SYLLABUS
POLS 1101 G & R: Introduction to American Government
Fall 2014

Instructor: Augustine Hammond, Ph.D.  Lecture Room: N 126 Allgood Hall
Class Meets: MW 2:30 – 3:45 PM  Office: E 312 Allgood Hall
Office Hours: MW 12:30 – 2:00 PM; 4:00 – 5:00 PM; and by Appointment
Email: ahammon3@gru.edu (Best method of contact)  Telephone: 706 – 729 – 2278

Introduction: Governments at every level (federal, state and local) are very important in the lives of individual citizens in various ways, including securing the rights and freedoms of individual citizens. The success of governments in achieving their goals to a greater extent depends on individual citizens’ active participation in government. This course is designed to introduce you to the institutions and processes of United States (US) government, their functions and effects on citizens. This course, structured around lectures, discussions, and exercises, will focus on the federal government. However a key component will be an understanding of the state government of Georgia and its Constitution; to meet the Georgia legislative requirement that students demonstrate competence in the Georgia Constitution in order to graduate.

The course will help you understand how the US and Georgia state governments function and provide the necessary background for more advanced courses in American government and politics. It main goals include providing basic understanding of:

- The evolution, processes and values of American government
- The integration of the major political institutions of US government into one political system
- The powers and limitations of the major political institutions of US government
- How the major political institutions respond to demands from the public through elections, political parties, interest groups, and the media
- The basic rights and responsibilities of US citizens
- The Georgia state government and its constitution, and how it differs from the federal government and the US constitution

Required Text:


Supplemental Materials: All course and supplemental materials will be made available on Desire2Learn (a.k.a. D2L) at https://lms.gru.edu/.

Recommended: A National Newspaper; to follow national political events (e.g. New York Times Online @ http://www.nytimes.com/; Washington Post Online @ http://www.washingtonpost.com/; USA Today Online at http://www.usatoday.com/)
Learning Objectives: At the end of this course, it is expected that you will be able to:

- Explain how American government is structured and why it is structured that way
- Describe the functions of the three branches of the US government
- Compare the structure and functioning of the federal government with that of state (Georgia) government
- Describe the role of political parties, interest groups, elections and the media in the US political system
- Describe the major factors affecting political participation in the US
- Identify and explain the rights and responsibilities of American citizens

Course Expectations: To achieve the objectives of this course, there are some expectations from you and me. Among other things, you are expected to:

- Attend class sessions and remaining in class until the end of class
- Read the calendar entry for each day carefully and familiarize yourself with the issues we will be covering and deadlines
- Complete all assigned readings PRIOR to the class period during which they are presented or discussed (Refer to class schedule for assigned readings)
- Actively participate in class discussions
- Complete all assignments (typed) and on time
- Ask questions and seek clarifications to incomprehensible issues
- Monitor your grades in D2L
- Talk with me, in advance, about any issues and/or concerns you might have

You can expect me to:

- Provide clarity to materials being discussed; feel free to ask questions
- Treat you and your views with respect; thus I encourage you to express yourself freely while respecting the views and orientations of others
- Give prompt feedback on all your assignments; I will endeavor to return your assignments with feedback at the next class session
- Make myself available to you outside of class periods to help you

Course Format: The course format is designed to deepen your understanding of the materials through a combination of lecture and class discussions. I perceive my major role as leading the class toward critical evaluation of course materials and facilitating discussions, and not just delivery of factual material. I believe every one of you has inherent capabilities and I strongly encourage you to ask questions in class as well as call on you to offer your insight on the issue under discussion. Though this may seem uncomfortable at times, it is pedagogically useful and will help you understand the materials. I am confident that your active participation in class will greatly enhance your learning and success in the class; sharing your perspectives on the issue will help me determine your strengthens and weaknesses and work on directing the class accordingly. Your views will always be respected in this class and you are encouraged to express yourself freely while respecting the views and orientations of others.

Evaluation: The course will be evaluated using a mixture of exam, assignment and participation as below:

- Exam (3) 600 Points
- Georgia Constitution Assignment 100 Points
Assignments 200 Points
Attendance and Participation 100 Points

Total 1,000 points

NOTE: There will be NO extra credit in this class.

