

POLS 1101: American Government0

Semester: Fall 2022
CRN: 92796

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Office Location: Langdale 1015
Political Science Office: Langdale 1005

Class Location: Petit Science Center 124
Class Meetings: TR 12:45pm – 2:00pm
Office Hours: TR 10:00am – 11:00am
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:

- The distinctive characteristics of the American system of government, and how it compares to other countries' systems.
- The principles and structure of the U.S. Constitution and Georgia Constitution and how they have developed over time.
- How and why the relative power of the different levels of government have changed over time.
- American political parties, their origins, and their functions.
- The history and present status of civil liberties and civil rights in the United States and Georgia.
- The nature and determinants of public opinion and how it is measured.
- The changing nature of media and its role in American democracy.
- Why some groups of citizens vote more often than others, why it matters, and how this could change.
- How to find the political party (or parties) that most closely align with your values and opinions.
- How the legislative, executive, and judicial branches (of both the U.S. government and Georgia government) operate and interact to enact, implement, and define laws and public policies.
- How citizens can effectively participate in democratic politics, including register and vote in Georgia; responsibly consume and share quality political news stories; become accurately informed about issues, candidates, and vital developments pertaining to public affairs; and identify and contact elected representatives.
- The nature, causes, and consequences of political polarization in American politics today.

Required Top Hat Textbook

The digital textbook and required activities and assignments for this course will be delivered through a platform called Top Hat. To get access to our course in Top Hat, you will either pay Top Hat directly (\$60) or purchase an access code from the bookstore (\$80). There is a two-week free trial at the beginning of the semester, so you can get started right away regardless of how you eventually pay. You may have received an email (in your student email account) with instructions for enrolling in this Top Hat course. If you already followed those instructions, you should be good to go. Otherwise, here is how to access our course content in Top Hat:

1. Go to <https://app.tophat.com/e/758790> and click on the blue box that says, “Log in with school account.”
2. Next you will be redirected to a GSU website to confirm your student account through the school’s system. After you have done that, you will be returned to Top Hat.
3. After confirming your school account, on the next screen in Top Hat you will be given two options:
 - a. If you do NOT already have a Top Hat account, then select the blue box that says, “Sign-up as a student.”
 - b. If you already have a Top Hat account, then you can (and should) merge your GSU single sign-on (SSO) account with that account by entering your current Top Hat account login information where it says, “Have an existing account? Merge it with your school’s SSO.” Then click on the blue box that says, “Merge my existing account with SSO.”
4. Next you will be taken to the checkout screen. You will choose one of three options:
 - a. “Start 14 Day Free Trial” (do this to get started right away and pay later)
 - b. “Redeem Bookstore Access Keys” (do this if you purchased an access key from the GSU bookstore)
 - c. “Check Out with Credit Card” (do this if you do not have, or do not plan to get, an access code from the bookstore).

If you have any difficulties with the above, you can consult with Top Hat's Getting Started Guide (<https://bit.ly/31TGMIw>) or contact the Top Hat Support Team by directly clicking the in-app support button (the “?” at the top right of your screen in Top Hat), sending an email (support@TopHat.com), or calling (1-888-663-5491).

Technical Assistance

Should you require assistance with the Top Hat platform at any time, please contact their Support Team directly clicking the in-app support button (the “?” at the top right of your screen), sending email (support@TopHat.com), or by calling 1-888-663-5491. Specific user information may be required by the technical support team when troubleshooting issues.

If you have any technical issues related to iCollege or its applications, contact GSU IT Services at help@gsu.edu or 404-413-HELP (404-413-4357).

Graded Requirements

This course consists of the following graded requirements, with each weighted according to the amount of work involved and/or how important they are for the goals of the course.

In all, you should plan to devote **4-6 hours per week** (on average) to excel in this course.

Homework (40%)

Each week (except exam weeks), you will engage with a digital interactive multimedia textbook in a platform called, “Top Hat.” Instructions for accessing and purchasing this text are detailed above. The textbook includes chapters, on which you will be tested, and activities that help you develop civic and critical thinking skills. You will have a set of required assignments to complete in Top Hat that are due before class begins – 12:45pm. These due dates are listed in the course schedule at the end of the syllabus. When you log in to Top Hat, open the folder for that week to find the items that need to be completed by the deadline. There will be two kinds of items: chapters and activities.

