

University of West Georgia
Fall 2009
American Government
POLS 1101 – 02
Meets: MWF 09:00 – 09:50am, Pafford 112

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LEARNING OUTCOMES: At the end of the semester, students will demonstrate that they have developed:

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

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: Attendance: You cannot participate, contribute, and learn if you are not in class. Therefore, attendance is a requirement of this course. Students are allowed 4 absences. **Students who miss more than 4 lectures will incur a penalty worth 10% of their Final Grade.** Please be aware that I make no distinction between excused and unexcused absences.

Participation: The structure of weekly class sessions will include a mixture of lectures, discussions, small group activities, and in-class debates. So please come to class prepared and ready to participate in whatever activities are planned for the session. **Class participation will be worth 10% of the Final Grade.** Participation entails writing five (5) 2-page article summaries, attending class, joining in-class debates, and being prepared with questions and comments about the material.

Exams: There will be four (4) exams during the semester. **Make up Exams:** All make-up exams will be in the format of three essay questions. To receive full credit on a make-up exam, ALL students must provide written documentation of the illness or emergency that precluded their attendance on the exam date. Anyone unable to provide written documentation will receive half credit for the make-up exam.

Grade Calculation – Grades will be calculated as follows:

| No. | Requirements | Page Count | Due Date | % Grade Value |
|-----|--------------------|------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| 1 | News Summaries (5) | 2 | TBA | 10 |
| 2 | Exam 1 | - | Friday, August 28 | 20 |
| 3 | Exam 2 | - | Friday, September 18 | 20 |
| 4 | Exam 3 | - | Wednesday, October 14 | 20 |
| 5 | Final Exam | - | Monday, December 7 | 30 |

Please note that **NO curves** or adjustment of scores will be made. **Extra Credit** will be awarded for attendance to special events such as lectures, films, community events, etc.

REQUIRED TEXT: (1) Ginsberg, Benjamin, Theodore J. Lowi, and Margaret Weir. 2007. *We the People: An Introduction to American politics* – Shorter 6th edition. New York: W.W. Norton & Company. (2) [Georgia State Constitution](#).

E-MAIL COMMUNICATION: The only official method of communication via e-mail is through your campus e-mail account (MyUWG) or CourseDen.

CLASSROOM POLICIES: (1) Please turn off cell phones during class. (2) Please arrive on time. (3) Please do not read newspapers, sleep, or work on material for other courses during class. (4) Since we will deal with controversial issues on a regular basis, it is vital to the success of this class to maintain an atmosphere of mutual respect and civility. Thus, personal attacks will not be tolerated. (5) **Students with learning disabilities should see me immediately to make appropriate arrangements.**

PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC HONESTY: All assignments for this course must be your own original work. Research sources must be properly cited and acknowledged. The University of West Georgia has a Code of Academic Honor that will be followed in this course. Suspected violations of the Code will be subject to disciplinary action according to the University policy.

WEEKLY CLASS SCHEDULE:

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|-------------------------|---|
| Aug. 10 – 14: | Introduction to the course and each other |
| Aug. 17 – 21: | Chapter 1: American Political Culture |
| Aug. 24 – 28: | Chapter 2: The Founding and the Constitution |
| | Friday – 28 August 2009 – Exam 1 |
| Aug. 31–Sep 04: | Chapter 3: Federalism |
| Sep. 07 – 11: | Chapter 4: Civil Liberties |
| Sep. 14 – 18: | Chapter 5: Civil Rights |
| | Friday – 18 September 2008 – Exam 2 |
| Sep. 21 – 25: | Chapter 6: Public Opinion |
| Sep. 28–Oct. 02: | Chapter 7: The Media |
| Oct. 05 – 09: | Chapter 8: Political Participation & Voting |
| | Tuesday – 6 October 2009 – Last day to withdraw with a W |
| Oct. 12 – 16: | Chapter 8: Political Participation & Voting - Continued |
| | TR-F – October 15-16 – Fall Break – No Class |
| | Wednesday – 14 October 2009 – Exam 3 |
| Oct. 19 – 23: | Chapters 9: Political Parties |
| Oct. 26 – 30: | Chapter 10: Campaigns and Elections |
| Nov. 02 – 06: | Chapter 11: Interest Groups |
| Nov. 09 – 13: | Chapter 12: Congress |
| Nov. 16 – 20: | Chapters 13/14: The Presidency/Bureaucracy |
| Nov. 23 – 27: | Nov. 25-27 Thanksgiving recess, no classes |
| Nov 30–Dec 04: | Chapter 15: The Federal Courts |
| | Friday, 4 December 2009, Last day of MWF classes |

FINAL EXAM: Monday, 7 December 2009, 8-10 am

DISCLAIMER: No student can claim any rights based upon “perceived” omissions, ambiguities, vagueness or incompleteness contained in this syllabus. The instructor retains the right to amend this syllabus without prior notice.