



# **Introduction to American Government**



**POLS 1101-006 (CRN 53978)  
Summer May Session 2019  
(Maymester)**

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**Instructor:** Russell Luke

**Email:** [rluke2@gsu.edu](mailto:rluke2@gsu.edu)

**Office Location:** Langdale 856

**Office Hours:** M to F 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 you may have.

### **I. 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 Politics and How It Compares to Other Countries' Systems.
- The Benefits Enjoyed by Citizens of Democratic Governments.
- The Principles and Structure of the U.S. Constitution & How It Has Developed Over Time.
- How and Why the Relative Power of the Different Levels of Government Have Changed Over Time.
- The History and Present Status of American Civil Liberties and Civil Rights.
- The Nature and Determinants of Public Opinion, and Its Impact on Government and Politics.
- Why and How Citizens Participate (Or Refrain from Participating) In Politics.
- American Political Parties, Their Origin, and Their Functions.
- How the Congress, President and Judiciary Operate and Interact to Enact, Implement and Define Laws and Public Policies.
- How to Effectively Use This Knowledge as Thoughtful Citizens Participating in American Democracy.

## **II. 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](mailto:rluke2@gsu.edu). The iCollege email system is unwieldy, *thus the best way to get in contact with me is through email.*

If you have questions or issues *while purchasing an access key* from the Kendall Hunt Publishing website (this is explained below), please contact Kendall Hunt support at [HelpDesk@kendallhunt.com](mailto:HelpDesk@kendallhunt.com). If you *have any other technical questions* related to the Realizeit adaptive learning system (discussed below), including *activating* your access key, please contact Realizeit technical support at [helpdesk@realizeitlearning.com](mailto:helpdesk@realizeitlearning.com).

Please note: Since iCollege is essential for accessing course materials and receiving announcements, please contact me immediately if you lose iCollege access (due, for example, to being dropped for nonpayment) so that I can add you manually back into iCollege right away.

### **Electronic Devices:**

As this is an online course, a computer with internet connectivity is a requirement. If you do not have a computer, the library has many which you can use. For the exams, laptop computers, cell phones, tablets, or other electronic devices are not allowed. Text messaging is also not allowed. Students that are caught using any of these devices during the exam will receive a zero for the exam and may be referred to the Dean's Office for academic dishonesty.

## **III. Required Textbook and Online Adaptive Learning Courseware:**

The required e-textbook for this course (*Understanding the American Way of Government and Politics*) is published by Kendall Hunt Publishing and is embedded within the Realizeit adaptive learning system you will be using this semester. You will have automatic free access to the textbook in Realizeit through iCollege during the first week of classes. To continue using it, by no later than Wednesday, May 15<sup>th</sup> (11:59:59 pm) you need to follow these instructions to purchase an access key and to activate it:

### **Step 1: Purchase an Access Key:**

The first step is to purchase an access key. For this, there are two options: purchase directly from the publisher online or purchase through the GSU bookstore. The first option is the fastest, easiest, and cheapest option, so you probably should not choose the second unless you need to for financial aid reasons. Please note: if you face significant financial hardship rendering you unable to purchase by the end of the second week of the semester, please work with the Financial Management Center (FMC) to find a solution: <https://success.gsu.edu/initiatives/financial-management-center/>. If FMC cannot help you, you may need to drop the course and take it during a semester when you can afford to purchase this required WebText. (But please do not drop without discussing with me first.) If you are not facing significant financial hardship (according to FMC), then you will choose from one of these two options to purchase an access key:

**Option A (Recommended): Purchase Access Key Directly from the Publisher:**

To purchase directly from the publisher, please follow these instructions:

