

Introduction to American Government

POLS 1101, Fall 2014

Mon., Wed., Fri. 8:00-8:50

Instructor: Ryan D. Williamson

email: ryandw10@uga.edu

Website: ryandwilliamson.com

Baldwin Hall 301

Office: Baldwin Hall 415

Office hours: Mon. Wed. & Fri. 9:15-10:15

Course Description and Goals

The primary objective of this course is to provide students with a broad overview of the political system in the United States. By the end of the course, students should be able to describe the structure and function of American institutions, as well as the motivations behind their construction and the consequences of their actions. Specifically, students should be able to explain how these institutions influence the behavior of both politicians and constituents. More generally, students should be able to apply theory to “real world” situations, use data to evaluate theoretical arguments, and write logical and coherent arguments.

Reading

There are two required texts for this course:

- Ken Kollman. 2014. *The American Political System*. Core Second Edition. New York: Norton. ISBN-13: 978-0-393-92330-8
- Charles S. Bullock III and Ronald Keith Gaddie. 2013. *Georgia Politics in a State of Change*. Pearson Custom Edition. New York: Pearson. ISBN-13: 9781256769378

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the UGA Disabilities Services office will be accommodated according to university policy. If you have documentation for accommodations from Disabilities Services, please present it to me as soon as possible. For more information, contact Disabilities Services at 706-542-8719. If you cannot reach the classroom or my office, please notify me as soon as possible so that alternative arrangements can be made.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a core value of institutions of higher learning. All students, upon enrolling, must pledge: “I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others.” It is your responsibility to avoid plagiarism,

cheating, and dishonesty. The university policy on academic integrity is posted at: <http://www.uga.edu/honesty/>. To qualify the application of the policy in this course: tests and written assignments should be your own work, while studying and class preparation can (and should) be done with others.

Course Requirements and Evaluation

Attendance	10 percent
Participation	10 percent
Reading Quizzes	5 percent
Writing Assignments	10 percent
Exam One	20 percent
Exam Two	20 percent
Final	25 percent

*****All work must be your own.**

Attendance: Each student will be granted 3 unexcused absences. After those are exhausted, the attendance grade will be the proportion of all classes attended. For example, a student who attends all classes will receive all 10 points. A student who attended all but 3 classes will also receive all 10 points. A student who missed 4 classes but had a university approved excuse will also receive all 10 points. However, a student who used all 3 “freebies” but also missed 10 percent of the classes will only receive 90 percent of the available points.

Participation: Though this course is largely lecture based, students are still expected to actively engage with the material in class. This consists of showing up on time, completing assigned readings, participating in any class discussions, and answering questions posed by the instructor. A detailed rubric can be found on page 4.

Quizzes: Periodically throughout the course of the semester, 5 quizzes will be given at the beginning of class related to assigned readings or material covered in previous class meetings. They will vary in length and question type. Additionally, they may or may not be announced beforehand. Each quiz will be graded out of 1 point for a total of 5 points toward your final grade, and make-up quizzes will not be allowed without a university approved excuse. If an absence is excused, make-ups will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Writing Assignments: Each student will be asked to write four 2-3 page papers that will be worth a total of 10 points towards their final grade. Each assignment will summarize a news article and discuss how that article relates to the readings covered in class. Papers should be typed, double spaced, and printed using 12 point Times New Roman font and one inch margins. Spelling, grammar, formatting, and punctuation will all be factored into the paper’s grade. A more detailed rubric can be found on page 4.

Exams: There will be 2 exams that will be administered in class on predetermined dates outlined here. Each will be worth 20 percent of your final grade. They will consist of at least 50 multiple choice, true/false, fill in the blank, and/or short answer questions.

Make-up exams will not be allowed without a university approved excuse. It is the student's responsibility to schedule a make-up exam as quickly as possible after he or she has provided an excuse. Any potential conflicts should be cleared with the instructor as soon as possible. Though all work must be completed individually, you are welcome to and even encouraged to prepare for all three exams with others.

Final: The final will consist of at least 50 multiple choice, true/false, fill in the blank, and/or short answer questions. Of these questions, one-third will be based off of material from previous exams, and the remaining two-thirds will be new material. Make-up finals will only be given to students who provide university approved excuses. Any potential conflicts should be cleared with the instructor as soon as possible.

Overall Grades: Grades are constructed to reflect the university standards posted at http://bulletin.uga.edu/Bulletin_Files/acad/Grades.html, which are summarized below. Grades will be based on how many points you earn according to the following distribution:

A- = 90-92	A = 93-100	
B- = 80-82	B = 83-86	B+ = 87-89
C- = 70-72	C = 73-76	C+ = 77-79
D = 60-69		
F = 0-59		

Student Resources

You can increase your chance of success in this course by using UGA's academic services. The Academic Resource Center offers tutoring in Study Strategies that can help with test preparation and in Writing. You can set an appointment at <http://tutor.uga.edu/arc/tutoring/> and the phone number is 706-542-7575. You also may check out opportunities at the Miller Learning Center (<http://mlc.uga.edu/>) and the Writing Center (<http://writingcenter.english.uga.edu/>).

