

University of West Georgia
Fall 2019
POLS 1101 – 10
American Government
Tue-Thu 11:00am–12:15pm (Nursing 115)

Dr. J. Salvador Peralta
Office: POLS 323
Office Hours: Mon-Thu 2:00-3:00pm
Office Phone: 678-839-4993
E-mail: jperalta@westga.edu

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. 2019. American Government 2e. Houston, TX: OpenStax. **This is a free textbook. Download it from: [OpenStax.org](https://openstax.org)**

(2) In addition, you are required to read The New York Times. UWG provides every UWG student **access to the NY Times for free**. To redeem your complimentary copy, [follow this link](#).

(3) Finally, please download a free copy of the [Georgia State Constitution](#).

Attendance and Participation

Attendance is a requirement of this course. Students are allowed 4 absences, but 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	Thursday, 1 September	20
3	Exam 2	Tuesday, 1 October	20
4	Exam 3	Thursday, 31 October	20
5	Final Exam (cumulative)	Wednesday, 11 December	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.

Late Policy:

Late submission of any requirement is not allowed. However, legitimate reasons may preclude a student from submitting an assignment on time. In those cases, a student may be allowed to submit an assignment late but (a) must present well-documented evidence to support a request for late submissions, and (b) will incur a penalty worth 20% of the value of the assignment.

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 and turnoff your laptops during class. (3) Please do not 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

- Aug. 14 – 16: Chapter 1: American Government and Civic Engagement
Thursday will be an introductory day
- Aug. 19 – 23: Chapter 2: The Constitution and Its Origins
Quiz 1 – due by noon on Friday, August 23, via CourseDen.
- Aug. 26 – 30: Chapters 3 & 14: American Federalism & State and Local Government
Quiz 2 due by noon on Friday, August 30, via CourseDen.
- Sep. 02 – 06 **Exam 1 – due by 1pm on Thursday, 05 September 2019, via CourseDen
Covers Chapters 1, 2, 3, 14, the US. Constitution, the GS Constitution, and
selected news articles.**

Module 2: Individual Agency and Action

- Sep. 09 – 13 Chapter 13: Federal Courts –
Quiz 3 due by noon on Friday, September 13, via CourseDen.
- Sep. 16 – 20 Chapter 4: Civil Liberties
Quiz 4 due by noon on Friday, September 20, via CourseDen.
- Sep. 23 – 27 Chapter 5: Civil Rights
Quiz 5 due by noon on Friday, September 27, via CourseDen.
- Sep. 30 – Oct. 04 **Exam 2 – due by 1pm on Tuesday, 1 October 2019, via CourseDen
Covers Chapters 4, 5, 13, the U.S. Constitution, and selected news articles.**

No class, Thursday, October 3, 2019. [Fall Break, October 3-4.](#)

Module 3: Toward Collective Action

- Oct. 07 – 11 Chapter 6: The Politics of Public Opinion
Quiz 6 due by noon on Friday, October 11, via CourseDen.
- Wednesday, October 9, 2019 – [Last day to withdraw with a grade of W](#)**

- Oct. 14 – 18 Chapter 7: Voting and Elections
Quiz 7 due by noon on Friday, October 18, via CourseDen.
- Oct. 21 – 25 Chapter 8: The Media
Quiz 8 due by noon on Friday, October 25, via CourseDen.

Module 4: Delivering Collective Action: Formal Institutions

- Oct. 28–Nov. 01 **Exam 3 due by 1pm on Thursday, 31 October 2019, via CourseDen
Covers Chapters 6, 7, 8 and selected news articles**
- Nov. 04 – 08 Chapter 9 & 10: Political Parties & Interests Groups and Lobbying
Quiz 9 (Covers chapters 9 & 10) – due by noon on Friday, Nov. 8, via CourseDen.

- Nov. 11 – 15 Chapter 11: Congress
Quiz 10 – due by 1pm on Friday, November 15, via CourseDen
- Nov. 18 – 22 Chapter 11: Congress, continued
Quiz 11 – due by 1pm on Friday, November 22 (This is a bonus quiz)
- Nov. 25 – 29 **Thanksgiving – no classes**
- Dec. 02 – 06 Review of Congress and the Presidency
- Dec. 09 – 13 **Final Exam**
Due by 1:00pm on Wednesday, 11 December 2019, via CourseDen
Exam 4 is cumulative, with a focus on Chapters 9-12

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 350-500 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. Identify the central ideas, questions, and concepts. Then identify and explain any theories (or explanations) and evidence presented 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 350 words (not including name, title, etc.) and no longer than 500 (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.