

University of West Georgia
Spring 2017
American Government
POLS 1101 – 13 and AB1
Meets: TR 2:00–3:15pm, Anthropology 7

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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.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

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

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.

Quizzes: The quizzes will be completed online under the CourseDen assessment tool. Quizzes conclude on Sundays by 5 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, and no extensions will be granted. Students will be able to take a quiz anytime once available. To complete the quizzes, students will login and be given a time limit to complete all of the questions. Any student not taking the quiz during the specified period will receive a zero.

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	Due Date	% Grade Value
1	Quizzes (10)	See Weekly Schedule	20
2	Exam 1	Tuesday, 05 September	20
3	Exam 2	Tuesday, 26 September	20
4	Exam 3	Tuesday, 25 October	20
5	Final Exam (cumulative)	Tuesday, 05 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 such as lectures, films, and completing short writing assignments.

Texts: (1) Glen Krutz et al. 2016. American Government. Houston, TX: OpenStax. **This is a free textbook. To get it, follow the instructions in the [Getting Started Guide](#)**

(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.

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 off cell phones during class. (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, 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.

COMMUNICATING with the instructor and each other:

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: We will adhere to the following protocols:

(1) If you ask me direct questions in CourseDen or via email, I will generally reply back 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!

DISCLAIMERS

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

Week	Module 1: Foundations
Aug. 07 – 11:	Introduction to the class and each other
Aug. 14 – 18:	Chapter 1: American Government and Civic Engagement Quiz 1
Aug. 21 – 25:	Chapter 2: The Constitution and Its Origins Quiz 2
Aug. 28 – Sep. 01	Chapters 3 & 14: American Federalism & State and Local Government Quiz 3
	Module 2: Individual Agency and Action
Sep. 04 - 08	Chapter 13: The Federal Courts Tuesday 05 September 2017, Exam 1 Covers Chapters 1, 2, 3, 14, the US. Constitution, the GS Constitution, and selected news articles.
Sep. 11 - 15	Chapter 4: Civil Liberties Quiz 4 (Covers Chapters 4 & 13)
Sep. 18 - 22	Chapter 5: Civil Rights Quiz 5
	Module 3: Toward Collective Action
Sep. 25 – 29	Chapter 6: The Politics of Public Opinion Tuesday, 26 September 2017, Exam 2 Covers Chapters 4, 5, 13, the U.S. Constitution, and selected news articles. Friday, September 29, 2017 – Last day to withdraw with a grade of W
Oct. 2 – 6	Chapter 7: Voting and Elections Quiz 6 (Covers chapters 6 & 7)
Oct. 9 - 13	Chapter 8: The Media Quiz 7
Oct. 16 – 20	Chapter 9 & 10: Political Parties & Interests Groups and Lobbying Quiz 8

Module 4: Delivering Collective Action: Formal Institutions

- Oct. 23 - 27 Chapter 11: Congress
Tuesday, 25 October 2013, Exam 3
Covers Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and selected news articles
- Oct. 30 – Nov. 3 Chapter 15 & 16: The Bureaucracy and Domestic Policy
Quiz 9 (Covers chapters 11, 15, & 16)
- Nov. 06 - 10 Chapter 12 & 17: The Presidency and Foreign Policy
- Nov. 13 - 17 Chapter 12 & 17: The Presidency and Foreign Policy, continued
Quiz 10 (Covers chapters 12 & 17)
- Nov. 20 – 24 Thanksgiving Break – No Classes**
- Nov. 27 – Dec. 1 What is politics? . . . review
- Dec. 04 – 08 [Final Exam Week](#)
Tuesday 05 December 2017, 11:00am-1:00pm, Exam 4 – This is a cumulative Final Exam.