

POLS 1101 American Government
SYLLABUS

Instructor:

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Description: American Government: Explores the role of the President, Congress, Supreme Court, and national administrative agencies in the American political system. The class examines the relationship between the American people and their political institutions with emphasis on political culture, the electoral process, political parties, interest groups, and political communication. Students use reading assignments, inter-active lectures, handouts, in-class exercises, class interactions, student presentations, current events, and the Internet while examining the American political system.

Class Schedule:

Class meets each Tuesday, from 5:30 PM to 10:15 PM, during the 8-week term—May 27, 2008 through July 22, 2008.

Course Texts:

Janda, K., Berry, J., & Goldman, J. (2008). *The Challenge of Democracy, 9th Edition*, New York: Houghton-Mifflin Co. ISBN: 978-0-618-81017-8.

Allen, Lee M., & Saeger, Richard, T. (2007). *Georgia State Politics: The Constitutional Foundation, 5th Edition* ISBN: 978-0-7575-4444-6

Course Requirements:

Each student will:

1. Prepare for every class
2. Actively (and respectfully) participate in class discussions, presentations, and projects related to the American political system
3. Complete all class assignments on-time
4. Have an active e-mail account for corresponding with the instructor and for completing on-line exercises
5. Submit designated assignments on 3½" diskette, CD, or flash drive. Refer to syllabus section "Weekly Assignments Activities-Assignments on Diskette, CD or Flash Drive"
6. Weekly, obtain and discuss a current event relevant to chapter discussions/presentations. Stay current with daily political happenings and they relate to class discussions
7. Participate in a simple-format debate regarding a controversial political topic
8. Pass the Georgia Exemption Test for the Georgia Constitution
9. Have computer skills sufficient to navigate the Internet, e-mail attachments, communicate via e-mail, and manipulate Microsoft Office applications (Microsoft Word and PowerPoint as examples)

Course Objectives / Desired Outcomes:

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Discuss the modern dilemma facing our political system and its impact on policymaking and socio-economic structure and welfare
2. Analyze the scope of government and its political processes using the models of democracy and the values pursued by government.
3. Evaluate how our political system works and compare it to other democracies in terms of size, type, and organization
4. Discuss national and global issues influencing the American political system
5. Apply critical thinking techniques to opinions and statements that they see and hear around them

Students achieving these objectives will not only enhance their inclination toward direct or indirect participation in our political system, but also strengthen their academic and personal development.

Class and Web Links

Refer to POLS 1101 home page <http://www.valdosta.edu/kingsbay/classes/pols1101/index.html> for access to Class Links such as the Syllabus, Topic Paper Format, GA Study Guide, Chapter Presentation Guidelines, Current Event Summary Template, and Research Template. There are also numerous Web Links for current events, writing and grammar, and avoiding plagiarism. I developed these documents for assisting you in successfully completing this course. Do not waste their intent, as failure to use these resources could adversely affect your academic success in POLS1101.

WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS / ACTIVITIES

Students will backup ALL hard copies of assignments on a 3 1/2" Diskette, CD-ROM, or Flash Drive:

Assignments	Diskette/Flash Drive	Filename format when saving
Debate Outline	X	Lastname_POLS1101_D_Outline_mmddyy
Chapter Presentation Outline	X	Lastname_POLS1101_CHx_Outline_mmddyy
Chapter PowerPoint Presentation	X	Lastname_POLS1101_CHx_PPT_mmddyy
Analytical Thinking Exercises	X	Lastname_POLS1101_WYOCHx_mmddyy
Current Event Summary/Cover Page *	X	Lastname_POLS1101_CHx_CES_mmddyy

* For each current event (6 total), use the Summary/Cover page template available on POLS 1101 Website, to develop a summary cover page (using Microsoft Word or equivalent). Attach the current event to the Summary/Cover page and submit at the end of each class.

Prior to First Class Session:

Read Chapter 1 *The Challenge of Democracy (COD)*

Preview COD Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, and 12. These chapters, at a minimum, will be discussed during the term. Instructor reserves the right to change assigned chapters as needed.

E-mail me at faubhaus@valdosta.edu identifying your preferred e-mail address for class communications.

