <https://healthpromotion.uga.edu>
- Accessibility and Testing: <https://accessibility.uga.edu>

Additional information, including free digital well-being resources, can be accessed through the UGA app or by visiting this [website](#).

8. **Artificial Intelligence-Based Software:** Students are allowed to use generative AI software for academic work, provided they document its use. This includes specifying the software used, the extent of its use, and how it contributed to the final product. AI-generated content must be cited appropriately, and students should include a brief reflection on how the AI tool helped them and what they learned from using it. The work must remain original, with AI not replacing critical thinking or personal effort. Instructors will evaluate both the content and the documentation of AI use, considering proper documentation in grading. Failure to document AI use may result in penalties, including reduced grades or academic disciplinary actions. (This paragraph was generated with the assistance of Microsoft Copilot).
9. **Tutoring:** The Office for Student Success and Achievement offers free peer tutoring in over 300 of UGA's most rigorous courses, including POLS 1101. To engage with a Peer Tutor, download the Penji app, available on iOS and Android, and sign in through SSO using your MyID. Need help? Visit our website for more information on how to engage with a Peer Tutor or email us at Office for Student Success and Achievement also provides Academic Coaching, Student Success Workshops, and more. The Office for Student Success and Achievement is committed to the success of all students at the University of Georgia. For more on these and other resources, please visit their [website](#).

Topics Schedule

Week 1 (8/17 and 8/19 – Introduction and Why Government?)
Bianco and Canon, Chapter 1

Week 2 (8/24 and 8/26 – Constitution and Founding)

Bianco and Canon, Chapter 2

[U.S. Constitution.](#)

[Declaration of Independence.](#)

[Letter from Birmingham Jail.](#)

Week 3 (8/31 and 9/2 – Federalism and Civil Liberties)

Bianco and Canon, Chapter 3 and 4

Week 4 (9/7 – Labor Day (No Class), 9/9 – Civil Liberties)

Bianco and Canon, Chapter 4

Wehle, Kim. 2019. *How to Read the Constitution and Why*, Chapter 6

Week 5 (9/14 – **MIDTERM #1**, 9/16 – Civil Rights)

Bianco and Canon, Chapter 5

Week 6 (9/21 and 9/23 – Public Opinion)

Bianco and Canon, Chapter 6

Abramowitz, Alan I. 2008. [“Forecasting the 2008 Presidential Election.”](#)

PS: Political Science and Politics. 41(4):691-695

Abramowitz, Alan I. 2016. [“Will Time for Change Mean Time for Trump”](#)

PS: Political Science and Politics 49(4):659-660.

Week 7 (9/28 and 9/30 – Political Parties)

Bianco and Canon, Chapter 7

Week 8 (10/5 and 10/7 – Federal and State Elections)

Bianco and Canon, Chapter 8

Week 9 (10/12 – **MIDTERM #2**, 10/14 – Interest Groups)

Bianco and Canon, Chapter 9

Week 10 (10/19 and 10/21 – U.S. Congress and Georgia Legislature)

Bianco and Canon, Chapter 10

[Congress.gov](#)

Week 11 (10/26 and 10/28 – U.S. President and Georgia Governor)

Bianco and Canon, Chapter 11

[Emancipation Proclamation](#)

[The American Presidency Project: Executive Orders](#)

Week 12 (11/2 – Bureaucracies, 11/4 – Federal and State Courts)

Bianco and Canon, Chapter 12

[Gettysburg Address](#)

[A-Z index of U.S. Government Departments and Agencies](#)

Week 13 (11/9 – Federal and State Courts, 11/11 – **MIDTERM #3**)

Bianco and Canon, Chapter 13

[Federalist Papers, No. 78](#)

Week 14 (11/16 and 11/18 – Economic and Social Policy)

Bianco and Canon, Chapter 14

Week 15 (Thanksgiving Week (No Class)))

Week 16 (11/30 – Foreign Policy)

Bianco and Canon, Chapter 15

Week 17 (12/7 – **Final Exam, 12:00PM – 3:00PM**)