- (1) Follow this link: <https://he.kendallhunt.com/product/understanding-american-way-government-and-politics-2>
- (2) Click on “Add to Cart” (making sure the quantity is set to 1). This should send you to a new screen showing this publication in your cart.
- (3) Click on “Checkout.” This should take you to a login screen.
- (4) Unless you have or want to set up a Kendall Hunt account (and I doubt you do), then click on “Checkout without an account.” This will take you to a new screen, at the top of which it reads, “Kendall Hunt Store Checkout / STEP-1: PLEASE ENTER YOUR BILLING SHIPPING INFORMATION.”
- (5) On that screen, enter all the required information and please use your GSU student email address (\_\_\_@student.gsu.edu) where it asks for your email address. For “Institution,” choose Georgia State University. Then click on “Continue to Next Step.” This will take you to a new screen, at the top of which it reads, “Kendall Hunt Store Checkout / STEP-2: REVIEW ORDER AND PAYMENT.”
- (6) On that screen, you should review your order (verifying the quantity and information are correct) and enter your credit or debit card information. After that, click on “proceed with purchase.” This will take you to a screen verifying purchase and providing you with an access key. You should also receive a confirmation email with the access key. Make sure to keep your access key.

If you experience technical difficulties *purchasing an access key* from the Kendall Hunt website, please contact Kendall Hunt technical support at [HelpDesk@kendallhunt.com](mailto:HelpDesk@kendallhunt.com).

**Option B (NOT recommended): Purchase Access Key from the GSU Bookstore:**

This option is more complicated and expensive, so I do not recommend doing it unless you need to purchase books from the bookstore for financial aid reasons. If you must purchase from the bookstore, I recommend doing so at the physical bookstore if possible, instead of through the bookstore’s online service. If you purchase through the bookstore’s online service, they will mail you an access card, and that can take five days or even longer. (By contrast, if you follow Option A above and purchase directly from the publisher online, you will receive an access key instantly and at lower cost than the bookstore’s online option.)

**Step 2: Activate your Access Key:**

After you have acquired an access key (following one of the two options above), you need to activate the key. This is simple. Anytime you access a Realizeit module from within iCollege (which is explained below), you will be greeted by a pop-up window that asks for your access key (while indicating how many days you have until the free trial expires on 5/15). When you have a key, you simply enter it into that pop-up window and click “activate.” Then you will be all set (and you’ll stop getting the annoying pop-ups). If you do not activate before the deadline on 5/15, do not panic. Your access to Realizeit will be disabled, but all the work you completed before the deadline will be saved, and your access will be reenabled within eight business hours after you purchase and activate your key. If you experience technical difficulties *activating your access key* in Realizeit (or any other technical issues with Realizeit throughout the semester), then please contact Realizeit technical support at [helpdesk@realizeitlearning.com](mailto:helpdesk@realizeitlearning.com).

**IV. Grading Scale:**

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

A+	4.3	97-100	B+	3.3	87-89	C+	2.3	77-79	D	1.0	60-69
A	4.0	94-96	B	3.0	84-86	C	2.0	74-76	F	0.0	0-59
A-	3.7	90-93	B-	2.7	80-83	C-	1.7	70-73	WF	0.0	

*ALL GRADES WILL BE POSTED ON iCOLLEGE*

For more information please visit: [www.gsu.edu/es](http://www.gsu.edu/es)

**V. Course Requirements and Graded Evaluations:**

Your final grade will be calculated on the basis of four components. First, 5% of your final grade will be based on accurate completion of a syllabus quiz located on iCollege. Second, 35% of your final grade will be based on required work you do each week within the Realizeit adaptive learning system. Third, 60% of your final grade will be based on three multiple choice exams, which you are required to take in-person each Monday, or via Proctor U. Below you will find more information about the three required components of your grade:

