

American Government, POLS 1101

Spring 2018

M & W- 7:30-8:50 a.m.

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Course Description:

A study of government and politics, including the philosophical and constitutional foundations, governing institutions, political behavior and major public policy issues. This course satisfies the State legislative requirement concerning the United States Constitution and the Georgia Constitution. This course is an introduction to American government and politics. While the course will focus mainly on issues at the national level, attention will also be given to state and local government. As a class we will discuss the political birth of the American regime and observe how the original framework designed by the Founding Fathers has both survived and evolved over the past two centuries. Ultimately, the aim of this course is to prepare students, regardless of their individual academic careers, to become more knowledgeable and thoughtful citizens.

Course Objectives:

Students in this class should develop a broad understanding of American government and politics. By the end of the semester students should be able to demonstrate that they have developed an understanding of the political and legal process of the U.S. and Georgia, and an understanding of the terminology of political science and U.S. politics, adapting written communication to specific purposes and audiences. They should demonstrate a knowledge of the U.S. and Georgia Constitutions. They should be able to identify the institutions and processes of the three branches of the U.S. government. Finally, they should be able to recognize current political issues and explain the policy making process and analyze politics in terms of political behavior and linking institutions. To hone this ability there will be class discussion on various current political events. Therefore, you should be aware of the most recent political happenings. This can be accomplished by reading the political articles from a national newspaper on a daily basis.

Required Texts:

- Matthew R. Kerbel, *American Government: Your Voice, Your Future* (Fifth Edition).
- Single semester subscription (15 weeks) to the Wall Street Journal –The cost of this subscription is \$15.00. We will cover the process for subscribing during the first class session.

HOW TO ORDER THE TEXTBOOK DIRECTLY FROM TEXTBOOK MEDIA-

Go to www.textbookmedia.com. Register. It will take about 60 seconds. You will be taken to My Account. You will see “You currently have no books to view.” To find the Kerbel book, click on Booklist. Locate the book and click on Pricing Details. You will have four options for the format (e-book, pdf, iPhone, and print). Read the descriptions and make your choice. Click on Add to Cart, then Checkout. Then you’ll see a page for Review Order. Once processed, eBook orders will be in My Account . Print orders may

take up to seven business days, but you'll have the online book immediately in My Account.

Student Responsibilities:

Assumption of Adulthood

This is a college course. All students are assumed to be adults and will be held to adult standards of accountability and decorum. You are expected to familiarize yourself with the requirements of the course. You are expected to meet the requirements of the course without having to be reminded of such things as exam dates. It is expected that you will do the required reading for the course. This is material that will not be covered in class, but for which you will be responsible. It is expected that you will complete all assignments, and that they will be completed in a timely manner and in conformity with the directions given concerning that assignment. If you have questions, you are expected to contact the professor to seek clarification

Attendance

There is more to the university experience than reading books. Being present for and participating in course lectures is an important facet of that experience. **Students are expected to attend all sessions of this class as a demonstration of the discipline the pursuit of education requires. A student who misses a class session is solely responsible for the materials for that day. Except in emergency situations—death of a family member, documented illness or other scenarios approved by me—I will not go over material missed by an absent student. Also, if a student misses a test or other assignment due to being absent from class he or she will get a grade of zero. A makeup of the exam or assignment will only be allowed in a case determined by me to constitute a valid emergency situation.**

Attendance will be taken 20 times throughout the semester. Each class will be worth 1 point, based upon whether you attend (1) or do not (0). This will be worth 20 points total.

Research Project

The ability to communicate in written form is another important academic skill worth developing. To that end students will be expected to compose an analytical research paper. This is not an opportunity simply to string together a bunch of bolded vocabulary words drawn from the textbook, but rather to demonstrate your understanding of the material itself. Specific details are provided in Appendix A.

Exams

A total of three exams—two sectional and one final—will be administered over the course of the semester. Each exam will include a combination of multiple choice, true/false, and fill-in-the blank questions. Each sectional exam will have 50 questions and the final exam will have 75 questions- 50 taken from the material covered since the last sectional exam and 25 covering material addressed during the semester. Punctuality matters on test days, so be on time! Expect exam questions to be drawn from the lecture, the textbook, and any additional reading assignments.

Two Part Writing Assignment

Additionally, there will be a two-part writing assignment in which you will write two separate papers. Each paper will be worth 15 points. Specific detail will be provided.

Participation

We will start each class period with a discussion of an article(s) that you have been assigned to read from the Wall Street Journal and some member(s) of the class will be selected to lead that discussion.

Please keep in mind the following:

- There is no opportunity for extra credit; therefore, it is in your interest to attend lecture, take notes, and keep up with your assigned reading.

Grading Procedures:

Students will be assigned a letter grade based on their points earned out of the total possible points, summarized below:

Exam I: 50 points

Exam II: 50 points

Final Exam: 75 points

Two Part Writing Assignment: 30 points

Research Project: 50

Class Attendance: 20 points

Participation: 25 points

Total: 300 points

Total points for course: 300

A: 270-300

B: 240-269

C: 210-239

D: 180-209

F: 0-179

Plagiarism, Cheating and Electronic Devices

This course has a strict zero-tolerance policy for academic misconduct. **If you plagiarize or cheat, you fail the course and I will report you to the University.** No debates. No letting-you-off-with-a warning. It is each student's responsibility to know what constitutes cheating and plagiarism. Further information regarding academic honesty can be found in the Student Handbook. Ignorance of the University of West Georgia Honor Code will not be accepted as an excuse for violations of it.

