

University of West Georgia
Spring 2018
POL 1101 – 15
American Government
Meets: MW 11:00am–12:15pm, Pafford 306

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the semester, students will demonstrate that they have developed and understanding of:

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

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Common Language for course syllabi: <https://www.westga.edu/UWGSyllabusPolicies/>

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Texts

(1) Glen Krutz et al. 2016. American Government. Houston, TX: OpenStax. **This is a free textbook.**

To get it, visit [OpenStax.org](https://openstax.org)

(2) In addition, you are required to purchase a student subscription to The New York Times. You may do so following this link and selecting your preferred option: [Student & Educator Rate](#)

(3) Finally, please download a copy of the [Georgia State Constitution](#), which is available online free of charge.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance is a requirement of this course. Students are allowed 4 absences, and 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. 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.

Reading Quizzes

The reading quizzes will be completed online in the CourseDen assessment tool. Quizzes conclude on Mondays by 9 a.m. Eastern Standard Time, and no extensions will be granted. Students will be able to take a quiz anytime once available. **Please see the guidelines at the end of the weekly schedule for more details.**

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

No.	Requirements	Due Date	% Grade Value
1	Quizzes (10)	See Weekly Schedule	20
2	Exam 1	Monday, 29 January	20
3	Exam 2	Monday, 26 February	20
4	Exam 3	Wednesday, 28 March	20
5	Final Exam (cumulative)	Wednesday, 02 May	20

Please note that **NO curves** or adjustment of scores will be made. **Extra Credit** will be awarded for attendance to, and reporting of, special events, and completing short writing assignments.

CLASSROOM POLICIES

Civility is very important in the conduct of politics, and it is of paramount importance in fostering a positive learning environment in the classroom. Therefore, we will adhere to the following practices: (1) Please arrive on time. (2) Please turn cell phones to airplane mode during class. (3) Please do not text, web surf, sleep, or work on material for other courses during class. (4) Since we will deal with controversial issues on a regular basis, and since it is vital to the success of this class to maintain an atmosphere of mutual respect and civility, personal attacks will not be tolerated.

COMMUNICATION

Email

All e-mail communication will proceed through official UWG channels (i.e. CourseDen, official UWG Gmail accounts). **I prefer that you contact me directly at: jperalta@westga.edu**

Discussion board

There is a discussion board called "Ask the Instructor a General Question." Please ask general information or assignment questions there so that everyone may see the answers. If you need to contact me on a different matter, please contact me through the email tab of the course website. For this class to work effectively, and for you to remain informed of course developments and latest updates, please login to the course website approximately every 48 hours.

Response Time and Netiquette

(1) If you ask me direct questions via email (jperalta@westga.edu), I will generally reply within two working days or 24-48 hours (weekend and holidays are not working days).

(2) Please abide by basic Internet etiquette or netiquette when communicating online. Emails must be properly addressed and use appropriate language, tone, and grammar. Also, communication in an online environment takes special consideration, so please avoid using acronyms (text message abbreviations); and keep in mind that your posts are public and cannot be retracted or deleted!

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.

Fair Use

All "Website" content and "Course Materials" for this course are intended for the sole use of the enrolled members only; for the purposes associated with it; and may not be retained, altered, shared, or further disseminated without explicit authorization from the copyright holder.

Weekly Class Schedule

Module 1: Foundations

- Jan. 08 – 12: Chapter 1: American Government and Civic Engagement
Quiz 1 – This quiz will be due Friday, January 12 by 9a.m.
- Jan. 15 – 19: Chapter 2: The Constitution and Its Origins
Quiz 2 – due Monday, January 15 by 9a.m.
- Jan. 22 – 26: Chapters 3 & 14: American Federalism & State and Local Government
Quiz 3 due Monday, January 22 by 9a.m.
- Jan. 29 – Feb. 02 **Exam 1 – due Monday, 29 January 2018, 11:00am–12:15pm via CourseDen
Covers Chapters 1, 2, 3, 14, the US. Constitution, the GS Constitution, and
selected news articles.**
- Chapter 13: Federal Courts
No quiz this week, next quiz will cover chapter 13
- Module 2: Individual Agency and Action**
- Feb. 05 - 09 Chapter 4: Civil Liberties
Quiz 4 (Covers chapters 4 & 13) – due Monday, February 05 by 9a.m.
- Feb. 12 - 16 Chapter 5: Civil Rights
Quiz 5 – due Monday, February 12 by 9a.m.
- Feb. 19 - 23 Chapter 6: The Politics of Public Opinion
Quiz 6 – due Monday, February 19 by 9a.m.
- Feb. 26 – Mar. 02 **Exam 2 – due Monday, 26 February 2018, 11:00am–12:15pm via CourseDen
Covers Chapters 4, 5, 6, 13, the U.S. Constitution, and selected news articles.
Wednesday, February 28, 2018 – [Last day to withdraw with a grade of W from
Full Session](#)**
- Chapter 7: Voting and Elections
Quiz 7 – due Friday, March 2 by 9a.m.
- Module 3: Toward Collective Action**
- Mar. 05 – 09 Chapter 8: The Media
Quiz 8 – due Monday, March 05 by 9a.m.
- Mar. 12 - 16 Chapter 9 & 10: Political Parties & Interests Groups and Lobbying
Quiz 9 (Covers chapters 9 & 10) – due Monday, March 12 by 9a.m.
- Mar. 19 – 23 Spring Break – No Classes**

Mar. 26 - 30	Module 4: Delivering Collective Action: Formal Institutions Exam 3 due Wednesday, 28 March 2018, 11:00am–12:15pm via CourseDen Covers Chapters 7, 8, 9, 10 and selected news articles
Apr. 02 – 06	Chapter 11: Congress
Apr. 09 - 13	Chapter 11: Congress, continued Quiz 10 – due Monday, April 09 by 9a.m.
Apr. 16 - 20	Chapter 12: The Presidency
Apr. 23 – 27	Chapter 12: The Presidency, continued Quiz 11 – due Monday, April 23 by 9a.m. (This is a bonus quiz)
Apr. 30 – May 04	Final Review
Dec. 04 – 08	Final Exam Due Wednesday, 02 May 2018, 08:00am-11:00am via CourseDen Exam 4 is a cumulative Final Exam.

Reading Quizzes General Guidelines

What and when? Reading quizzes are due as scheduled and are short essays in which you react to and reflect on the content of a chapter.

How long? Your responses should be approximately 250-350 words in length. Please try to see them as an opportunity for exploration and engagement with the text and with your classmates rather than as a hoop to be jumped through or a task to be checked off. This will also be the best way to understand the material and prepare for the exams, so the more effort you place on these readings quizzes, the better prepared you will be for the exams.

How?

1. Summarize the content of the reading. In this section, you should avoid offering opinions. Simply identify and explain the central questions, theories, and evidence whether you agree with it or not.
2. Reflect on one aspect of the reading about which you were critical/unsure/puzzled. In other words, allow your personal (but reflective and considered) response to the material to come out in the second paragraph. Here you can react, agree, disagree, and so on. But you must always explain why you are adopting the stance you are adopting.
3. Reflect on one aspect of the reading that made you think differently about something **OR** reflect on how the topic of your section of this class ties in with other chapters discussed **OR** how it ties in with your personal experience with politics.
4. Finish with two questions about the topic you would still like to see addressed in class. If you have no further questions, don't just make two up for the sake of it.

It is your responsibility to ensure that responses are no shorter than 250 words (not including name, title, etc.) and no longer than 350 (being concise is important even if there are occasions on which you would love to say more. Whittling things down is an important skill.) Responses must be correctly formatted and be generally grammatically correct.