1. ***Syllabus Quiz (5%):*** You will be taking a brief syllabus quiz on iCollege to verify your understanding and acknowledgement of the duties, structure, and requirements of this course. By completing this quiz, students accept the responsibilities laid out in the syllabus, and agree to abide by them.
2. ***Realizeit Modules (35% of Grade):*** Each week you will be working through one or two modules in the Realizeit adaptive learning system. Each module contains content from a textbook entitled *Understanding the American Way of Government and Politics*. To learn how to access and use Realizeit modules, you will need to watch a video called “WATCH FIRST: Realizeit Tutorial” that is available under the Content Browser in a folder called “Week 1.” After watching that video, you will learn more about the textbook content and more about the Realizeit system by doing the module called “Welcome Module” that is also available under the Content Browser in the folder called “Week 1.” This very short module provides an overview of the textbook—its focus, content, and style—and explains how its interactive and adaptive features (powered by Realizeit) can help with your learning if you use them correctly. The Welcome Module will also explain what a “composite score” is. This is important to know because about ***30% of your final grade will be the average of the composite scores across all modules you complete in Realizeit.*** Your composite score, you will learn, is based on the number of sections you complete within each module and the level of mastery you demonstrate (by answering the quiz questions within the system). ***The other 5% of your final grade related to Realizeit will come from the Polls and Your View open-ended response questions that you will answer within the system as you engage with the content.*** Polls 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” to see how the rest of the class answered the question. I think you will find these polls to be fun and interesting. Your View 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 70 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. You will automatically receive credit for each Your View question after submission, but I will adjust your score downward if the answer does not, in my judgment, reflect a requisite degree of thoughtfulness. (So when the system says “correct!” after you submit, please know that this does NOT necessarily mean you received full credit. You should interpret “correct!” as meaning “answer submitted.”) Your submission will be visible only to you and me.

Again, all of these assignments are integrated within the Realizeit platform. The schedule at the end of this syllabus indicates when each module is due. Composite scores earned for each module will be posted in the iCollege grade book the morning after modules are due. Grades for Your View questions and Polls will not be recorded in iCollege until the end of the semester, but if you do not hear anything from me you can probably safely assume you are doing a satisfactory job completing the Polls and thoughtfully answering the Your View questions.

**The due dates for the Modules are listed in the course schedule.**

3. **Section Exams (60%):** You will be taking three one-hour multiple choice exams in the designated periods. 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.

Exams will be administered in Langdale Hall each Monday, or via Proctor U. If you are away from campus this semester and/or face significant obstacles to coming to campus to take one or more exams in the proctoring lab, then you may take one or more exams from home online using the ProctorU service. With ProctorU, a human proctor will observe you taking your exam through your webcam and will expect you to participate in an “environment check” prior to starting your exam. The environment check requires moving your webcam to show all around the room in which you are taking your exam. The ProctorU service costs \$15 per exam and they charge an extra \$8 fee if you schedule or reschedule less than 72 hours before your exam time. Alternatively, I will be proctoring a 3-hour exam session each Monday, from 3:00 to 5:00 pm in Langdale Hall Room 300.

**Instructions for Scheduling and Taking an Exam through ProctorU**

If you choose to use the ProctorU service for taking an exam (and paying \$15 for doing so), then follow the detailed instructions for scheduling and taking an exam through ProctorU [at this link](#). Make sure to schedule at least 72 hours ahead of time so that you can avoid the \$8 late fee. If you need to reschedule, those instructions will explain how, but please note you will need to pay the \$8 late fee if you reschedule less than 72 hours before your scheduled exam. If you have technical problems while trying to schedule or take an exam with ProctorU, please contact GSU technical support at [help@gsu.edu](mailto:help@gsu.edu).

### Exam Schedule

***Exam 1 Period: 5/17/19 – 5/20/19***

Covering Unit One: Modules 1, 2, 3, 9, and 10.

***Exam 2 Period: 5/24/19 – 5/27/19***

Covering Unit Two: Modules 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8.

***Exam 3 Period: 5/31/19 – 6/3/19***

Covering Unit Three: Modules 11, 13, 14, and 15.

#### **Makeup Exams:**

There will be no makeup exams. If you miss an exam, you will receive a zero. See “Problems and Emergencies” for the only exceptions to this rule.

#### **Exam Review:**

Although I do not publicly release exam questions and answers, I am happy to thoroughly review each exam with you in my office.

