

POLS 1101: American Government

Semester: Fall 2018

CRNs: 83477, 93764, 93810

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Office Location: Langdale 856

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Class Location: Langdale 600

Class Meetings: WF 11:00am – 12:15pm

Office Hours: WF 1:00pm – 2:30pm

Or by appointment

Prerequisites: None, this is an introductory, required course for all Georgia State students.

Syllabus

PLEASE NOTE: You are responsible for being aware of all policies, information, and assignments listed on this syllabus. You are also responsible for all materials covered in class, regardless of your attendance, including assignment handouts provided throughout the semester. By remaining in this class, you are accepting this responsibility and agreeing to follow the course guidelines. Read each section carefully and contact me immediately with any questions.

Objectives:

This is a required course to complete your undergraduate degree at Georgia State University. Over the course of the semester, you will be learning the following.

1. About the history and evolution of the American Government – why and how the U.S. Constitution and Government originated and developed.
2. The evolution of Civil Liberties and Civil Rights throughout American History, their foundation and their implementation.
3. The key functions, duties and powers of the Legislative, Judicial and Executive branches of the Government.
4. Key political concepts, how they shape U.S. Government, and they impact your life.
5. Effect of public opinion and public participation on governance and the direction of the Federal Government.
6. The role and influence of political parties on Government, their origin, and their future.
7. The impact of the Media and the changing Media landscape

Further you will be expected to:

1. Identify key elements, concepts, and structures in American Government.
2. Objectively evaluate pressing political problems and current events from several viewpoints.
3. Understand how these concepts and issues connect and influence your own life.

Announcements and Communications:

When I need to make announcements to the class as a whole, I will do so by posting an announcement on the class iCollege page. If I need to contact you individually, I will do so by messaging you using your GSU Email. You should be in the habit of checking your email **daily**, throughout the course of your tenure at Georgia State University. You can download the Outlook app on your phone or computer and connect with your GSU email. If you need to contact me, please use my email address: rluke2@gsu.edu. The iCollege email system is unwieldy, **thus the best way to get in contact with me is through email.**

Required Readings:

1. The U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights. Available through your online textbook, or widely available through the internet. It is strongly recommended that you print out a hard copy for reference throughout the semester.
2. Current news topics. In this class we will be discussing current events, and it is important for you to be knowledgeable of these events, so you can contribute to class. It is strongly advised that you reference two or more reputable news sources, preferably of different partisan viewpoints. I recommend the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal. It is not required to purchase a subscription to newspapers, rather you should sign up for online updates, which many news organizations offer free of charge.
3. Online Textbook: Evans, Michael. 2016. *Understanding the American Way of Government and Politics*. Kendall Hunt Publishing / Great River Learning.

Instructions for purchasing a subscription to this webtext and registering an account are provided on iCollege. Once you have purchased a subscription and registered an account, you will access the webtext by going <http://www.grtep.com/> and entering your **username** and **password**. But first you need to purchase a subscription and register your account. If you have difficulties, you can contact Great River Learning web support using the form at <https://www.grtep.com/index.cfm/core/General/systemSupport>.

Grading:

This course is graded on a +/- letter scale. The following scale will be used to calculate grades.

A+	4.3	97-100	B	3.0	84-86	C-	1.7	70-73
A	4.0	94-96	B-	2.7	80-83	D	1.0	60-69
A-	3.7	90-93	C+	2.3	77-79	F	0.0	59-
B+	3.3	87-89	C	2.0	74-46	WF	0.0	

For more information please visit: www.gsu.edu/es

ALL GRADES WILL BE POSTED ON iCOLLEGE

Course Requirements and Graded Evaluations:

1. *Participation (10%):* Class participation is essential in this class. You should ask questions and engage with class activities in a productive manner. Furthermore, attendance for this class is highly suggested, but not mandatory. It will be extremely difficult to do well in this class if you do not attend class. We will be covering material external to the textbook. Also, we will periodically be doing KaHoot informal surveys and quizzes, as well as random in-class activities. These will not affect your grade, but I will keep track of participation with these activities. This will affect the calculation of your final grade in the following manner. For example, if we conduct 10 in-class activities over the course of the semester, each activity will count for one point. Participation in these activities will earn you a point for each.
2. *Section Exams (60%):* You will be taking three one-hour multiple choice exams in the designated class period. The exam on which you get the **highest score will be worth 30% of your final grade.** Your **second highest exam will be worth 20% of your final grade.** And your **lowest exam score will be worth 10% of your final grade.** Each exam will consist of approximately 50 multiple-choice questions and each will be non-cumulative i.e., each exam will focus only on the material in the unit just covered and not on material from previous units.