Week 1:

Discussions / Activities:

Discuss class schedule: See Student Assignment Schedule (last page of Syllabus)

Discuss Syllabus

Establish chapter presentation groups, debate topics, and debate teams

Assign chapters in *The Challenge of Democracy (COD)* for group chapter presentations

Discuss group chapter presentations and topic debate requirements

Discuss Georgia State Politics assignment and study guide

WEEK 2:

Assignments Due:

COD Text	Class Activity	Current Event (CE)
Finish reading CHs 1 & 2	To Be Announced / As Assigned	CH 1 or CH 2

Discussions / Activities:

Discuss COD Chapters 1 & 2

Class Activity as assigned

Discuss & Submit Current Event relevant to Chapter 1 and / or Chapter 2

WEEK 3:

Assignments Due:

COD Text	GA Study Guide Questions	Group (GRP) 1 Presentation	Class Activity	CE	Quiz
CH 3	Answer Q's 1-15	COD CH 3	As Assigned	CH3	CH 1 & 2

Discussions / Activities:

COD Chapter 3 Group Chapter Presentation and Class Discussion
 Discuss & Submit Chapter 3 Class Activity and Current Event
 The Constitution of the United States of America, Appendix–review as needed
 Review/Discuss GA State Politics Study Guide Questions 1-15 (see attached Student Assignment Schedule)
 Chapters 1 & 2 Quiz

WEEK 4:**Assignments Due:**

COD Text	GA Study Guide Questions	GRP 2 Presentation	Class Activity	CE	Quiz	Topic Debate (N/A if PPP required)
CH 4	Answer Q's 16-30	COD CH 4	As Assigned	CH 4	CH 3	As Assigned

Discussions / Activities:

COD Chapter 4 Group Presentation and Class Discussion
 Discuss & Submit Chapter 4 Class Activity and Current Event
 The Constitution of the United States of America, Appendix – review as needed
 Review/Discuss GA State Politics Study Guide Questions 16-30 (see attached Student Assignment Schedule)
 Chapter 3 Quiz
 Topic Debate – SEE ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE on last page

WEEK 5:**Assignments Due:**

COD Text	GA Study Guide Questions	GRP 3 Presentation	Class Activity	CE	Quiz	Topic Debate (N/A if PPP required)
CH 5	None Due	COD CH 5	As Assigned	CH 5	CH 4	As Assigned

Discussions / Activities:

COD Chapter 5 Group Presentation and Class Discussion
 Discuss & Submit Chapter 5 Class Activity and Current Event
 The Constitution of the United States of America, Appendix – review as needed
 Chapter 4 Quiz
 Topic Debate – SEE ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE on last page

WEEK 6:**Assignments Due:**

COD Text	GA Study Guide Questions	GRP 4 Presentation	Class Activity	CE	Quiz	Topic Debate (N/A if PPP required)
CH 7	Answer Q's 31-60	COD CH 7	As Assigned	CH 7	CH 5	As Assigned

Discussions / Activities:

COD Chapter 7 Group Presentation and Class Discussion

Discuss & Submit Chapter 7 Class Activity and Current Event
 The Constitution of the United States of America, Appendix – review as needed
 Chapter 5 Quiz
 Review/Discuss GA State Politic Study Guide Questions 31-60 (see attached Student Assignment Schedule)

WEEK 7:

Assignments Due:

COD Text	GRP 5 Presentation	Class Activity	CE	Quiz	GA Exemption Exam	Topic Debate or PPP Due
Read CH 13	COD CH 12	As Assigned	CH 12	CH 7	X	As Assigned

Week 7 Discussions / Activities:

COD Chapter 12 Group Presentation and Class Discussion
 Discuss & Submit Chapter 12 Class Activity and Current Event
 Chapter 7 Quiz
 Georgia State Politics Exemption Exam
 Topic Debate – SEE ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE on last page
 Review for Final

WEEK 8:

Assignments Due:

Final	Instructor Evaluation	Topic Debate or PPP Presentation
X	As Required	As Needed

Discussions / Activities:

Miscellaneous Agenda as needed
 Instructor Evaluation if required
 Topic Debate or PPP presentation – As needed

GRADING:

Oral Presentations & Final Exam (% of Grade see Course Grading section)

During the term, individually and as a group-member you will (a) debate a controversial political issue, (b) conduct a chapter presentation, (c) discuss current events, and (d) participate in weekly class activities (as assigned).

Topic Debate Presentations: Basic Format or a Policy Position Paper (To be discussed Week 1)

Topic Debate Teams, consisting of 2-3 students on each side of the issue, will discuss a controversial political issue. There will be five topic debates from Week 3 through Week 8. Details will be discussed during Week 1.