Chapters (25%)

There will always be at least one chapter to complete each week. Each chapter includes a mix of text to read and video clips to watch. As you proceed through the chapter, you will encounter four kinds of questions:

- Objective questions assess your understanding of the content and are graded for correctness.
- Poll questions ask for your opinion and are graded simply on completion (there are no “correct” answers).
- Written response questions ask you to engage in critical thinking through writing and/or offer your written reflections. Like poll questions, these questions do not have correct answers. However, you are expected to demonstrate thoughtfulness and clarity in your written responses. These are graded on completion, but they can be downgraded if they do not demonstrate sufficient thoughtfulness and clarity.
- Class discussion questions ask you to offer your thoughts in a class discussion thread while respectfully responding to written responses made by classmates. These are also graded on completion but will be downgraded for thoughtlessness, lack of clarity, or for failing to engage with classmates in a civil and respectful way.

Your performance on these questions will make up 25% of your final grade for the semester.

Activities (15%)

In addition to the main chapter content, many weeks you will have additional activities in Top Hat that are designed to broaden your understanding of American politics and/or help you develop vital civic skills. These activities will normally include every type of question listed above except for class discussion questions. Some of these activities are embedded within chapters, but most will be on separate pages that are clearly marked in each weekly folder.

Your performance on these activities will make up an additional 15% of your grade. Thus, all the work you do in Top Hat (chapters + activities) will be worth 40% of your final grade for the semester.

Three Exams (40%)

You will take three exams that are based on the content from the digital textbook. Exams will include multiple choice and matching questions. A study guide will be provided for each exam, and you should work with that guide every week to prepare for your upcoming exam. You will take these exams in person and will have one full class period – 75 minutes – to complete the exams. These exams will consist of multiple choice and matching questions. The grade weighting of each exam will be determined by how well you do on each relative to the others. The exam on which you get the highest score will be worth 20% of your final grade. Your two lowest exam scores will each be worth 10% of your final grade.

Exams are non-cumulative, meaning they will only cover the material from the most recent chapters and not cover material from previous chapters. There is no final, cumulative exam for this course. Detailed study guides will be provided at the beginning of each unit. Study guides will specify what material from the textbook and lectures you will need to review to excel on each exam. It will be important to work with the study guides (in the manner recommended on them) every week. You do NOT want to wait until exam week to prepare.

Exam 1: September 22nd

Exam 2: October 27th

Exam 3: December 1st

Class Participation (10%)

Although this course is in the lecture style, throughout the semester I will endeavor to create a more seminar format. This means that I will conduct class discussions, small group projects, and other in-person activities rather than simply lecturing for the entire class period. Participating in these activities will account for 10% of your final grade in the course. While attendance is not mandatory, you will need to physically attend the course to participate in these activities. Moreover, I will test you on content from both the textbook and the course lectures. It will be difficult to excel in this course without regularly attending class.

Syllabus Quiz, Surveys, and End-of-Semester Standardized Core Assessment Quiz (10%)

During the first week of the semester, you will complete a Syllabus Quiz and Pre-Course Survey. During the semester, you will also complete at least one mid-semester check-in survey. During the last week of the semester, you will complete a Post-Course Survey. Inside that survey will be a standardized Core Assessment Quiz that is worth 5% of your grade for the semester. This 30-question multiple-choice quiz is something that all students taking POLS 1101 at GSU-Atlanta and GSU-Perimeter are required to take. There will be no study guide for this quiz. Half of the questions will test your knowledge of the basic concepts covered in the course. The other 15 questions will involve interpreting tables and graphs that pertain to core course concepts.

Altogether, these quizzes and surveys will be worth 10% of your final grade of the semester. Before you can complete the required surveys, the first week of class you will need to sign-up for the Political Science Research Pool (PSRP). As is discussed below, participation in PSRP is an optional way to earn extra credit. However, registering for PSRP is required. Instructions for registering for PSRP are provided below.

