

Political Science 1101-91D: American Government

Dr. Melanie N. Clay

Newnan Center, Tel: 770-254-7280

Honors House (Main Campus), Tel: 678-839-0627

Office Hours at Newnan: Fridays 9:30 – 11:30

Online hours in WebCT: Wednesday 8 am – 10 am

This course will explore the political system of the United States and Georgia. We will explore basic issues of Federalism, executive configurations, legislative systems, party systems, electoral systems, and bureaucracy. When you are finished, you will be able to speak knowledgeably about the politics and the political system of this country with peers and others and you will have a basic understanding of government and politics in Georgia and the USA.

It is my sincere hope that in this course you will also learn to *question everything* (*your instructor, your book, the media, politicians, your long-held beliefs*), and to be inspired to fully participate in class, in American government, and in life.

A. REQUIRED text:

We the People,

shorter 6th edition. Ginsberg, Lowi, and Weir. W.W. Norton and Company.

B. Grading:

Weekly WebCT Discussion (Online): (16 @ 10 points each) - 160 points

7 Current Events (Online): (10 points each) - 70 points

14 Weekly (Online) Quizzes: (20 points each) - 280 points

Group Project: 160 points

In-Class Participation: 100 points

Midterm (Online): 100 points

Comprehensive Final: 130 points

A total of 1000 points will be available. 900 or above= A; 800-899= B; 700-799= C; 600-699= D; 599 or less= F

WebCT Discussion

- Each week there will be an assigned discussion on WebCT. It will be based on your readings or classroom discussions. To receive the full 10 points, **you** will submit a 200-word minimum response by Tuesday evening of each week, and then respond to the postings of two of your classmates by Thursday at 11:59 pm. Late responses will receive zero points.

Please note that both your postings should be well presented, clear, and correct. Your reactions to your classmates should be thoughtful and reflective, and should not just say, "I agree."

Hint: type up what you want to say (in something like Microsoft Word) and then copy and paste it in the discussion board. That way, if you lose your WebCT connection for some reason, you won't have to re-do your answer.

For help with WebCT, contact the Distance Learning Helpline at 770.839.6248 or email distance @westga.edu.

Current Events

- During 7 of the weeks, you will submit a current event regarding your assigned legislator (assigned in first course). You will provide the source of the article, author, and link (when available), a minimum 100 word synopsis, and your reaction to the article (50 words or more). The due dates for these are on this syllabus and on the WebCT calendar

Online Quizzes

- Each week there will be an online quiz. You will have three chances to take this quiz, however each time you take it the questions may be different. Your grade will be the highest of the three attempts that you make. The quizzes will close on Thursday at 11:59 pm of each week. You should not wait until Thursday to make your first attempt, or else you may not have time to take it three times. These quizzes are completely based on the readings for that unit.

Group Project

- Each week in the first few weeks of the class you will sit with your group (assigned on the first day of class). You will have a group project and also in-class mini discussions. It is important that you learn to work successfully with others as a team even when you disagree (isn't this what legislators have to do all the time?). You are expected to contribute your share, show respect for others with differing opinions, and wait until a group member is finished talking until you start to talk. Your group grade will be based on the group project as well as evaluation from your group peers. Details about the group project will be posted on WebCT early in the semester.

In-Class Participation

- Attendance is mandatory. We will have much to accomplish each time that we meet. You will only be excused if you email me prior to a necessary absence, and provide a doctor's note (for illness). Two unexcused absences will result in the loss of half the points from your in-class participation grade (half a grade). Three tardies counts as an unexcused absence. You will also be evaluated on your actual participation in class discussions. Keep in mind that you should be actively engaged when in the classroom with your cell phone or PDA on "OFF" (not vibrate or silent).

Midterm

An online midterm (mostly multiple-choice) will be available near the mid-point of the course. You will have only one opportunity to take this test. A study sheet will be provided one-week prior to the midterm. You are expected to take this exam independently, without the help of any other person or student. You may use your books and notes.

Final Exam

An in-class final exam will be delivered on the date listed on the course calendar (below and on WebCT). It will mostly cover material since the midterm (some from earlier chapters) and will include discussion questions. You will not be able to use your books or notes for the final exam.

Extra Credit

There will be one or more opportunities for extra credit. These will be announced and described in the face-to-face class meetings.

C. Support for Online Students

This course meets 51% online through WebCT.

For WebCT help: go to <http://www.westga.edu/~distance/webct1/help/> Or call 678.839.6248.

For library resources for online students: go to <http://www.westga.edu/~library/>)

To access WebCT, you may use your own computer, but may need help setting it up property (see link above for WebCT help). You are always welcome to use the computer labs at the Newnan campus or at the UWG main campus.

University Bookstore: <http://www.bookstore.westga.edu/>

D. Academic Honesty

All work submitted for this course must be your own original work. If you plagiarize even one single sentence or if you cheat on an exam, you will earn an F in this course, and may be reported for further disciplinary action.

E. Disclaimer

Please make sure that you understand this syllabus, and ask questions of the instructor if something is unclear. The instructor has the right to make modifications to the syllabus during the semester, and such modifications will be announced in class.