#### **VI. Additional Resources:**

Given the abbreviated format of this course, I feel several additional resources may be useful.

- i. **Video Lectures:** I have posted a series of video lectures, that I created for a previous semester of this course, on iCollege. These lectures cover specific aspects of the Modules that are more complicated or otherwise give students trouble. Given the limited time we have, I feel that these lectures may prove a helpful, supplemental resource. ***These lectures are not graded, and you are not required to watch them.*** However, these lectures are no longer than 15 minutes each, and may aid your understanding of the material covered. There may be some unnecessary information not relevant to this course, e.g. Interest Groups, but I recommend you view these lectures before completing the Modules or in preparation for the Exams. These Video Lecture are posted alongside their respective modules on iCollege.
- ii. **Study Guides:** I have posted Study Guides for each of the 3 Exams. I urge you to complete these ***while*** completing the modules. These Guides are a good way to structure your learning. Moreover, these Study Guides will prove an invaluable resource when preparing for the Exams. Everything that will be covered on the Exams is included in the Study Guides, although not everything on the Study Guides will be in the Exams. I urge you to download and print these out immediately and fill them out as you go along.



- iii. **Review Sessions:** Every Friday (May 17<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, and 31<sup>st</sup>) from 3:00 pm-5:00 pm, I will be holding virtual review sessions, in preparation for your Exams. Barring unforeseen technical issues, you will be able to ask me questions and I will respond in real time. Also, if you have specific questions that you want me to cover, send me an email before Friday at 3:00 pm, and I will do my best to answer them during this session. *Attendance and participation in these virtual sessions is neither mandatory nor graded*, but I do urge you to use this opportunity to ask any questions you have or have me clarify topics that were not clear. I intend to upload these as video files so you will also be able to view them if you are not available during this time, or wish to re-watch them while studying.

## VII. Extra Credit Opportunities:

There will be one (and only one) extra credit opportunity this semester. If desired, you may write an essay answering a question of my choosing. If you wish to write this essay, email me, and I will provide you a suitable question, as well as requirements, format and grading rubric. This will count for a maximum of 5% extra credit points, added to your final grade. I am not overly generous with my grading of these essays, and the average extra credit value that students have received is approximately 2 points. You will be better served to spend your time on the Modules and Exams, given the limited time that the Maymester allows for extra work. You should consider this extra credit opportunity only if it may mean the difference between passing and failing. More information is available upon request.

## VIII. Miscellaneous Course Policies and Notifications:

### **Cheating and Academic Misconduct:**

Academic integrity is fundamental to the process of learning and evaluating academic performance. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, tampering with academic records and examinations, falsifying identity, and being an accessory to acts of academic dishonesty. Any violations of Georgia State University's Policy on Academic Dishonesty (Section 409) will be prosecuted to the fullest extent. If you would like to view the policy in full, you can go to <http://www.gsu.edu/~wwwfhh/sec409.html>. Please note that the University considers violations of dishonesty rules to be grounds for receiving an "F" in this course. If you have any questions about what constitutes cheating, academic misconduct, or plagiarism, examine the university policy and/or ask me.

### **Disability Policy:**

Students who wish to request accommodation for a disability may do so by registering with the Office of Disability Services (located in Suite 230 of the New Student Center). Students may only be accommodated upon issuance by the Office of Disability Services of a signed Accommodation Plan and are responsible for providing a copy of that plan to instructors of all classes in which accommodations are sought. Please advise me (and provide me with a signed copy of your Accommodation Plan) if you have a documented disability that needs to be accommodated.

**Withdrawals and Hardship Withdrawals:**

The last day to withdraw and receive a W is May 24<sup>th</sup>. Students who withdraw on or before that day receive a W; students who withdraw after will receive a WF. Ws have no effect on your GPA whereas WFs count as Fs for GPA calculation purposes. If you are struggling in the course and are worried about keeping your HOPE Scholarship, then you should consider taking a W before 5:00pm on May 24<sup>th</sup>. Please feel free to contact me for advice on this. Another kind of withdrawal, called “Hardship Withdrawals,” are only given if students experience non-academic emergencies beyond the midpoint of the semester which interfere with or prevent the completion of their coursework. Such hardships are usually due to medical, personal or financial emergencies, and are not to be used for academic issues. These withdrawals also do NOT count as F’s for GPA calculation purposes.