Extra Credit

You can have up to 3 extra percentage points added to your final grade for the semester by participating in PSRP studies. These studies are conducted by faculty and graduate students. They are a fun and interesting way to earn extra credit. The first week of the semester, you are required to register for PSRP studies. After registering, you will receive emails throughout the semester informing you about opportunities to participate in studies for extra credit. (Make sure to check your junk mail/spam folder and/or configure your filters to accept email from gsupolisci-admin@sona-systems.net.) While you are required to register, participating in studies is entirely optional. You will find more detailed instructions in a PDF document called “PSRP Pamphlet Fall 2022” provided in the “Extra Credit” module under the Content tab in iCollege.

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

ALL GRADES WILL BE POSTED ON iCollege

For more information please visit: <https://registrar.gsu.edu/academic-records/grading/>

Required PSRP Registration

To take required surveys and be eligible for extra credit opportunities, you are required to register for the Political Science Research Pool (PSRP). Details about the required surveys and optional extra credit are provided below. Here are the instructions for meeting the requirement of registering for PSRP during the first week of class:

- (1) Follow this link: <https://gsupolisci.sona-systems.com/>
- (2) Click on “Panther ID Log In”
- (3) You will be asked for your GSU student login information. Use the same information you use for logging in to iCollege, Panther email, etc.
- (4) Next you will be brought to an account creation screen. Most of your information will automatically appear on the form. The only thing you need to select is our course section. **Make sure to enter the correct course section.** Then click on “Request Account.”
- (5) That should be all you need to do. The next time you go to <https://gsupolisci.sona-systems.com/>, you will be able to login to your PSRP account by following steps 2 and 3 above.

If you have any difficulties registering for PSRP, contact Dr. Toby Bolsen (tbolsen@gsu.edu).

Miscellaneous Notes and Policies

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 **only** way to get in contact with me is through GSU email.

Communication of Grades

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**. If you wish to discuss grades, either speak to me after class or during office hours. If you cannot attend office hours, email me and we can set up a time to speak either in person or via Zoom.

Getting Added Back into iCollege if Dropped from the Course

Please contact me immediately if you are temporarily dropped from this course (e.g., due to nonpayment) so that I can add you manually back into iCollege right away while you are working to be officially reinstated into the course. This way you won't fall behind while waiting to be reinstated.

Financial Hardship

If you anticipate facing significant financial hardship making it impossible for you to purchase access after your free trial expires, please work with the Financial Management Center (FMC) to find a solution. They are often able to provide financial assistance for purchasing required course materials for students who need it. If FMC cannot help you, you may have to consider dropping the course and taking it during a semester when you can afford to purchase the required textbook, but please do **NOT** drop the course without discussing with me first.

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 online textbook. 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 the section below for more details.

Policy on Missed Assignments & Deadlines:

There will be no makeup assignments or exams. If you miss a homework assignment, you will receive a zero. 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 completing an assignment or 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 without university approved documentation.

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.

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 will strictly be adhered to. These requirements may be found [here](#). 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 may lead to additional disciplinary policies such as suspension and/or expulsion.

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) for the entirety of class periods. Text messaging is also not allowed. If you are expecting an urgent or emergency message, talk to me before class as to not be disruptive. 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

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. Students who wish to request

accommodation for a disability may do so via the Access and Accommodations Center (AACE) at <https://access.gsu.edu/>. Students may only be accommodated upon issuance of a signed Accommodation Plan by the AACE Center (see: <https://access.gsu.edu/testing-services/>) and are responsible for providing a copy of that plan to instructors of all classes in which accommodations are sought. 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.

Withdrawal and Hardship Policies

The last day to withdraw from a course and receive a “W” is **October 11th**. 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 (<https://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.

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: <https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/50346>). 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 (<https://safety.gsu.edu/safety-and-you/>).

Course Evaluations

Your constructive assessment of this course plays an indispensable role in shaping the future of education at GSU. Upon completing the course, please take time to fill out the online course evaluation.