Electronics Policy

Given the rise in technology, many students have become well versed and reliant on laptops and tablets for taking notes, downloading lecture slides and readings, and other activities related to doing well in class. As such, the use of electronic devices for class is not prohibited. However, frequenting social networking sites and partaking in other non-class related tasks not only distracts the user but those around him or her as well. Therefore, abuse of any electronic devices could adversely affect your final grade.

Participation Rubric

- A Student attends every class while consistently demonstrating that he or she has completed and understands the assigned readings by participating in class discussion meaningfully.
- B Student only attends most class meetings while completing all readings and actively participating in a meaningful way.
- C Student has perfect attendance but regularly fails to demonstrate completion of readings or participate in any meaningful way.
- D Student only attends most class meetings and regularly fails to demonstrate completion of readings or participate in any meaningful way.
- F Student misses classes regularly, does not complete assigned readings, does not engage in class discussion meaningfully, or is disruptive or disrespectful.

Writing Assignment Rubric

- A Student clearly and concisely summarizes each of the week's assigned readings. Additionally, he or she has discussed at length how the readings relate to one another as well as any relevant readings from previous weeks. The paper will be organized in a coherent manner, properly formatted, and will be free of any spelling and grammatical errors.
- B Student fails to meet one of the above criteria.
- C Student fails to meet multiple criteria listed above.
- D Student fails to meet any of the listed criteria.
- F Student fails to complete the assignment.

How to Succeed in this Course

- Be respectful of your own and others' ideas.
- Attend class consistently.
- Keep up with the readings.
- If something is not clear, ask a question.
- Clarify expectations with the instructor.
- Utilize all resources available to you.

Course Schedule

Date	Reading
Collective Action Problems	
Aug. 18	Introduction
Aug. 20	Kollman, Chapter 1, p. 3-11
Aug. 22	Kollman, Chapter 1, p. 11-29
The Founding	
Aug. 25	Kollman, Primary Source Material, p. 622-655
Aug. 27	Kollman, Chapter 2, p. 31-50
Aug. 29	Kollman, Federalist No. 10 & 51, p. 655-664
The Constitution	
Sept. 1	No Class: Labor Day
Sept. 3	Kollman, Chapter 2, p. 50-64
Sept. 5	Bullock and Gaddie, Chapter 1
Types of Government	
Sept. 8	Kollman, Chapter 3, p. 67-82
Sept. 10	Kollman, Chapter 3, p. 82-99
Sept. 12	Bullock and Gaddie, Chapter 8
Civil Rights and Civil Liberties	
Sept. 15	Kollman, Chapter 4, p. 101-117
Sept. 17	Kollman, Chapter 4, p. 117-134
Sept. 19	Bullock and Gaddie, Chapter 9
Exam Week	
Sept. 22	Review
Sept. 24	Exam One
Sept. 26	To Be Determined
The Legislative Branch	
Sept. 29	Kollman, Chapter 5, p. 137-168
Oct. 1	Kollman, Chapter 5, p. 168-181
Oct. 3	Bullock and Gaddie, Chapter 5
The Executive Branch	
Oct. 6	Kollman, Chapter 6, p. 185-203
Oct. 8	Kollman, Chapter 6, p. 203-222
Oct. 10	Bullock and Gaddie, Chapter 6
The Judicial Branch	
Oct. 13	Kollman, Chapter 8, p. 263-288
Oct. 15	Kollman, Chapter 8, p. 288-296
Oct. 17	Bullock and Gaddie, Chapter 7

Course Schedule Continued

Date	Reading
The Bureaucracy	
Oct. 20	Kollman, Chapter 7, p. 225-245
Oct. 22	Kollman, Chapter 7, p. 245-260
Oct. 24	Bullock and Gaddie, Chapter 14
Exam Week	
Oct. 27	Review
Oct. 29	Exam Two
Oct. 31	No Class: Fall Break
Political Parties	
Nov. 3	Kollman, Chapter 12, p. 409-424
Nov. 5	Kollman, Chapter 12, p. 424-442
Nov. 7	Bullock and Gaddie, Chapter 11
Interest Groups	
Nov. 10	Kollman, Chapter 11, p. 377-388
Nov. 12	Kollman, Chapter 11, p. 388-406
Nov. 14	Bullock and Gaddie, Chapter 12
Public Opinion	
Nov. 17	Kollman, Chapter 9, p. 299-313
Nov. 19	Kollman, Chapter 9, p. 313-338
Nov. 21	Bullock and Gaddie, Chapter 10
Thanksgiving Break	
Nov. 24	No Class
Nov. 26	No Class
Nov. 28	No Class
Campaigns and Elections	
Dec. 1	Kollman, Chapter 13, p. 445-460
Dec. 3	Kollman, Chapter 13, p. 460-479
Dec. 5	Bullock and Gaddie, Chapter 13
Political Participation	
Dec. 8	Kollman, Chapter 10, p. 341-356
Dec. 9	Kollman, Chapter 10, p. 356-374
Final Exam	
Dec. 15	Baldwin 301 8:00–11:00am

All dates and assignments are subject to change.