Exam 1: 9/21/18
Exam 2: 10/19/18
Exam 3: 12/7/18
3. *End of Semester Standardized Exam (5%):* The final graded component will be a standardized 30-question exam that all POLS 1101 students at GSU Atlanta and GSU Perimeter are required to take during the last two weeks of the semester. You will take the multiple-choice exam online via iCollege. (It will not be proctored in person.) More information about this exam will be provided later in the semester.
4. *Weekly Online Assignments (25% of grade):* Each week you will be doing online assignments that are designed to help you learn the material for purposes of preparing for exams and/or to help you gain deeper understanding or appreciation of the topics covered. All of these assignments are integrated within the online WebText. Each week, activities will be due no later than 11:59pm on Tuesday of the week they are assigned.

Here are the types of assignments integrated into the WebText that you must complete each week:

- a. **Study Quizzes.** Material in the textbook is presented to you in relatively brief sections within each chapter. Each section is contained on a single page. At the bottom of nearly every page you will find something called a “Study Quiz.” These quizzes are normally quite short—ranging from one to five questions—and *you may take each quiz as many times as you need in order to get a perfect score.* It is important, however, that you do not seek to skip the reading and randomly guess the answers to these questions. One of

the purposes of these quizzes is for you to check your understanding of the most important information provided on each page. Another purpose is to help you start encoding the information into your long-term memory. Research shows that immediate questioning after reading relatively short “chunks” of information is a crucial first step toward remembering the material for the long-term. However, neither of these potential benefits will be realized if you do not make an earnest effort to read the material closely and then answer the quiz questions as best you can without random guessing. It is perfectly OK to miss answers due to a lack of recall, and it is even alright to make *educated* guesses (based on your understanding and recollection of the reading), but, if you want to learn the material and do well on exams, it is not alright to skip the reading and randomly guess answers to the Study Quiz questions.

IMPORTANT: After you answer the last question on a quiz, make sure to click on “SAVE ANSWER” before clicking on “I AM FINISHED/SUBMIT FOR GRADE.” You will NOT get credit for a question if you do not click on “SAVE ANSWER.”

For questions in all forms, each question is worth one point. After submitting a Study Quiz, you will be able to review the questions and your answers, and you will be told if you got 1 or 0 points for each question. Your grade for this component will be based on the percentage of all questions that you answer correctly throughout the semester.

- b. “Your View” open-ended response questions.** These questions allow you to develop and express your thoughts through writing. You should plan to write enough to adequately express your thoughts, but this should normally require no more than about 80 words and can often be expressed in well under that many words. So long as you submit a thoughtful answer (in my judgment), you will get full credit. After submission I will adjust your score downward if the answer does not, in my judgment, reflect a requisite degree of thoughtfulness. Your submission will be visible only to you and me. However, I will periodically select the most interesting and thoughtful responses to share with the class as a whole. Each Your View question is worth 2 points. Your grade for this component will be based on the percentage of all possible Your View points that you earn.
- c. Poll questions.** Each chapter has Poll questions, which allow you to express your opinions or judgments on questions posed to all students in the class. After submitting your answer, you can click on “see results” in order to see how the rest of the class answered the question. I think you will find these polls to be fun and interesting. They are also the easiest points you will receive this semester. Just answer all of the poll questions and you will receive 100% for this component of your grade.
- d. Chapter Evaluations:** At the end of each chapter, you will be asked to fill-out a brief form on which you evaluate the chapter and, if you wish, offer written feedback on it. This is to help me learn about students’ experiences with the WebText and thereby improve it in the future. Much like Poll questions, you will receive 100% credit for simply completing these on time.

Extra Credit for Research Participation:

You may participate in GSU's Political Science Research Pool (PSRP) studies. These studies are conducted by faculty and graduate students at GSU. Students often find participation in PSRP studies fun and interesting. But, even if not, they are a great way to earn extra credit. You may earn up to 3 percentage points (on your final percent for the course) by participating in up to 3 hours of studies over the course of the semester. If you wish to participate, you can register at: <https://gsupolisci.sona-systems.com>.

Attendance Policy:

Attendance is expected for all classes. Participation makes up 10% of your grade. You cannot participate in class if you do not attend. However, attendance is not mandatory but strongly encouraged. I will not simply be teaching from the book. We will be covering other subjects and I do not post my slides or lecture notes. Furthermore, if you miss class, you will be expected to receive class materials from another student. If you miss an exam, you will need to provide documentation of a **university-approved** emergency. See your Student Handbook for details.

