

# Introduction to American Government

Political Science 1101, Fall 2014

T TR 8:00-9:15, MLC 213

Instructor: Justin Norris

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Office Hours: TBA

## Course Description

This course shall provide students information necessary for developing a broad understanding of American government. In so doing, we shall examine the origins, development, and functions of the three branches of government: the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. In addition to discussing how the branches of government function independently, we shall also discuss how the branches of government interact with one another. Finally, the course shall also discuss the roles of federalism, public opinion, elections, and voting behavior within the American political system.

**Course Goals:** The primary goal of this course is to provide students with the tools they need for understanding and critically evaluating the political information widely disseminated by politicians, pundits, and the media. If we accomplish our goal, by the end of the semester students will be discerning consumers of political information, and know how to participate in the political process if they so choose.

## Required Texts

Kernell, Jacobson, Kousser and Vavreck. 2013. *The Logic of American Politics*, 6th Edition. Washington D.C., CQ Press. (LOGIC)

Bullock and Gaddie. 2013. *Georgia Politics in a State of Change*. Pearson Custom Edition, New York, Pearson. (GA READER)

## **Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the UGA Disabilities Services office will be accommodated according to university policy. For more information, contact Disabilities Services at 542-8719.

## **Academic Honesty**

Students are expected to maintain academic integrity in all of their course related work. Cheating, plagiarism, and dishonesty will not be tolerated. Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with University policies related to academic honesty, which are posted here: <http://www.uga.edu/honesty/>. Penalties for violating these policies are severe, and ignorance of said policies is not an acceptable excuse.

## **Student Responsibilities**

Students are expected to carefully read the assigned course materials before each lecture, regularly attend class, participate in class discussions, take exams at their appointed time, and turn in assignments on time. I will not accept late assignments without a verifiable emergency or illness, in which case students will have five days to turn in the late assignment. Students shall turn in a physical copy of their assignment at the beginning of class the day the assignment is due. I will not accept an electronic copy of the assignment unless arrangements for which are made prior to the due date. Students are expected to take exams on test day. Missed exams can be made up only in the case of extreme circumstances, and students must provide verification. If you know you will miss an exam, and can provide acceptable verification for your absence, arrangements for a makeup can be made.

Students that miss class are responsible for what was covered. I will not provide notes from the lecture if you miss class. Students are allowed to use laptops in class so long as it is not disruptive. You are adults, and if you want to spend class on Facebook, Reddit, Tumblr, or whatever else, that is your prerogative, but keep in mind that you are responsible for knowing the material.

Students shall be respectful of one another during in-class discussions. Students shall not bully their peers, or use derogatory language. Such behavior will not be tolerated. If students have questions about the syllabus, or any of the class materials they are encouraged to ask questions.

# Course Grade

Your course grade is based on your performance in the following components:

- Attendance & Participation 10%
- Assignments and/or Quizzes 10%
- First Exam 25%
- Second Exam 25%
- Final Exam 30%

The first two exams will take place during regular class time. The final exam will take place during the university proscribed test period.

Final course grades are assigned as follows:

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

# Tentative Schedule

**Note: topics and dates subject to change**

## **Week 1: Introduction**

8/19 Ch. 1 LOGIC

8/21 Ch. 1 LOGIC

## **Week 2: The Constitution**

8/26 Ch. 2 LOGIC

8/28 Ch. 2 LOGIC; Ch. 4 GA READER

## **Week 3: Federalism**

9/2 Ch. 3 LOGIC

9/4 Ch. 3 LOGIC; Ch. 8 GA READER

**Week 4: Civil Rights**

9/9 Ch. 4 LOGIC

9/11 Ch. 4 LOGIC; Ch. 9 GA READER

**Week 5: Civil Liberties**

9/16 Ch. 5 LOGIC

9/18 Ch. 5 LOGIC

**Week 6: Exam 1**

9/23 Review

9/25 Exam 1

**Week 7: Congress**

9/30 Ch. 6 LOGIC

10/1 Ch. 6 LOGIC; Ch. 5 GA READER

**Week 8: The Presidency**

10/7 Ch. 7 LOGIC

10/9 Ch. 7 LOGIC; Ch. 6 GA READER

**Week 9: The Judiciary**

10/14 Ch. 9 LOGIC

10/16 Ch. 9 LOGIC; Ch. 7 GA READER

**Week 10: Exam 2**

10/21 Review

10/23 Exam 2 NOTE: WITHDRAWAL DEADLINE

**Week 11: Public Opinion**

10/28 Ch. 10 LOGIC

10/30 Ch. 10 LOGIC

**Week 12: Voting & Elections**

11/4 Ch. 11 LOGIC

11/6 Ch. 11 LOGIC

**Week 13: Political Parties**

11/11 Ch. 12 LOGIC

11/13 Ch. 12 LOGIC; Ch. 11 GA READER

**Week 14: Interest Groups & The Media**

11/18 Ch. 13 LOGIC; Ch. 12 GA READER

11/20 Ch. 14 LOGIC

**Week 15: Thanksgiving Break**

11/25-11/27 NO CLASS (enjoy your break)

**Week 16: The Media & Government Reform**

12/2 Ch. 14 LOGIC

12/4 Ch. 15 LOGIC

**Week 17: Wrap up**

12/9 Review (not mandatory)

12/10 Reading Day

**Week 18: Final Exam**

12/16 Final Exam 8:00-11:00 am