

POLS 1101: American National Government

**Fall 2018
MW 11:00-12:15
Bonner Lecture Hall**

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Course Description

This course is intended to introduce students from a wide variety of academic disciplines and backgrounds to the operation and importance of American national government. We will cover in depth national institutions, as the course title suggests, but also devote our attention to such topics as politics of the American founding, the constitution and how it has evolved over time, the changing nature of conceptions of rights in American society, elections and the importance of the media and interest groups, and we will even devote some class time to areas of public policy and politics in Georgia. As the preceding demonstrates, we will survey a vast array of topics fundamental to improving your understanding of American politics.

Course Objectives

Relating to the description of the course, the instructor will consider this course a success if students walk away from the course at the end of the semester with a fundamental understanding of how American government works, but more importantly, how the government operations and outcomes effect our lives as citizens of this nation on a daily basis. It is the instructor's intent not to convince you of any partisan dispositions or policy objectives, but rather to attempt to foster the student's understanding of American politics while stressing the importance of civic involvement among citizens.

Learning Outcomes for POLS 1101 – American Government

Student completing POLS 1101 will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a knowledge of the U. S. Constitution.
2. Demonstrate a knowledge of the Georgia State Constitution.
3. Identify the institutions and processes of the three branches of U.S. government.
4. Recognize current political issues and explain the policy making process.
5. Analyze politics in terms of political behavior and linking institutions.

6. Demonstrate that they have developed an understanding of the political and legal processes 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.

Required Texts:

Barbour, Christine, Gerald R. Wright, and Greg Giroux. *Keeping the Republic*. Cheapest edition you can find.

Course Evaluation

Exams (150 points): There will be three exams throughout the course of the semester. Exams will consist of 50 multiple choice questions. Each exam will be worth 50 points. Exams will be taken in class.

Final Exam (150 points): There will be a cumulative final during finals week. It will be worth 150 points.

Short Paper (8 points): There will be one short paper (details available during week 1).

Online Discussions (42 points; must be completed by due date): Students will complete 6 online discussions due as noted in the course schedule below. Discussions will be worth 7 points each, with credit earned based on a satisfactory response to the prompt plus satisfactory responses to two colleagues at minimum! In general, more is better when it comes to discussions.

Grading Procedures:

Students will be assigned one of the following letter grades based on their points earned out of the total possible points:

A: 90-100%

B: 80-89%

C: 70-79%

D: 60-69%

F: 0-59%

The total number of points available in this course will be 400. As such, the grade breakdown is as follows:

A: 315-350

B: 280-314

C: 245-279

D: 210-244

F: 0-209

Academic Dishonesty:

I take academic dishonesty very seriously, as does the University. As such, any cheating or suspicion of cheating on any assignment for this course will not be tolerated and will be

prosecuted to the fullest extent, including those authorities above me. Cheating will result in a failing grade for the course, no exceptions.

Make up assignments:

No such thing. All assignments must be done on time, or will not be accepted. Period.

Students with disabilities and Social Justice:

For information on disabilities and social justice, please go to the following link.

<http://tinyurl.com/UWGSyllabusPolicies>

Course Schedule

Week 1: (August 15) Introduction

- Students will receive syllabus. We will talk. Students will leave room with warm, fuzzy feelings, holding hands and skipping out of the building.

Week 2: (August 20-22) Introduction to Politics

- August 20- class will meet online. Complete the introductory discussion (Online discussion 1) and respond to at least two colleagues. All participation in discussion is due by Wednesday at the beginning of class.
- August 22- What is Politics (Chapter 1)

Week 3: (August 27-29) Political Culture and the Founding

- August 27-Chapter 2 Political Culture
- August 29- Chapter 3 The Founding (class meets online. It is my birthday. I do not teach on my birthday. Online discussion 2 due by Wednesday, September 5).

Week 4: (September 3-5) The Founding (continued)

- September 3- Labor Day, no class.
- September 5- Chapter 3 the Founding (continued)

Week 5: (September 10-12) The Constitution, Short Paper due.

- September 10- Chapter 4 The Constitution
- September 12- Chapter 5 Civil Liberties
- Short Paper due September 12 on Course Den.

Week 6: (September 17-19) Civil Liberties/Civil Rights

- September 17- Chapter 5, Civil Liberties (continued)
- September 19- Chapter 6, Civil Rights.

Week 7: (September 24-26) Exam I

- September 24- Review for Exam I
- September 26- Exam I taken in class.

Week 8: (October 1-3) Congress

- October 1- Chapter 7, Congress.
- October 3- Chapter 7, Congress.

Week 9: (October 8-10) Presidency

- October 8- Chapter 8 Presidency
- October 10- Presidency continued

Week 10: (October 15-17)

- October 15- Chapter 9 Courts.
- October 17- Chapter 9 Courts continued

Week 11: (October 22-October 24) Bureaucracy

- October 22- Bureaucracy. Class meets online. Online discussion 3 due by Monday, October 29th at beginning of class.
- October 24- Bureaucracy. Class meets online.

Week 12: (October 29-31) Exam II

- October 29- Review for Exam II
- October 31- Exam II taken in class.

Week 13: (November 5-7) Public Opinion

- November 5- Chapter 11 Public Opinion
- November 7- Chapter 11, Public Opinion. Class meets online. Complete online discussion 4 by November 12 at beginning of class.

Week 14: (November 12-14) Political Parties

- November 12- Chapter 12 Political Parties Class meets online. Complete online discussion 5 by November 26 at the beginning of class.
- November 14- Chapter 13 Interest Groups. Class meets online. Complete online discussion 6 by November 26 at the beginning of class.

Thanksgiving Break November 17-25

Week 15: (November 26-28) Exam III

- November 26- Review for Exam III.
- November 28- Exam III taken in class.

Week 16: (December 3-5) Review for Final

- December 3- Review for final
- December 5- Review for final.

Cumulative Final Examination: Wednesday, December 12, 11:00-1:00