

POLS 1101, Sections OLI and OLJ  
American Government  
Spring Semester 2021

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### Purpose

The U. S. Constitution was written in 1787 and went into effect in 1789. Just about every educated American is aware of that, but few give much thought to how astounding it is that the United States has been operating under the Constitution for 231 years. Nothing like that has ever happened in the history of humankind.

However, our 231-year-old constitutional and political system is clearly showing signs of wear. Our legislative branch is straining under the heavy weight of lifetime politicians who are so fearful of losing the next election that they will do anything to humor their constituents. Legislators' reelection-oriented activities are costly, and to no small extent they explain why the indebtedness of our national government has surpassed the staggering \$26-trillion mark. As public policymaking is complicated by the existence of that incomprehensible amount of debt, our elected officials are unable to build coalitions to enact legislation on such pressing issues as immigration reform, the growth of unemployment and the persistence of poverty, and the accumulation of indisputable evidence (because just about everyone is walking around today with a movie camera in her hand) that some police patrol officers are brutalizing unarmed members of minority groups. Presidents' and Congress's interests seem to have very limited overlap. Therefore, compromise is hard to come by.

I plan to share with you what I know about these troubling developments. I don't suppose that I have many solutions, but I have a lot of explanations. Our discussions about these developments should be very interesting--at least as interesting as the news media's coverage of what the president and Congress are doing.

### Syllabus Supplement

Please examine the "Syllabus Supplement," which is available in the "Syllabus" module of our D2L course.

### Learning Objectives

- Students will analyze the complexity of human behavior as a function of the commonality and diversity within or between groups.
- Students will analyze the interaction between culture and history or politics in the United States.
- Students will understand the American system of constitutional government, including separation and division of powers and the system of checks and balances.

### The Online Environment

#### 1. GENERAL RULES

This course is delivered in an asynchronous environment, which means that you will be working on your own schedule, subject to the necessary assignment deadlines. Here are some general rules:

- Course discussion is an important part of your learning experience and your grade.
- Complete your weekly assignments before you move on to the next week.
- Always check to see whether there are any new course announcements.
- For the purposes of this course, all times are expressed in U. S. Eastern Time ("ET").
- Don't wait to learn how to use D2L.
- Use the assigned UNG E-mail account and not your personal E-mail account.
- Should a technical problem arise, address it immediately.
- Observe course "netiquette" and be considerate of others at all times.

It is your responsibility to make sure you have computer hardware and software that allow you to read and send E-mail, access the Internet, and enter the D2L website. You will normally use D2L to communicate with me or to turn in assignments.

## 2. COMPUTER SKILLS REQUIREMENTS

In order to effectively participate in this class, you need to be able to use E-mail, type, save and attach documents to your communications, log in to D2L, post messages on discussion boards, and save and upload documents in various formats, including but not limited to Microsoft Word and Adobe-pdf format. If you have questions regarding any of these issues, please do not hesitate to contact me.

## 3. COMMUNICATION IN D2L AND BY E-MAIL

- Always include a subject line ("POLLS 1101: [Topic]").
- Remember that without facial expressions some comments may be taken the wrong way. Be careful in wording your E-mails. Use of emoticons might be helpful in some cases. Do not write in all capital letters.
- Use standard fonts. You never know what fonts someone else's machine can read!
- Avoid sending large attachments.
- Special formatting such as centering, audio messages, tables, html, etc., should be avoided unless necessary to complete an assignment or other communication.
- Respect the privacy of other class members.

### **STUDENT HELP RESOURCES**

◆ UNG Service Desk contact is (706) 864-1922 or at [helpdesk@ung.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ung.edu).

◆ For 24/7 support, go to <https://D2LHelp.view.usg.edu/>

◆ Citation Styles: APA - <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/>

◆ D2L Tutorials: [https://my.ung.edu/departments/distance-education/Pages/eLearning%20\(D2L\)/Placing-a-Support-Help-Desk-Ticket.aspx](https://my.ung.edu/departments/distance-education/Pages/eLearning%20(D2L)/Placing-a-Support-Help-Desk-Ticket.aspx)

## Course Requirements

### 1. READING

The required textbook is:

Cavalli, Carl D., ed. *The Basics of American Government*. 3<sup>d</sup> ed. Dahlonega, Ga.: University Press of North Georgia, 2017.

You may purchase a printed copy of the textbook in the bookstore. You may also access the textbook at no charge on the Web using the link at this URL address:

<https://ung.edu/university-press/books/the-basics-of-american-government-3-edition.php>

Study the assigned readings on a timely basis in accordance with the attached schedule. To "study" does *not* mean to scan; rather, to "study" involves careful reading and note-taking (or underlining) to facilitate retention of facts and to facilitate review for the examination.

