

**POLITICAL SCIENCE 1101: American Government
Undergraduate Course
Fall Semester 2009**

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A popular government, without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy, or perhaps both. Knowledge will forever govern ignorance; and a people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives.

James Madison

Class meetings: Classes will meet Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings from 11:00 a.m. to 11:50 a.m. in Room 1203 of the Technology Enhanced Learning Center (TLC).

Contacting the instructor: Tentatively, I will have office hours on Mondays and Wednesdays from 12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. I am easily reached via email or phone. E-mail correspondence for the course should be handled through Course Den. When necessary I can also be reached at my home office (404-875-5911).

Class webpage: Make a practice of frequently checking our class website on Course Den.

Required Text: Ginsberg, B., Lowi, T., and Wier, M. 2009. We the People: An Introduction to American Politics, Shorter Seventh Edition, Georgia Edition, W.W. Norton & Company. (There are other editions of this book available; however, you will be responsible for the content of this edition.)

Supplemental Text (not required): Lawler, P. and Schaefer, R. 2005. American Political Rhetoric: A Reader. Fifth Edition. Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Course Content: This course explores the ideas and institutions that shape the government and politics of the United States. Our analysis will focus on three key areas: the Constitution and the debates of the founding era, the institutions of modern American government, and the political behavior of the American public. Documents from America's formative period and insights from the field of modern political science will facilitate our examination of important political phenomena from a broad range of analytical perspectives. The goal of this course is to help participants arrive at a deeper, more comprehensive understanding of the forces that determine the modern-day American government, so that he or she may be both a more perceptive student and critic of the system and a more informed and reflective citizen.

Timely reading is critical both for achievement as an individual student in this class, and for the success of the course as a whole. As a result, students are expected to come to class having read the material thoroughly and thought about it carefully. Be prepared to discuss the assigned readings in class. This course will be greatly enriched if people with views across the political spectrum voice their opinions on the important and often controversial issues that we will discuss.

Many students in this class will be participating in the iServe semester project, "Educating the UWG Community on Green Issues." Accordingly, the response of the American political system to the problem of global warming will be examined in this class. Class discussions will include support of a specific objective of the iServe project: writing a letter to ask a local representative to take a stand on global warming. Your grade on the iServe project will be determined by the EXCEL Center for Academic Success and will be included as a part of your final grade calculation.

Course objectives: At the end of the semester each student should have demonstrated:

1. An understanding of the basic values of American civic culture;
2. An understanding of how American culture, values, and political institutions compare with those of other types of governments;
3. An understanding of the interrelationship between American governmental institutions;
4. An understanding of the basic terminology of political science and U.S. politics; and,
5. An understanding of the constitutional, institutional, political, and legal processes of the U.S. and Georgia.

Evaluating Student Progress: The course format will incorporate a combination of readings, lectures, and class discussions. Examinations will consist of multiple choice, true/false, and short answer questions. Students' grades in the course will be determined as follows:

1. In-class examinations (3 x 13.3 points each): 40%
2. Final examination: 25%
3. Unannounced reading quizzes: 15%
4. Attendance, promptness, and class participation: 10%
5. iServe semester project: 10%.

1. In-class Examinations (40%): There will be three equally weighted examinations which together account for 30% of the course grade. The exams will be given during regular class sessions.

2. Final Examination (25%): A comprehensive final examination will be required for this course.

3. Unannounced Reading Quizzes (15%): To ensure that students are completing assigned readings in a timely manner, there will be several unannounced reading quizzes during the course of the semester. These should be very easy for those who have read the assignment, and very difficult for those who have not. Your lowest grade will be dropped.

4. Attendance and Active Class Participation (10%): Come to class prepared. Students are responsible for reading the assigned material and attending class sessions. Roll will be taken during most classes. Students missing a class, or any part of a class, will be marked absent. Three absences will result in a loss of five points on your attendance grade.

Even with a large class, participation in class discussions is important. For some students, the level and kind of participation makes the difference between a higher and lower final grade. Class sessions will consist primarily of discussion of the assigned readings. In order to earn a high grade for participation, students should:

- Attend every class;
- Arrive at class on time and stay for the entire class;
- Read all the assigned readings and come to class with questions about and thoughts on the readings; and,
- Consistently take an active part in class discussions.

Students are also expected to log on to the course web site at least once per week; daily works best. During class, students are not to use personal laptops, other computer resources, or cell phones.

5. iServe Project Participation (10%)

The following rules will guide this class:

1. From the University of West Georgia Student Handbook: “All forms of academic dishonesty including cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and facilitating or allowing academic dishonesty in any academic exercise are prohibited. Cheating means using, or attempting to use, or aiding others in using unauthorized materials, information or study aids.”
2. Missed examinations can be made up only if a medical emergency exists and is validated by a doctor’s note on office stationery. If you have any questions, ask or e-mail me.

Note: This course syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary.



FOUNDATIONS OF THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

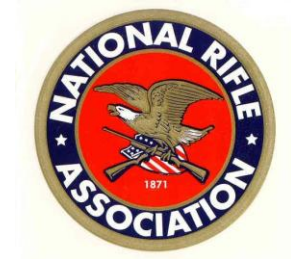
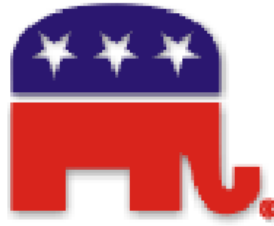
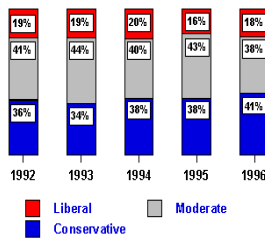
Date	Readings
Aug. 14	Syllabus
Aug. 17 & 19	Ch. 1: American Political Culture
Aug. 21, 24, & 26	Ch. 2: The Founding and the Constitution
Aug. 28 & 31, Sep. 2	Ch. 3: Federalism Appendix: Georgia's Constitution and Government http://sos.georgia.gov/elections/constitution_2007.pdf
Sep. 4, 9, & 11	Ch. 4: Civil Liberties
Sep. 14 & 16	Ch. 5: Civil Rights
Sep. 18	EXAM 1



INSTITUTIONS OF THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

Date	Readings
Sep. 21, 23, & 25	Ch. 12: The Congress
Sep. 28 & 30	Ch. 13: The Presidency
Oct. 2 & 5	Ch. 14: Bureaucracy in a Democracy
Oct. 7, 9, & 12	Ch. 15: The Federal Courts
Oct. 14	EXAM 2

Self-Identified Political Leanings of the American Public, 1992-1996



AMERICAN POLITICS

Date	Readings
Oct. 19 & 21	Ch. 6: Public Opinion
Oct. 23, 26, & 28	Ch. 7: The Media
Oct. 30 & Nov. 2, 4	Ch. 8: Political Participation and Voting
Nov. 6, 9, & 11	Ch. 9: Political Parties
Nov. 13	EXAM 3
Nov. 16, 18, & 20	Ch. 10: Campaigns and Elections
Nov. 23, 30, & Dec. 2	Ch. 11: Groups and Interests
Dec. 4	COURSE REVIEW
Dec. 7 – 11 TBD	FINAL EXAM (Comprehensive)