**Privacy and Personal Information:**

In keeping with USG and university policy, I will make every effort to maintain the privacy and accuracy of your personal information. Specifically, unless otherwise noted, I will not actively share personal information with anyone except university employees whose responsibilities require access to said records. However, some information may be subject to the Georgia Open Records Act. This means that while I do not actively share information, in some cases I may be compelled by law to release information. Also, your information will be managed in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which prohibits the release of education records without student permission. For more details on FERPA, [go here](#).

**Problems, Emergencies, and Counseling Services:**

If a problem or emergency arises that prevents you from taking an exam or completing an assignment, you should contact me. Also, generally speaking, college can be a challenging time for students and it can all feel overwhelming at times. If you are feeling a lot of stress, thinking of harming or killing yourself, have been a victim of a crime, and/or are having difficulties in your relationship with an intimate partner, there are a lot of people and resources eager to help you at GSU and off-campus. PLEASE consider taking advantage of these opportunities if you might benefit from help:

- GSU Counseling Center: 404-413-1640
- Offers immediate crisis help (including after-hours), counseling, support groups, stress management and meditation classes, and more.
- <https://counselingcenter.gsu.edu/crisis-services/>
- <https://counselingcenter.gsu.edu/immediate-help>
- GSU Student Victim Assistance: 404-413-1965
- GSU Campus Police: 404-413-3333
- Off-Campus Resources:
  - National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255
  - Rape Crisis Center: 404-616-4861
  - Atlanta Victim Assistance: 404-588-4740
  - Multi-County Crisis Helpline: 1-800-715-4225



**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. Given the abbreviated nature of this semester, make up exams will rarely be given. Late assignments **WILL NOT** be accepted.

**Online Behavior:**

It is the expectation of the instructor that students will behave in a professional and polite manner in this class. Interactions on the internet often seem impersonal, but there is always someone else on the other side of the monitor. Students will interact with one another in a courteous and professional manner on any course or university platform. This applies especially to questions asked during Virtual Review Sessions.

**\*\*\*\* 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 when checking final grades on PAWS. \*\*\*\***

**IX. Course Schedule:**

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

**Unit One:**

Monday (5/13): *Welcome Module & Module One:* What are Gov'ts & What Do They Do?

Tuesday (5/14): *Modules Two & Three:* Intro. to the Amer. Way of Gov't & Politics

Wednesday (5/15): *Module Nine:* Public Opinion

Thursday (5/16): *Module Ten:* Political Participation

*Modules One, Two, Three, Nine, Ten, and Welcome Module Due Friday 5/17 by 11:59 pm*

**Exam One Period: Friday (5/17) to Monday (5/20)**

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**Unit Two:**

Monday (5/20): *Module Four & Five:* U.S. Constitution

Tuesday (5/21): *Module Six:* Federalism

Wednesday (5/22): *Module Seven:* Civil Liberties

Thursday (5/23): *Module Eight:* Civil Rights

*Modules Five, Six, Seven, and Eight Due Friday 5/24 by 11:59 pm*

**Exam Two Period: Friday (5/24) to Monday (5/27)**

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**Unit Three:**

Monday (5/27): *Module Eleven:* Political Parties

Tuesday (5/28): *Module Thirteen:* Legislative Branch (Congress)

Wednesday (5/29): *Module Fourteen:* Executive Branch

Thursday (5/30): *Module Fifteen:* Judicial Branch

*Modules Eleven, Thirteen, Fourteen, and Fifteen Due Friday 5/31 by 11:59 pm*

**Exam Three Period: Friday (5/31) to Monday (6/3)**