

Political Science 1101
Introduction to American Government
Spring 2016
Location: Fine Arts 53
Tues. & Thurs. 9:30-10:45

Chase Meyer
Baldwin 101-X
Office Hours: Wednesday 3-5pm and by appointment
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Course Description:

This introductory course is designed to examine the role that American government and politics plays in our lives and provide a better understanding of the functions and responsibilities of our governmental system. To learn more about the nature of American political institutions, we will examine features of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches as well as the role of political parties, interest groups, the media and the bureaucracy in our political system. We will also discuss each of these topics from a historical perspective while simultaneously placing them in the context of contemporary political debates.

Required Texts:

The Logic of American Politics. 7th edition. by Samuel Kernell, Gary Jacobson, Thad Kousser and Lynn Vavrek. CQ Press. ISBN: 978-1-4833-1984-1

Georgia Politics in a State of Change, Fourth Custom Edition for the University of Georgia, by Charles S. Bullock and Ronald Keith Gaddie ISBN: 1-256-81336-2

Course Expectations:

I expect all students to behave professionally in this class. I will not tolerate disruptive behavior in the classroom, including (but not limited to) talking during lectures, reading newspapers, the ringing of cell phones or pagers, leaving class early, inappropriate or offensive remarks, and personal attacks against other students or the instructor. Although class attendance is not mandatory, you will be held responsible for all material in the textbooks and in lectures, even if you miss a class. If you are absent, be sure to get the notes from a fellow classmate.

Grades and Requirements:

Your grade in this course will be based on the following components:

1. Participation (10%)
2. Quizzes (10%)
3. Exam #1 (15%)
4. Exam #2 (20%)
5. Exam #3 (15%)
6. Final Exam (30%)

Final grades will be assigned as follow: 100-93 = A, 90-92 = A-, 87-89 = B+, 83-86 = B, 80-82 = B-, 77- 79 = C+, 73-76 = C, 70-72 = C-, 60-69 = D, and 60-0 = F. There is no curve in this course. An extra credit opportunity will be presented at a later time in the semester.

Attendance and Participation:

Attendance for this course is not mandatory, but I **strongly** urge you to come to class. It will be incredibly difficult to do well in this course without showing up and paying attention. A full 10% of your grade will be determined based on participation in class, I will keep track of how often each student participates.

Quizzes and Exams:

Quizzes:

Several unannounced pop-quizzes will be given during the semester. These quizzes will cover the readings assigned for the day and will be given at the beginning of class. Students who show up late or who do not attend class will not be given an opportunity to retake a quiz. The only way to get points on the quizzes is to show up, be on time, and do the readings.

Exams:

There will be four exams in this course, including a final exam given during the scheduled examination period at the end of the semester. Examinations will consist of multiple choice and essay questions. While the first three exams are non-cumulative, the final exam will cover material from the lectures and the assigned readings for the entire course. The exam dates are:

Exam 1: February 4th

Exam 2: March 31st

Exam 3: April 26th

Final Cumulative Exam: May 5th 8:00 am

Grade Appeals, Make-up Policy, and Incompletes:

Formal grade appeals must be made in writing, and in the case of an exam, I will re-grade your entire test. Therefore, your grade can go up or down. A final grade of “Incomplete” will only be given in this course under exceptional circumstances and is solely at the discretion of the instructor. If an incomplete is given, it is the student’s responsibility to complete the necessary requirements as early in the following semester as possible. Legitimate excuses for absence from an exam (e.g., religious holiday, medical emergency, or illness) must be presented to me and accepted prior to the exam when feasible.

Office Hours and Availability:

If you would like to speak with me outside of class time, feel free to stop by my office in Baldwin 101-X (the graduate student lounge) during regularly scheduled office hours Wednesday 3-5pm. Keep in mind that occasionally I may have another scheduled meeting during this time and may be unavailable. If you want to ensure that I am available on a given day, email me ahead of time to set up a specific time to meet. I also strongly encourage you to come to office hours, I am happy to help you out in the class anyway I can, but I can only help you if you come by to ask for help.

Academic Integrity:

All students are responsible for maintaining the highest standards of honesty and integrity in every phase of their academic careers. The penalties for academic dishonesty are severe and ignorance of the policy is not an acceptable defense. See also http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/academic_honesty/academic_honesty.htm.

Special Needs:

Students with special needs that require accommodation should notify me and the Office for Disability Services in the first two weeks of the course so appropriate arrangements can be made. All information and documentation of special needs is confidential.

Course Schedule: (Subject to Change)

Tues. Jan. 12th: Syllabus Day and Class Introduction

Readings: None

Thurs. Jan. 14th: Introduction to the Logic of American Politics

Readings: Kernell et al. Chapter 1

Tues. Jan. 19th: Logic of American Politics cont. and the U.S. Constitution

Readings: Kernell et al. Chapters 1 & 2, the Articles of Confederation

Thurs. Jan. 21st: The U.S. Constitution

Readings: Kernell et al. Chapter 2, the U.S. Constitution

Tues. Jan. 26th: Federalism

Readings: Kernell et al. Chapter 3

Thurs. Jan. 28th: Civil Liberties

Readings: Kernell et al. Chapter 5

Tues. Feb. 2nd: Civil Rights

Readings: Kernell et al. Chapter 4

Thurs: Feb. 4th: Exam #1

Readings: None

Tues: Feb. 9th: The U.S. Congress

Readings: Kernell et al. Chapter 6

Thurs. Feb. 11th: Law-making in the Congress

Readings: Kernell et al. Chapter 6 cont.

Tues. Feb. 16th: Congressional Elections

Readings: TBD

Thurs. Feb. 18th: The Judiciary
Readings: Kernell et al. Chapter 9

Tues. Feb. 23rd: The Bureaucracy
Readings: Kernell et al. Chapter 8

Thurs. Feb. 25th: The Presidency
Readings: Kernell et al. Chapter 7

Tues. Mar. 1st: Presidential Elections
Readings: TBD

Thurs. Mar. 3rd: DISTRICT WORK PERIOD
Readings: None

SPRING BREAK

Tues. Mar. 15th: Public Opinion
Readings: Kernell et al. Chapter 10

Thurs. Mar. 17th: Voting and Campaigns
Readings: Kernell et al. Chapter 11

Tues. Mar. 22nd: Political Parties
Readings: Kernell et al. Chapter 12

Thurs. Mar. 24th: Interest Groups
Readings: Kernell et al. Chapter 13

Tues. Mar. 29th: The Media
Readings: Kernell et al. Chapter 14

Thurs. Mar. 31st: Exam #2
Readings: None

Tues. Apr. 5th: Introduction to Georgia Politics
Readings: Georgia Politics Chapters 1-3

Thurs. Apr. 7th: Georgia Politics The General Assembly and the Constitution
Readings: Georgia Politics Chapters 4 and 5

Tues. Apr. 12th: Georgia Politics The Governorship
Readings: Georgia Politics Chapter 6

Thurs. Apr. 14th: Georgia Politics The Judiciary
Readings: Georgia Politics Chapter 7

Tues. Apr. 19th: Georgia Politics Voting Rights
Readings: Georgia Politics Chapters 9 and 10

Thurs. Apr. 21st: Georgia Parties and Interest Groups
Readings: Georgia Politics Chapters 11 and 12

Tues. Apr. 26th: Exam #3
Readings: None

Thurs. Apr. 28th: Conclusion and review for final exam
Readings: None

FINAL EXAM: May 5th 8:00am