Uses of Cell Phones, Laptops and other Electronic Devices

I have a classroom policy against the use of Droids, I-phones, cell phones and all the other electronic gadgets. Students may bring lap top computers or I-pads to class for the purpose of taking notes only. No electronic devices of any kind are permitted during exams. Cell phones will remain off during all class periods. Think of this class as a journey back in time to the period in ancient history called 1985 during which mankind existed without cell phones and gadgets.

Texting in class is prohibited and it will result in your being asked to leave the class!!!

UWG Common Syllabus Language

This syllabus includes the UWG Common Syllabus Language that can be found at: http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common_Language_for_Course_Syllabi.pdf

This is a QEP Course.

Clear written communication is important in all disciplines, and increasingly employers are expecting college graduates to be good writers. That's one reason why UWG is focusing on improving undergraduate student writing across the core. When you hear about the QEP—UWG's Quality Enhancement Plan—know that what your peers and professors are talking about is WRITING, because we are committed to giving you opportunities across your core curriculum to improve the quality of your writing. Want to know more? Visit the QEP website at <http://www.westga.edu/qep/>

COURSE OUTLINE

Introduction: American Political Culture

Readings: *American Government*, pp. 1-21

Section I: Foundations of Government
Founding Principles, The Constitution, Federalism

Readings: The Declaration of Independence, *American Government*, Appendix A

Constitution, Preamble and Article I, *American Government*, Appendix B.

American Government, pp. 22-51.

First Exam

Section II: Politics and the Presidency
Campaigns and Elections, the Presidency and the Executive Branch

Readings: Constitution, Article II, *American Government*, Appendix B

American Government, pp. 194-226

American Government, pp. 300-339

American Government, pp. 340-367

Second Exam

Section III: Congress and The Judiciary

Readings: Constitution, Article III, *American Government*, Appendix B.

Constitution, Amendments I-XXVI, *American Government*, Appendix B.

American Government, pp. 258-299

American Government, pp. 368-401

Section IV: State and Local Government

Final Exam- May 7, 2018

APPENDIX A. Research Project – A Critical View on Current Political Issues

<p>Choosing an issue</p>	<p>You should carefully analyze one of the current political, economic, or social issues. For example, issues like (illegal) immigration, abortion, death penalty, gay marriage, health care (and reform), minimum wage, unemployment, tax, marijuana laws, social security reform, right to die, gang crisis, gun control/right, alternative energy, privatizing military, middle east peace, Iran/North Korea nuclear development, wars, government spending/debt, education, search and seizure issues, etc.. Or any political issue will be fine (If you are not sure, please ask the instructor about your topic) *** Reporting your topic: Due January 17, 2018, in class (Submit a paragraph-long description of your topic). After this date, you cannot change your topic.</p>
<p>Major components that you should include in your issue perspective</p>	<p>(1) Nature and background of the issue: what is the issue about? What major debates are in the issue? Are there pros and cons in the issue? If so, what are they? Why is the issue important? (2) Historical and current development of this issue: if the issue has existed for a long time, how has the issue evolved and developed? How has Congress been dealing with the issue? What are the major government reactions or policies? How about interest groups? (3) Key arguments: identify the major arguments within the issue. Does political ideology (affiliation) make a difference? Are there any gender differences? Is there any socio-economic factors that make a difference surrounding the issue? (4) Pros vs. cons contrast: what are their most favorable rationales? How do public opinions respond to the issue or the arguments (pros and cons)? (5) Your judgment: what is your perspective? Do you prefer the pros or cons, or a third perspective? Why? (Make a strong argument)</p>
<p>Writing criteria and format</p>	<p>Your writing should be persuasive, clear, and logical. The essay must be typed and checked for spelling and grammar. Appropriate citations and references are required. Here are some format guidelines. (1) Cover title page: Title and your name, the cover page is not counted toward the total page number. (2) Margin should be 1-inch top, bottom, left, and right. (3) Use Times New Roman 12 font (4) Start your essay from the top line of the first page: Do not write your name, course name, and the instructor name again on the top margin of the first page. (5) Do not make any irregular space between paragraphs. (6) Provide accurate citations in necessary places. (7) Page number should be placed in the bottom center of each page. (8) References should be the last page. (9) Length (body of writing, not including the cover and reference page): 6~ 8 pages [Minimum requirement is 6 full pages], and double-spaced</p>
<p>Plagiarism</p>	<p>Plagiarism is the use of materials by other authors and content providers without the appropriate attribution. This is a serious violation of the University Honor Code. You must use the appropriate citations and references if you use the work of others to inform your paper. Types of Plagiarism (http://www.plagiarism.org/plagiarism-101/types-of-plagiarism/): (1) Submitting another’s work, word-for-word, as one’s own. (2) Contains significant portions of text from a single source without alterations. (3) Changing key words and phrases but retaining the essential content of the source. (4) Paraphrases from multiple sources, made to fit together (5) Borrows generously from the writer’s previous work without citation. (6) Combines perfectly cited sources with copied passages without citation. (7) Mixes copied material from multiple sources. (8) Includes citations to non-existent or inaccurate information about sources. (9) Includes proper citation to sources but the paper contains almost no original work. (10) Includes proper citation, but relies too closely on the text’s original wording and/or structure.</p>
<p>Due Dates</p>	<p>Topic Choice: January 17 Project Due: April 16</p>