Policy on Missed Assignments & Deadlines:

There will be no makeup assignments or exams. If you miss an exam, you will receive a zero. If you are late to an exam, you must take it in the time that remains when you arrive. If a problem or emergency arises that prevents you from attending an exam, you should contact me via email immediately. You will be expected to provide a **university-approved** excuse and documentation. My policy on the make-up exams is that the same material will be covered, but the questions will be harder and may include short answer or essay questions. Late assignments **WILL NOT** be accepted.

Academic Honesty and Electronic Submissions:

This is a college level course and as such the expectations of academic honesty are numerous. As a result, in this class, the Georgia State University's policy as available here (<http://www.gsu.edu/~wwwfhb/sec409.html>) will strictly be adhered to. Any observed violations of such standards will be grounds for failing the course and be reported to both college and departmental authorities for review in accordance with University policy. Such a report can lead to additional disciplinary policies.

Electronic Devices:

Laptop computers are allowed in this classroom for taking notes. However, distracting behavior such as browsing Facebook or YouTube videos will not be tolerated. Cellphones and other electronic devices including MP3 players and iPods should be stored away from sight. Cell phones should be placed on silent (Not vibrate) and only emergency calls should be answered. Text messaging is also not allowed. Students that are caught using any of these devices during class will be asked to leave the class for the remaining time period. Students will also be marked absent for the class if an in-class activity or quiz has been completed.

Students with Disabilities:

Students with disabilities requiring any accommodations must be registered with the Office of Disability Services before an instructor can modify instructions or expectations. The Office of Disability Services may be contacted at 404-413-1560 or in the Student Center in 205. Any student with a disability who may require special accommodations is requested to make an appointment with the instructor at the beginning of the semester. Students must self-identify so that arrangements can be made according to University policy.

Withdrawal and Hardship Policies:

The last day to withdraw from a course and receive a “W” is **October 9, 2018**. All students who withdraw on or before this date will receive a “W”; students that withdraw after this date will receive a “WF” (Withdraw Fail). Exceptions to this policy are listed on the Registrar’s website (<http://registrar.gsu.edu/registration/withdrawals/>). Students can receive a maximum of 6 “W” in their academic career at Georgia State; after receiving 6 they will automatically receive a “WF”.

Early Alert Program:

This course participates in The Early Alert program which seeks to identify and support freshman students who need help improving their course grade. Every freshman student that needs it will receive an email invitation from the Undergraduate Studies Department to attend tutorial help. This help will cover things like time management, study skills, note taking, and general subject matter on 1101.

Classroom Behavior:

It is the expectation of the instructor that students will behave in a professional and polite manner in this class. Many of the issues that are discussed are ones that individuals often have strong personal and emotional feelings about. Yet, it should be understood that we are in a classroom and the function is to discuss the foundations of American government and its issues, not our own personal views or biases. More importantly, when personal views are discussed in topics relevant to the course, it is expected that all students will be respectful of each other’s views.

Campus Carry Law:

As of July 1st, 2017, *HBO 280 of the Georgia Assembly* went into effect on all public post-secondary education facilities in the state of Georgia (the full text of the bill can be found here: <http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/en-US/display/20172018/HB/280>). It authorizes the carrying and possession of handguns in certain manners by weapons carry license holders in certain buildings or on real property owned by or leased to public institutions of postsecondary education within limitations. One of those limitations is in classroom settings with students that are maintain dual enrollment status or are under the age of 18. This is one of those classrooms. Additional information on the law and the parameters of carrying and possession of weapons on Georgia State campuses can be found here (<http://safety.gsu.edu/campus-carry/>) .

Miscellaneous Notes and Policies:

University policy requires accordance with FERPA regulations, which state that **final grades on any assignment will not be given out over the phone or via email at any time by the instructor.** Furthermore,

To improve the class room environment students may periodically be asked to give feedback concerning the lecture, the professor, or the course in general.

****** Your constructive assessments of this course, on these and most importantly the end of the semester evaluations, play an indispensable role in shaping education at Georgia State University. Upon completing this course, please take the time to fill out the online course evaluation. ******

The course syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary.

Course Schedule with Readings:

Week 1 (8/22-8/24): Welcome + What are Governments and What Do They Do?