Detailed Course Schedule

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

Week 1 (August 21st to August 27th):

Class Topics:

August 23rd: Course Introduction

August 25th: Chapter 1 – Introduction to American Government

Assignments:

Due September 1st at 12:45pm – Chapter 1 in Top Hat

Week 2 (August 28th to September 3rd):

Class Topics:

August 30th: Chapter 3 – The U.S. Constitution Part 1

September 1st: Chapter 3.5 – The U.S. Constitution Part 2

Assignments:

Due September 1st at 12:45pm – Chapter 3 in Top Hat

Due September 1st at 12:45pm – Chapter 3.5 in Top Hat

Week 3 (September 4th to September 10th):

Class Topics:

September 6th: Chapter 4 – Federalism Part 1

September 8th: Chapter 4.5 – Federalism Part 2

Assignments:

Due September 6th at 12:45pm – Chapter 4 in Top Hat

Due September 8th at 12:45pm – Chapter 4.5 in Top Hat

Week 4 (September 11th to September 17th):

Class Topics:

September 13th: Chapter 5 – Civil Liberties Part 1

September 15th: Chapter 5.5 – Civil Liberties Part 2

Assignments:

Due September 13th at 12:45pm – Chapter 5 in Top Hat

Due September 15th at 12:45pm – Chapter 5.5 in Top Hat

Week 5 (September 18th to September 24th):

Class Topics:

September 20th: Exam 1 Review

September 22nd: Exam 1

Assignments:

By September 22nd at 12:45pm: Complete Exam 1 Study Guide

Week 6 (September 25th to October 1st):

Class Topics:

September 27th: Chapter 6 – Civil Rights Part 1

September 29th: Chapter 6.5 – Civil Rights Part 2

Assignments:

Due September 27th at 12:45pm – Chapter 6 in Top Hat

Due September 29th at 12:45pm – Chapter 6.5 in Top Hat

Week 7 (October 2nd to October 8th):

Class Topics:

October 4th: Chapter 7 – Voting, Elections, and Political Participation

October 6th: Chapter 8 – Public Opinion Part 1

Assignments:

Due October 4th at 12:45pm – Chapter 7 in Top Hat

Due October 6th at 12:45pm – Chapter 8 in Top Hat

Week 8 (October 9th to October 15th):

Class Topics:

October 11th: Chapter 8.5 – Public Opinion Part 2

October 13th: Chapter 9 – The Media

Assignments:

Due October 11th at 12:45pm – Chapter 8.5 in Top Hat

Due October 13th at 12:45pm – Chapter 9 in Top Hat

Week 9 (October 16th to October 22nd):

Class Topics:

October 18th: Chapter 10 – Political Parties Part 1

October 20th: Chapter 10.5 – Political Parties Part 2

Assignments:

Due October 18th at 12:45pm – Chapter 10 in Top Hat

Due October 20th at 12:45pm – Chapter 10.5 in Top Hat

Week 10 (October 23rd to October 29th):

Class Topics:

October 25th: Exam 2 Review

October 27th: Exam 2

Assignments:

By October 27th at 12:45pm: Complete Exam 2 Study Guide

Week 11 (October 30th to November 5th):

Class Topics:

November 1st: Chapter 11 – The Legislative Branch Part 1

November 3rd: Chapter 11.5 – The Legislative Branch Part 2

Assignments:

Due November 1st at 12:45pm – Chapter 11 in Top Hat

Due November 3rd at 12:45pm – Chapter 11.5 in Top Hat

Week 12 (November 6th to November 12th):

Class Topics:

November 8th: Chapter 12 – The Executive Branch

November 10th: Chapter 13 – The Judicial Branch

Assignments:

Due November 8th at 12:45pm – Chapter 12 in Top Hat

Due November 10th at 12:45pm – Chapter 13 in Top Hat

Week 13 (November 13th to November 19th):

Class Topics:

November 15th: Chapter 2 – America’s Polarized Politics Part 1

November 17th: Chapter 2.5 – America’s Polarized Politics Part 2

Assignments:

Due November 15th at 12:45pm – Chapter 2 in Top Hat

Due November 17th at 12:45pm – Chapter 2.5 in Top Hat

Week 14 (November 20th to November 26th):

Thanksgiving Break: No Classes

Week 15 (November 27th to December 5th):

Class Topics:

November 29th: Exam 3 Review

December 1st: Exam 3

Assignments:

By December 1st at 12:45pm: Complete Exam 3 Study Guide

***By December 11th at 11:59pm: Complete Post-Course Survey & Core Assessment Quiz
(link available via iCollege)***