

Introduction to American Government (Honors)

Political Science 1105H, Spring 2018

M W F 10:10-11:00, Baldwin Hall 104

Instructor: Justin Norris

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Office Hours: W F: 11:30-12:30, Baldwin Hall 418

Course Description

This course shall provide students the necessary information 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. 2017. *The Logic of American Politics*, 8th 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 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. I am also available to address student questions, problems, and concerns during my office hours, and can be reached by email. My email address is listed at the top of this syllabus.

Class Assignments

There will be a quiz for each chapter we discuss in the main textbook, and there will be quizzes on much of the material from the Georgia Reader. All of the quizzes will be taken online through eLC, and are open book. The online content and online quizzes will be accessible only as we discuss the material in class. Though I will remind students in class, students are still expected to pay attention to, and adhere to, the due dates posted online. Supplementary materials for many of the topics we discuss throughout the semester will also be posted online in eLC.

Along with the quizzes there will be an online discussion board assignment, the content of which pertains to the role of political parties in presidential nominations. Specifically, students will discuss some of the issues surrounding the allegations that the leadership of the Democratic Party cheated Senator Bernie Sanders out of winning the party's presidential nomination. The materials and the instructions for the assignment will be posted online in eLC, and the assignment will be assigned, and due, during the in-class discussion of the chapter on political parties.

Semester Project

Instead of a final exam, there is a semester project designed to give students insight into political journalism, with the goal teaching students how to become informed consumers of political news.

An informed citizenry is an important component of democracy. Critical thinking skills and accurate information about political actors, political processes, or political events are necessary for people to make informed decisions in the ballot box, as to hold politicians accountable for their actions. However, due to media fragmentation, and the rise of partisan or ideologically driven news, some of which borders on propoganda, it has become increasingly difficult for people to differentiate between 'real' and 'fake' news. This project is designed to help students identify and differentiate between good journalism, opinion journalism, and propoganda, so that by the end of the semester students will have the skills to become informed news consumers. Project details will be discussed in-class, and will be available online in eLC.

Course Grade

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

- Attendance 5%
- Discussion Board Assignment 5%

- Quizzes 10%
- First Exam 15%
- Second Exam 15%
- Third Exam 15%
- Fourth Exam 15%
- Class Project 20%

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: NO CLASS

1/4 - 1/5 SPSA Conference NO CLASS

Week 2: Introduction

1/8 - 1/12 Ch. 1 LOGIC

Week 3: Constitution

1/15 MLK Day NO CLASS

1/17 - 1/19 Ch. 2 LOGIC; Ch. 4 GA READER

Week 4: Federalism

1/22 - 1/26 Ch. 3 LOGIC

Week 5: Exam 1

1/29 Catch Up Day/Discussion

1/31 Review

2/2 Exam 1

Week 6: Civil Rights

2/5 - 2/9 Ch. 4 LOGIC; Ch. 9 GA READER

Week 7: Civil Liberties

2/12 - 2/16 Ch. 5 LOGIC

Week 8: Exam 2

2/19 Catch Up Day/Discussion

2/21 Review

2/23 Exam 2

Week 9: Congress

2/26 - 3/2 Ch. 6 LOGIC; Ch. 5 GA READER

Week 10: The Presidency

3/5 - 3/9/20 Ch. 7 LOGIC; Ch. 6 GA READER

Week 11: Spring Break

3/12 - 3/16 **SPRING BREAK NO CLASS**

Week 12: The Federal Judiciary

3/19 - 3/23 Ch. 9 LOGIC; Ch. 7 GA READER

Note: 3/19 WITHDRAWAL DEADLINE

Week 13: Exam 3

3/26 Catch up day/Discussion

3/28 Review

3/30 Exam 3

Week 14: Voting & Elections

4/2 - 4/6 Ch. 11 LOGIC; Ch. 13 GA READER

Week 15: Political Parties

4/9 - 4/13 Ch. 12 LOGIC; Ch. 11 & 12 GA READER

Week 16: The Media

4/16 - 4/18 Ch. 14 LOGIC

4/20 Review

Week 17: Exam 4

4/23 Exam 4

4/25 Wrap Up

4/25 Reading Day