The final grades will be reported as percentage of the total points (1,000) and will be graded as follows:

- A = 90.0 – 100.0%
- B = 80.0 – 89.9%
- C = 70.0 – 79.9%
- D = 60.0 – 69.9%
- F = Below 60%

Exams: There will be three (3) exams worth 600 points (each worth 200 points). The exams will be cumulative with the subsequent exam containing more questions from materials covered after the previous exam(s). All the exams will consist of multiple choice, true and false, and fill-in-the-blank questions.

Georgia Constitution Assignment: There will be a take home assignment on the structure of government and constitution of the state of Georgia worth 100 points. This assignment will consist of short responses to questions testing your understanding of, and/or familiarity with, the constitution and government of the state of Georgia.

Assignments: Throughout the semester, five (5) assignments will be assigned. The assignments, worth 200 points of your final grade, are meant to enhance your understanding of, and/or reinforce, materials covered in class. More information on the assignments will be discussed in class and made available on D2L (see course schedule for due dates for the assignments).

Attendance and Participation: There will be 100 points to be assigned for class attendance and participation. The points will be assigned based on attendance to all class sessions and on quality involvement in class discussions. Participation includes suggesting new ideas, your perspectives, and/or ‘pointed’ follow-up questions to on-going discussions. It requires that you not only offer a point of view on a particular topic, but you also substantiate comments made based on your understanding of the readings and/or the issue under discussion.

NOTE: While attending all class sessions does not guarantee earning all the 100 points (quality participation is also required), missing class, coming to class late and/or leaving class early will result in losing attendance and participation points.

CLASS POLICIES

Attendance: Most of the course materials will be covered during class lectures and discussions. Consequently, attending all class sessions punctually is essential for success in this class. I want you to succeed in this class and I will be working with you to ensure that you succeed in the class but excessive absence from classes will make that difficult (if not impossible). If you miss more than THREE (3) class sessions (irrespective of the cause) prior to mid-term (October 13, 2014), you are most likely to fail the class and will be advised to drop the
Overall, if you miss SIX (6) class sessions throughout the semester you will be dropped from the class and earn a grade of ‘WF’. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class and if you are late to class and/or leave before the end of class you will be considered absent. **NOTE:** If you absent themselves from class, come to class late and/or leave before the end of class, it will be your responsibility to make the necessary arrangement for obtaining missed lecture notes, handouts, assignments, announcements, etc.

**Make-up Exam:** There will be no make-up exam EXCEPT under exceptional circumstances such as illness or medical emergencies. Missing an exam without university-approved excuse or a verifiable reasonable excuse (e.g. a doctor’s note) will result in a zero on the exam. Make-up exam, if any, will be arranged only after a review of your written request and satisfaction with the authenticity of accompanying excuse note. **NOTE:** Normal doctor’s visit does not qualify as medical emergency and will not necessitate make-up exam.

**Late Papers/Assignments:** Late papers or assignments will not be accepted under any circumstance except under condition of medical emergency (acceptable documentation will be required) or with my prior approval. “Late” is defined as not being turned in during the class period it is due. Papers can be submitted through the Dropbox in D2L as word attachment. However, it will be your responsibility to ensure that the paper(s) is/are fully and properly uploaded (and accessible to the instructor). You should also keep a copy of the paper, in case I request a hard copy.

Papers will not be accepted via e-mail unless directed by me or you can present a doctor’s excuse or some other reason(s) I deem acceptable. Papers which are “dropped off” in my mailbox or slipped under my office door on the due date (unless directed by me) will also be considered “late”.

**Electronic Device:** The use of all communication devices (including cell phones, pagers and beepers) in class is prohibited. Any of these devices should be “turned off” (or to voiceless tone) prior to entering class. The use of laptop computer is not allowed in this class unless with my prior approval. **NOTE:** If you violate this rule (uses such devices and/or device going off in class), you will be asked to leave the class and considered absent for that class session.

**Eating and Drinking:** Eating in class is prohibited unless for a special occasion and with my prior approval. This notwithstanding, drinks (including water, soft drinks and coffee) are allowed in class but if you spill drinks, you must clean up immediately.