- Purchase and register for the WebText (see instructions above & on iCollege)
- Read the Welcome Screen and **ALL** of Chapter 1, Complete all Study Quizzes, Your View Questions, and Polls on the pages you read **by 9/4 at 11:59pm.**

8/22 – Syllabus Overview and Housekeeping

8/24 – Government: Definitions, Duties and Purpose

Week 2) (8/29-8/31): Overview of the American Way of Government and Politics

- Read **ALL** of Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, complete all Study Quizzes, Your View Questions, and Polls on the pages you read **by 9/4 at 11:59 pm.**

8/29 – Introduction to American Government

8/31 – Introduction to American Politics

* Now is a good time to register for participation in the Political Science Research Pool (PSRP) so that you are prepared to earn up to 3% extra credit on your final grade for the semester. The link for registering is available at: <https://gsupolisci.sona-systems.com>. See above for more information about this extra credit opportunity. Remember to check at least once per week for new studies in which you can participate. *

Week 3 (9/5-9/7): U.S. Constitution

- Read **ALL** of Chapter 4, complete all Study Quizzes, Your View Questions, and Polls on the pages you read **by 9/4 at 11:59pm.**

9/5 – History, the Revolution, Articles of Confederation and Lessons Learned

9/7 – The Founder’s Constitution, the Second Founding and Beyond

Week 4 (9/12-9/14): Federalism

- Read **ALL of Chapter 5,** Complete all Study Quizzes, Your View Questions, and Polls on the pages you read **by 9/11 at 11:59pm.**

9/12 – Structure, Similarities and Function

9/14 – Evolution, Power and Other Examples

Week 5 (9/19-9/21): Exam 1

9/19 – Runover and Review Session

9/21 – **Exam 1**

Week 6 (9/26-9/28): Civil Liberties

- Read **ALL** of Chapter 6, complete all Study Quizzes, Your View Questions, and Polls on the pages you read **by 9/25 at 11:59pm.**

9/26 – Lessons from the Articles, Constitutional Origins, and the 14th Amendment

9/28 – Process of Incorporation, States, and Landmark Cases

Week 7 (10/3-10/5): Civil Rights

- Read **ALL** of Chapter 7, complete all Study Quizzes, Your View Questions, and Polls on the pages you read **by 10/2 at 11:59pm.**

10/3 – Early American History, the Civil War, Reconstruction, and Southern Regression

10/5 – The Civil Rights Movement, Women’s Liberation, Gay Rights and the Future

****The last day to withdraw from the course is 10/9****

Week 8 (10/10-10/12): Political Participation & Public Opinion

- Read **ALL** of Chapter 8 & Chapter 9, complete all Study Quizzes, Your View Questions, and Polls on the pages you read **by 10/9 at 11:59pm.**

10/10 – Political Participation: Different Forms, Civil Disobedience and Social Media

10/12 – Public Opinion: The Impact on Government and Expressions

Week 9 (10/17-10/19): Exam 2

10/17 – Runover and Review Session

10/19 – **Exam 2**

Week 10 (10/24-10/26): Political Parties

- Read **ALL** of Chapter 10, complete all Study Quizzes, Your View Questions, and Polls on the pages you read **by 10/23 at 11:59pm.**

10/24 – Origins, Evolutions in System and Third Parties

10/26 – Structure, Influence, Polarization and Future of Parties

Week 11 (10/31-11/2): Interest Groups & The Media

- Read **ALL** of Chapter 11, complete all Study Quizzes, Your View Questions, and Polls on the pages you read **by 10/31 at 11:59pm.**

10/31 – Differences, Functions, Influence, Impact and Types of Political Parties

11/2 – The 4th Estate, New Media, and the Future of Journalism

Week 12 (11/7-11/9): Congress

- Read **ALL** of Chapter 12, complete all Study Quizzes, Your View Questions, and Polls on the pages you read **by 11/6 at 11:59pm.**

11/7 – Structure and Evolution

11/9 – Duties and Obligations

Week 13 (11/14-11/16): Presidency

- Read **ALL** of Chapter 13, complete all Study Quizzes, Your View Questions, and Polls on the pages you read **by 11/13 at 11:59pm.**

11/14 – Origin, Constitutional Sources and Enumerated Powers

11/16 – Evolution of Duties, Power, and the Executive Agencies

***** Thanksgiving Break: 11/18-11/25 *****

Week 14 (11/28-11/30): Judicial Branch

- Read **ALL** of Chapter 14, complete all Study Quizzes, Your View Questions, and Polls on the pages you read **by 11/27 at 11:59pm.**

11/28 – Origin, Role and Evolution of the Judiciary

11/30 – Runover and Review Session

Week 15 (12/7): Final Exam

12/7 – **Final Exam**: 10:45am – 1:15pm
Langdale 600

**** By 11:59pm on Sunday 12/11, you must complete the standardized exam on iCollege that will be worth 5% of your final grade. (See above for details about this requirement.) ****