F. Course Calendar

					Readings (do before coming to this week's class)
Week 1	Meet: Friday, August 14 Introduction, American Political Culture	Online Discussion (first posting by August 18)	No current events	Online Quiz - Chapter 1 (by 11:59 pm August 20)	Read Chapter 1 (We the People)
Week 2	Meet: Friday, August 21 Founding and the Constitution	Online Discussion (first posting by August 25)	Online Current Events (post by August 26)	Online Quiz - Chapter 2 (by 11:59 pm August 27)	Read Chapter 2 (We the People) by August 21
Week 3	Meet: Friday, August 28 Federalism	Online Discussion (first posting by September 1)	No current events	Online Quiz - Chapter 3 (by 11:59 pm September 3)	Read Chapter 3 (We the People) by August 28

Week 4	Meet: Friday, September 4 Congress	Online Discussion (first posting by September 8)	Online Current Events (post by September 9)	Online Quiz - Chapter 12 (by 11:59 pm Sept 10)	Read Chapter 12 (We the People) by September 4
Week 5	Meet: Friday, September 11 The Presidency	Online Discussion (first posting by September 15)	Online Current Events (post by September 16)	Online Quiz - Chapter 13 (by 11:59 pm Sept 17)	Read Chapter 13 (We the People) by September 11
Week 6	Meet: Friday, September 18 Political Opinions	Online Discussion (first posting by September 22)	No current events this week	Online Quiz - Chapter 6 (by 11:59 pm Sept 24)	Read Chapter 6 (We the People) by September 18 Group Project Due
Week 7	Meet: Friday, Sept 25 Media/Public Opinion	Online Discussion (first posting by Sept 29)	Online Current Events (post by September 30)	Online Quiz - Chapter 7 (by 11:59 pm October 1)	Read Chapter 7 (We the People) by September 25
Week 8	Meet: Friday, October 3 Participation and Voting	Online Discussion (first posting by October 7)	No current events this week	Online Quiz - Chapter 8 (by 11:59 pm October 9)	Read Chapter 8 (We the People)
Week 9	Meet: Friday, October 9 Political Parties	Online Discussion (first posting by October 13)	Online Current Events (post by October 15)	Online Quiz - Chapter 9 (by 11:59 pm October 15)	Read Chapter 9 (We the People) by October 9

Week 10	No Meeting Fall Holiday	Online Live Study Session Tuesday, October 20 7 – 9 pm chatroom			MIDTERM ONLINE October 21-22, 2009
Week 11	Meet: Friday, October 23 Campaigns and Elections	Online Discussion (first posting by October 27)	No current events	Online Quiz - Chapter 10 (by 11:59 pm October 29)	Read Chapter 10 (We the People) By October 23
Week 12	Meet: Friday, October 30 Special Topic Discussion	Online Discussion (first posting by November 3)	Online Current Events (post by November 4)	Online Quiz -Special Topic Quiz (by 11:59 pm November 5)	Readings TBA
Week 13	Meet: Friday, November 6 Civil Liberties	Online Discussion (first posting by November 10)		Online Quiz - Chapter 4 (by 11:59 pm November 12)	Read Chapter 4(We the People) by November 6
Week 14	Meet: Friday, November 13 Civil Rights	Online Discussion (first posting by November 17)	Online Current Events (post by November 18)	Online Quiz - Chapter 5 (by 11:59 pm November 19)	Read Chapter 5 (We the People) by November 13
Week 15	Meet: Friday, November 20 Federal Courts	Online Discussion (first posting by November 24 - no reactions to classmates required this week only)	No current events this week	No Online Quiz this week	Read Chapter 15 (We the People) by November 20

Week 16	Thanksgiving NO CLASS MEETING – I'll put a short presentation for you online for Chapter 15	Online Discussion (first posting by December 1)	No current events this week	Online Quiz - Chapter 15 (by 11:59 pm December 3)	Read Chapter 15 (We the People) and View My short Online Chapter 15 presentation by November 30
Week 17	Meet: Friday, December 5 Georgia Politics and Wrap Up	Online Discussion (first posting by December 8)	No current events this week	No Quiz this Week	Online Live Study Session Thursday, December 11, 7-9 pm ChatRoom (Optional)
Week 18	Meet Friday, December 11 FINAL EXAM				Good luck on your FINAL EXAM~!

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT STATEMENT

If you are a student who is disabled as defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act and requires assistance or support services, please seek assistance through the Center for Disability Services. A CDS Counselor will coordinate those services. See <http://www.westga.edu/~dserve/>

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

No person shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, religion, creed, national origin, age, or disability, be excluded from employment or participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity conducted by UWG.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION STATEMENT

University of West Georgia adheres to affirmative action policies to promote diversity and equal opportunity for all faculty and students.

Assignments with Points

	Possible Points	Possible So Far
Week 1		
Online Discussion	10	
Quiz	20	30
Week 2		
Online Discussion	10	
Quiz	20	
Current Event	10	70
Week 3		
Online Discussion	10	
Quiz	20	100
Week 4		
Online Discussion	10	
Quiz	20	
Current Event	10	140
Week 5		
Online Discussion	10	
Quiz	20	
Current Event	10	180
Week 6		
Online Discussion	10	
Quiz	20	
Group Project	160	370
Week 7		
Online Discussion	10	
Quiz	20	
Current Event	10	410
Week 8		
Online Discussion	10	
Quiz	20	440
Week 9		
Online Discussion	10	
Quiz	20	
Current Event	10	480
Week 10		
Midterm	100	580
Class Participation through Midterm	50	630
Week 11		
Online Discussion	10	
Quiz	20	660
Week 12		
Online Discussion	10	
Quiz	20	
Current Event	10	700
Week 13		
Online Discussion	10	
Quiz	20	730
Week 14		
Online Discussion	10	
Quiz	20	
Current Event	10	770
Week 15		
Online Discussion	10	780
Week 16		
Online Discussion	10	

Quiz	20	810
Week 17		
Online Discussion	10	820
Last Half Participation	50	870
Week 18		
Final	130	1000
Extra Credit 1	10	
Extra Credit 2	10	
Extra Credit 3	10	1030

900 or above = A

800-899 = B

700-800 = C

600-699 = D

Below 600 = F