**Availability:** I will make every effort to be available, outside of class periods, to help you with any difficulty you might have with the course material and/or requiring advice. My contact information is listed at the beginning of the syllabus. Office hours are periods where it is guaranteed you can meet with me in person – just drop in. If those hours are not convenient, you can contact me to set up an appointment. There is one rule about appointments: *If you make an appointment with me, I expect you to keep it.* If I can make a special effort to meet with you, at a time and date convenient to you, you can certainly make the effort to keep the appointment. I
will make it a point to meet you without appointment, outside the posted office hours, in cases of **extreme necessity**.

The easiest way to get in touch with me is during office hours or by e-mail (ahammon3@gru.edu). You should expect to receive response to your e-mail messages within 24 hours, provided it was sent before 12:00 noon on a standard business hours during the week. Expect responses in 48 – 72 hours for mails received on holidays or over the weekend. I will also communicate important information about the class through e-mail as well as post additional and/new information including lecture notes and class activities on **D2L**. It is therefore your responsibility to check your campus e-mail and visit **D2L** regularly for any update and essential information relating to the class.

**NOTE**: Do not email me via **D2L**, I do not check **D2L** mails regularly and you might not receive timely response if you email through **D2L**.

**ADA Compliance**: If you have any form of physical, emotional and/or learning impairment requiring accommodation, you should please inform me and contact the Testing and Disability Services at 706-737-1469 immediately.

**Academic Dishonesty**: The university regulations regarding academic dishonesty including (but not limited to) cheating, plagiarism and credential misrepresentation will be strictly enforced. Plagiarism includes but not limited to the presentation of ideas, words, techniques, etc of someone without properly acknowledging the source. Further information on plagiarism and cheating, and the penalties that go with it is available from the university Code of Student Conduct.

**COURSE SCHEDULE** (Subject Change)

You are expected to read the materials assigned for each lecture period prior to the lecture. **Think thoughtfully about the materials and be prepared to discuss the issues raised by the materials (and ask questions) in class.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Subject/Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 18</td>
<td>Introduction to the course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 20 &amp; 25</td>
<td>American Government: Roots, Context, and Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read: O’Connor, et al. Ch. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 27</td>
<td>The Making of the United States Constitution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read: O’Connor, et al. Ch. 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assignment One Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 1</td>
<td>Holiday (Labor Day) – No Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 3</td>
<td>The Making of the United States Constitution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read: O’Connor, et al. Ch. 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sept 8 & 10  The Federal System
Read: O’Connor, et al. Ch. 3

Sept 15 & 17  Civil Liberties
Read: O’Connor, et al. Ch. 4

Sept 22  Exam One (Chapters 1 – 4 of O’Connor, et al.)

Sept 24 & 29  Civil Rights
Read: O’Connor, et al. Ch. 5

Sept 24  Assignment Two Due

Oct 1 & 6  The Congress
Read: O’Connor, et al. Ch. 6

Oct 6  Georgia Constitution Assignment Due

Oct 8  Georgia Constitution
Read: Constitution of the State of Georgia

Oct 13 & 15  The Presidency
Read: O’Connor, et al. Ch. 7

Oct 13  Assignment Three Due

Oct 20 & 22  The Executive Branch and the Federal Bureaucracy
Read: O’Connor, et al. Ch. 8

Oct 27  Exam Two (Chapters 1 – 8 of O’Connor, et al.)

Oct 29 & Nov 3  The Judiciary
Read: O’Connor, et al. Ch. 9

Nov 5 & 10  Public Opinion and the News Media
Read: O’Connor, et al. Ch. 10

Nov 5  Assignment Four Due

Nov 12 & 17  Political Parties and Interest Groups
Read: O’Connor, et al. Ch. 11

Nov 19 & 24  Campaigns, Elections, and Voting
Read: O’Connor, et al. Ch. 12

Nov 19  Assignment Five Due

Nov 26  Holiday (Thanksgiving Break) – No Class
Dec 1 & 3  Social and Economic Policy
Read: O’Connor, et al. Ch. 13

Dec 10 (3:30 PM)  Exam Three (Chapters 1 – 13 of O’Connor, et al.)