Supplemental Debate Information and Instructions:

- As part of your debate package, each team member will submit:
1. Debate Issue Report (available on POLS1101 Web page)-Each team member will submit a issue report <http://www.valdosta.edu/kingsbay/classes/pols1101/index.html>
 2. Outline of your debate presentation-how you will proceed and your argument points
 3. Hard copies of your resources used (a minimum of three sources beyond your initial debate issue document)

Policy Position Paper

As a group or individually, pending class size, you will develop a 8-10 page Policy Position Paper (PPP) that addresses a relevant and current controversial issue in American Government / Political Science, which may

involve (a) race, (b) gender, (c) sexual orientation, (d) socio-economics, (e) education or (f) First Amendment rights (g) equal protection of the laws, and (g) division of power between nation and states as examples. The APA 5th edition Manual (writing style and format) and *Instructions for Writing Policy Position Papers* will be used as guides in developing the papers. Additional instructions will be discussed during Session One.

Group Chapter Presentation: source *The Challenge of Democracy* (10%)

Refer to ***POLS 1101 Chapter Presentation Guidelines*** document for additional guidance. Available online at <http://www.valdosta.edu/kingsbay/classes/pols1101/index.html> (Presentations dependent upon class size)

During your chapter presentation, consistent/frequent/excessive reading from (a) the text, (b) your notes, or (c) PowerPoint is an unacceptable practice in developing your academic knowledge and skills. That practice will result in a significant grade reduction (minimum 20-30 points).

Group	Chapter	Presentation Due Date
1	3	Week 3
2	4	Week 4
3	5	Week 5
4	7	Week 6
5	12	Week 7

Final Exam

The exam may consist of multiple-choice, matching, essay, short-answer, and True / False covering the chapters discussed during the term. You are responsible for all chapter material whether or not discussed in class.

Class Participation (30%)

Attend, each class, prepared to discuss what you have read and learned in the class. Take time during the week to learn about current political happenings. This will improve your class participation. Full class participation is encouraged and rewarded.

Current Event

Acquire a current event relevant to the topic(s) of class discussion for each week.

Current Events are due weekly from **Week 2 through Week 7**. For each current event, use the Current Event Summary Template available on <http://www.valdosta.edu/kingsbay/classes/pols1101/index.html> Using Microsoft Word or equivalent, develop a one-paragraph summary. Attach the current event Current Event Summary. Submit current event with summary at the end of each class. Refer to ***Student Assignments Schedule and Current Event Summary Template***.

Be prepared to discuss current event in class as it relates to weekly group presentations and class discussions.

Each Group will present a current event(s) relevant to their specific chapter presentation. The current events can be the same as individual current events due for that week.

You will receive a **20-point reduction**, in weekly class participation, if you do not submit a current event when due and in the required format. Refer to ***Late Work*** section.

Class Activities (To Be Assigned / Announced)

A variety of open-ended thought-provoking questions ask for your opinion about various controversial issues, which require critical thinking responses. The acronym, CLUES: Consider your source, Layout your argument, Uncover the evidence, Evaluate the data, and State the political implication(s) will help you critically answer each question.

Each essay will be a minimum of one (1) paragraph (4-7 sentences) using APA 5th edition format. Double-space, 12pt. font, Courier New or Time New Roman, and 1" margins are only a few examples of APA formatting. Left justify your name, chapter, due date, and write the question(s) prior to writing your response.

Most answers will require more than a paragraph. You may provide personal experience(s) to support your answer, but in no way should your personal experience form the basis of your answer. You will receive a **20-point reduction**, in weekly class participation, if you do not submit critical thinking assignments when due and in the required format. Refer to **Student Assignment Schedule**.

Debate Evaluation (% of Grade see Course Grading section)

Students will assist/comment on evaluating group issue debates and participate in class discussion after the debate. Failure to participate will result in an appropriate grade reduction, but not less than one-letter grade for the week's participation grade. Additionally, debate evaluations are based upon handout criteria.

Chapter Quiz (% of Grade see Course Grading section)

There are six (6) chapter quizzes starting Week 3 and ending Week 8. Each quiz may consist of a combination of: (a) matching, (b) true-false, with false-hood explanations, (c) multiple-choice, and (d) essay questions relevant to weekly reading assignments from the text – *The Challenge of Democracy*

Georgia Exemption Test for the Georgia Constitution (10%)

The State of Georgia requires you to take and pass this test with a minimum of 70%. It is a 25 question multiple-choice exam.

