

Introduction to American Government

POLS 1101, Spring 2020

Monday-Wednesday-Friday

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Room:
Office:
Office Hours:

Course Description and Goals

The primary objective of this course is to provide students with a broad overview of the political system in the United States. By the end of the course, students should be able to describe the structure and function of American institutions, as well as the motivations behind their construction and the consequences of their actions. 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. Specifically, students should be able to explain how these institutions influence the behavior of both politicians and constituents.

Required Texts

There are two required texts for this course:

- Lowi, Theodore, Benjamin Ginsberg, Kenneth A. Shepsle, and Stephen Ansolabehere. 2014. *American Government: Power and Purpose*. Fifteenth Core Edition. New York: Norton. ISBN: 978-0-393-67503-0
- Charles S. Bullock III and Ronald Keith Gaddie. 2013. *Georgia Politics in a State of Change*. Pearson Custom Edition. New York: Pearson. ISBN-13: 9781256769378

Course Requirements and Evaluations

Attendance	10 points
Quizzes	5 points
Exam One	25 points
Exam Two	25 points
Exam Three	25 points
Final Paper	10 points

Attendance and Participation: Each student will be granted 3 unexcused absences. After those are exhausted, the attendance grade will be the proportion of all classes attended. For example, a student who attends all classes and participates will receive all 10 points. A student who attended all but 3 classes will also receive all 10 points. A student who missed 4 classes but had a university approved excuse will also receive all 10 points. However, a student who used all 3 “freebies” but also missed 10 percent of the classes will only receive 90 percent of the available points.

Quizzes: Periodically throughout the course of the semester, 4 quizzes will be given at the end of class related to assigned readings or material covered in previous class meetings. They will vary in length and question type. Additionally, they may or may not be announced beforehand. Each quiz will be graded out of 1.25 point for a total of 5 points toward your final grade, and make-up quizzes **will not be allowed** without a university approved excuse. If an absence is excused, make-ups will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Exams: There will be 3 exams that will be administered in class on predetermined dates outlined here. Each will be worth 25 points of your final grade. They will consist of 50 multiple-choice questions and at least one short answer question. **Make-up exams will not be allowed without a university-approved excuse.** It is the student's responsibility to schedule a make-up exam as quickly as possible after her or she has provided an excuse. You will have one week to make up the exam after which you will receive a 0. Any potential conflicts should be cleared with the instructor as soon as possible. Exams may not be taken early.

Final Paper: Submit an **analysis** paper between 500-750 words. The paper will be worth 10 points of your final grade. The paper will address the following questions based on the article/ video of your choice (from a list of options):

- Who are the political actors (including organizations) and what are their respective interests?
- How does this video demonstrate the inner workings of government institutions?
- Is this representative of U.S. political culture? Why or why not?
- Discuss the ways in which the events described impacted the greater community.

Overall Grades: Grades are constructed to reflect the university standards, which are summarized below. Grades will be based on how many points you earn according to the following distribution:

A = 90-100 B = 80-89 C = 70-79
D = 60-69 F = 59 and below

How to Succeed in this Course

- Be respectful of your own and others' ideas.
- Attend class consistently.
- Keep up with the readings.
- If something is not clear, ask a question.
- Clarify expectations with the instructor.
- Utilize all resources available to you.

Course Schedule (Subject to change as events warrant):

Date	Reading
	Introduction/The Five Principles of Politics
Jan. 13	Introduction
Jan. 15	Lowi, Chapter 1
Jan. 17	Discussion
	The Founding
Jan. 20	No Class
Jan. 22	Lowi, Chapter 2, p. 30-48
Jan. 24	Lowi, Chapter 2, p. 48-70
	Federalism and the Separation of Powers
Jan. 27	Lowi, Chapter 3, p. 72-93
Jan. 29	Lowi, Chapter 3, p. 93-102
Jan. 31	Discussion
	Civil Liberties and Rights
Feb. 3	Lowi, Chapter 4
Feb. 5	Lowi, Chapter 5
Feb. 7	Discussion
	Exam Week 1
Feb. 10	Review
Feb. 12	Exam 1
Feb. 14	Discussion
	Congress: The First Branch
Feb. 17	Lowi, Chapter 6, p. 186-209
Feb. 19	Lowi, Chapter 6, p. 209-245
Feb. 21	Discussion
	The Presidency as an Institution
Feb. 24	Lowi, Chapter 7, p. 248-273
Feb. 26	Lowi, Chapter 7, p. 273-300
Feb. 28	Discussion
	The Executive Branch: Bureaucracy
Mar. 2	Lowi, Chapter 8, p. 302-319
Mar. 4	Lowi, Chapter 8, p. 319-340
Mar. 6	Discussion
	The Federal Courts
Mar. 9	Lowi, Chapter 9, p. 342-361
Mar. 11	Lowi, Chapter 9, p. 361-391
Mar. 13	Discussion
	Exam Week 2

Mar. 16	Review
Mar. 18	Exam 2
Mar. 20	Discussion
Spring Break	
Mar. 23	No Class
Mar. 25	No Class
Mar. 27	No Class
Public Opinion	
Mar. 30	Lowi, Chapter 10, p. 392-418
April 1	Lowi, Chapter 10, p. 418-445
April 3	Discussion
Elections	
April 6	Lowi, Chapter 11, p. 446-476
April 8	Lowi, Chapter 11, p. 476-511
April 10	Discussion
Political Parties	
April 13	Lowi, Chapter 12, p. 512-533
April 15	Lowi, Chapter 12, p. 533-557
April 17	Discussion
Groups and Interest	
April 20	Lowi, Chapter 13, p. 558-575
April 22	Lowi, Chapter 13, p. 575-596
April 24	Discussion/Paper Due
Exam Week 3	
April 27	Review
April 29	Exam 3
May 1	TBD