

University of West Georgia  
Fall 2018  
POLS 1101 – 09  
American Government  
Meets: TR 08:00am–09:15am, 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/administration/vpaa/common-language-course-syllabi.php>

## 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 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 each session.

### Reading Quizzes

The reading quizzes will be completed online in the CourseDen assessment tool. Quizzes conclude on Mondays by 8 p.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. The Final Exam will be cumulative.

**Make up Exams:** 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, 10 September	20
3	Exam 2	Tuesday, 02 October	20
4	Exam 3	Tuesday, 30 October	20
5	Final Exam (cumulative)	Tuesday, 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.

## 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, (1) 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.** (2) Please arrive on time. (3) Please turn cell phones to airplane mode during class.

## COMMUNICATION

### Email

All e-mail communication will proceed through official UWG accounts (i.e. CourseDen, official UWG Gmail). **I prefer that you contact me directly at: [jperalta@westga.edu](mailto: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](mailto: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. 13 – 17: **Thursday, 16 August - Introduction to the class and each other**

Aug. 20 – 24: Chapter 1: American Government and Civic Engagement  
Quiz 1 – This quiz will be due Monday, August 20 by 8pm.

Aug. 27 – 31: Chapter 2: The Constitution and Its Origins  
Quiz 2 – due Monday, August 27 by 8pm.

Sep. 03 – 07: Chapters 3 & 14: American Federalism & State and Local Government  
Quiz 3 due Monday, September 03 by 8pm.

### **Module 2: Individual Agency and Action**

**Exam 1 – due via CourseDen on Monday, September 10 by 8:00pm  
Covers Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 14, the U.S. Constitution, and the Georgia State Constitution.**

Sep. 10 – 14: Chapter 13: Federal Courts & Chapter 4: Civil Liberties  
Quiz 4 (Covers chapters 4 & 13) – due Wednesday, September 12 by 8pm.

Sep. 17 – 21: Chapter 5: Civil Rights  
Quiz 5 – due Monday, September 17 by 8pm.

Sep. 24 – 28: Chapter 6: The Politics of Public Opinion  
Quiz 6 – due Monday, September 24 by 8pm.

Oct. 01 – 05: **Exam 2 –  
due Tuesday, October 02, 08:00am–09:15am via CourseDen  
Covers Chapters 4, 5, 6, 13, the U.S. Constitution, the Georgia State  
Constitution, and selected news articles.**

**Thursday, 04 October – Fall Break (no class)**

### **Module 3: Toward Collective Action**

Oct. 08 – 12: Chapter 7: Voting and Elections  
Quiz 7 – due Monday, October 8 by 8pm.

**Monday, October 8 – Last day to withdraw with a grade of W**  
Oct. 15 – 19: Chapter 8: The Media  
Quiz 8 – due Monday, October 15 by 8pm.

Oct. 22 – 26: Chapter 9 & 10: Political Parties & Interests Groups and Lobbying  
Quiz 9 (Covers chapters 9 & 10) – due Monday, October 22 by 8pm.

### **Module 4: Delivering Collective Action: Formal Institutions**

Oct 29–Nov 02: **Exam 3 –  
due via CourseDen on Tuesday, October 30, 08:00am–09:15am**

**Covers Chapters 7, 8, 9, 10, and selected news articles**

**Thursday, November 01 – Midterm elections discussion**

Nov. 05 – 09: Chapter 11: Congress

Nov. 12 – 16: Chapter 11: Congress, continued  
Quiz 10 – due Monday, November 12 by 8pm

Nov. 19 – 23: **Thanksgiving recess (no classes)**

Nov. 26 – 30: Chapter 12: The Presidency  
Quiz 11 – due Monday, November 26 by 8pm (This is a bonus quiz).

Dec. 03 – 07: Chapter 12: The Presidency, continued

Dec. 10 – 14 [Final Exam \(cumulative\)](#)

**Due via CourseDen on Tuesday, December 11, 8:00 am–10:00am**

### **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 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 class and 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 and support it with evidence from the text.
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.) Responses must be correctly formatted and be grammatically correct.