Attendance (10%)

If you attend all classes, you will receive ten points toward your final grade. See **Attendance Policy** for details

Course Grading:

PPP Class Format

Policy Position Paper	30%
Participation, CE & WYO	30%
Chapter Presentation	10%
Quizzes	10%
Georgia Exemption Exam	10%
Attendance	10%
	100%

Debate Class Format

Participation, CE & Class Activities	30%
Quizzes	10%
Debate	20%
Chapter Presentation	10%
Georgia Exemption Exam	10%
Final	10%
Attendance	10%
	100%

- 90% and over = A
- 80 - 89% = B
- 70 - 79% = C
- 65 - 69% = D
- 64% and below = F

ACADEMIC POLICIES:

Attendance Policy:

PARTICIPATION is the **KEY** to your success in this class and participation is impossible if you are not present. Students should attend every class and submit work when it is due. It is VSU's policy that if you miss more than two classes - excused or not, you will receive a "W" or "I" grade in the class! Do not let this happen to you!

Absences:

1. Contact me in advance (minimum of 24 hours) of any absence. Make-up work will be given only if the absence is excused (copy of military orders or command memo, written memo from superior, or a signed doctor's note).

2. Failure to discuss your absence, with me in advance (of the absence), or as soon as possible thereafter, and failure to provide me with written documentation of the excuse, will result in (a) an “unexcused absence” (b) losing a chance to make-up work, and (c) losing class attendance points. Furthermore, class work will not be accepted, if you are unexcused, on the day, class work is due. Missing two classes will result in your withdrawal.
3. Your absence, on the day of your respective chapter presentation or topic debate, will result in an “F” for that assignment.

Tardy and Leaving Early:

1. You are expected to arrive on time and attend the class (for the entire period). Failure to do so will be counted as an absence at the discretion of the instructor.
2. Emergencies are the exception provided the instructor receives an explanation as soon as possible.
3. Leaving early, without a justifiable reason or without being excused by the instructor, constitutes an unexcused absence or a reduced class participation grade or both. I am a proponent of class participation and active learning and neither can take place if you leave early or decide not to attend.

Late Work:

All assignments are due as designated and at the beginning of class. If you are absent (presuming absence is excused), you are expected to make every reasonable effort to provide the assignment to me at the time that it was due, but in no case more than one-week.

Emergencies (medical et cetera) and official military duty are exceptions (with proper documentation).

The penalties for late work:

One-day late:	One letter-grade reduction
Two-days late:	Two-letter-grade reductions
Three or more-days late:	No credit for assignment(s)

Classroom Accommodations/ Modifications:

Valdosta State University complies fully with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you believe you are covered under this Act, and if you have need for special arrangements to allow you to meet the requirements of this course, please contact personnel at the VSU Center at the Naval Submarine Base. The office will put you in contact with VSU’s Special Services Office. Furthermore, please discuss this situation with me at the first class meeting.

Classroom Behavior:

Eating and drinking in class is permitted if you (a) do not disturb the other students, and (b) deposit all your trash in the proper trash receptacles upon exiting the class.

Please observe the smoking areas (if available) and parking areas, and comply with all rules of SUBASE, the building, and VSU.

Using **cellular phones** (including text messaging) and **wearing hats in class** is **prohibited**. I suggest placing cellular phones on vibrate during class time and if you receive a call take it outside the classroom. You will be asked to leave the class if you cannot adhere to these requests.

You will receive a minimum of a **10-point deduction** in your weekly participation grade (considerate/respectful to others) with a maximum of class withdrawal for causing classroom disruption / disturbance. Furthermore, before you are allowed to return to class (if you were asked to leave because you caused any disruption / disturbance), you will need a signed letter from the VSU Director or Assistant Director verifying that the disturbance(s) will not continue.

POLS 1101 SUM 2008--STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS

WEEK	1 27-May	2 3-Jun	3 10-Jun	4 17-Jun	5 24-Jun	6 1-Jul	7 8-Jul	8 15-Jul
Chapter Presentations/Discussion	CH 1 & 2	CH 3	CH 4	CH 5	CH 7	CH 12		
Class Activity (as assigned)	CH 1 & 2	CH 3	CH 4	CH 5	CH 7	CH12		
Final								X
Quiz		CH 1 & 2	CH 3	CH 4	CH 5	CH 7		
Current Events	CH 1 or 2	CH 3	CH 4	CH 5	CH 7	CH 12		
Topic Debates / Paper (PPP)**			Debate	NA	Debate	NA		
GA Exemption Study Guide Questions		1-15	16 - 30		31 - 60			
GA Exemption Exam							X	

** As class size permits and as assigned