## 2. BULLETIN-BOARD DISCUSSIONS

I have developed a set of questions about the readings for 15 of the weeks' modules (including the first week, when your introduction of yourself will count as part of the discussion contribution). You are required to post an answer to any one of the questions. Your answers must be posted on the Discussion Board before 12 noon ET on Friday of the course week. Late participation (i.e., between Friday and the end of the course week) will be penalized (minus 1 point). Then you are welcome to respond to any of your classmates' posts before 12 noon ET on Monday at the end of the course week. When submitting your answers, be sure to include your name and which reading(s) your answers are addressing. Make sure to properly cite the reading(s) by providing name of author, title of material if there might be any ambiguity, and page number(s), in accordance with some accepted style manual (such as MLA, APA, etc.). The answers should not be of the "I agree" or "I disagree" type, but they should address broader theoretical or analytical themes. The answers should not merely re-state the author's words, but should reveal reflective and critical analysis.

For example:

I am Destiny Bright. Concerning Question 3: Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay wrote the <i>Federalist</i> papers. They wanted to persuade the American people that the draft constitution was a much better document than the Articles of Confederation. So they wrote these essays to explain such
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features of the draft constitution as separation of powers, checks and balances, federalism, and an independent judiciary (Alexander, 2017).

- Destiny

I will grade it as a 2 because you followed the format and demonstrated that you read the material, but it does not show critical analysis. On the other hand, perhaps a student's answer were formulated differently, like this:

I am Destiny Bright. Concerning Question 3: The *Federalist* papers were a series of essays that explained to the American public that the draft constitution would be an effective device for establishing a much better government than the confederation. Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay wrote these essays for New York State newspapers with the objective that the essays would persuade the people of New York to support the ratification of the draft constitution at a state ratification convention. In *Federalist* 10, for example, Madison explained that the draft constitution would allow people to freely establish interest groups ("factions"), leading to countless factions that would not be a threat to the U. S. political and governmental system because they would neutralize each other as a result of their large numbers. In *Federalist* 51, Madison explained the clever system of checks and balances that allow each branch the necessary tools to "check" the selfish ambitions of the other branches. The essays worked: On July 26, 1788, New York became the 11<sup>th</sup> state to ratify the draft constitution (Alexander, 2017, pp. 26-29).

- Destiny

I will grade this question as a 3 because you followed the format and also demonstrated critical review of the material.

Your weekly questions will be graded using the following criteria (Point Range 3-0):

- 3 = Student adheres to all requirements of posting--that is, the student submits an answer before noon on Friday, title of message clearly references discussion theme, answers make proper reference to reading, and/or answers make proper citation of readings by giving page numbers. Participation is extensive and

coherent; some of the week's themes are discussed; arguments are clearly stated; topic/theme/controversy builds from and into the course's topics and goals; student clearly makes an effort to build on the week's discussion by effectively incorporating material from the course and other courses.

- 2 = Student adheres to some or most of the requirements of posting--that is, the student submits an answer before noon on Friday, title of message clearly references discussion theme, some readings are not clearly or properly referenced, and/or some answers are not properly cited or lack page numbers. Some themes are discussed; discussion refers to the readings but misses on originality or freshness (lacks effort to interpret material in an interesting and original way); discussion would have been enhanced by the use of additional sources (both in quality and quantity).

- 1 = Student has not adhered to requirements of posting--that is, student submits an answer that is vague or general or incoherent, there is no title of message or document does not refer to the readings, there is no proper citation of material or reference is inaccurate, and/or there is no citation of pages or page number is inaccurate. Contributions consist mostly of sparse postings such as "I agree," "Yes, you are right," "I see your point"; contributions stray from the week's theme.

- 0 = Student did not participate in that week's discussion.

*Your contributions to the class discussions will account for 45 percent of your course grade.* Participation in class discussions plays an important part in this course, both as a component of your course grade and as a way of learning the material. You are encouraged to offer your own issues and questions for discussion, but they must be appropriate to the subject matter. Because students will not be online at the same time, the course will use the Discussion Board, and not chat rooms, for the course discussion. Weekly class discussions must be completed before you move on to the next week. Weekly class discussions will close at noon each Monday at the end of the class week. You will not be able to participate for credit after that.

#### Discussion Group Guidelines:

- Discussion is the heart of the course, so don't be bashful.
- Complete your weekly assignments and that includes class board discussions before you move on to the next week.

- Review the discussion threads thoroughly before joining the discussion.
- Try to maintain threads by using the "Reply" button rather than starting a new topic.
- Do not make insulting or inflammatory statements to other class members.
- If you respond to a classmate's post, do not cause the original post to be reproduced in *your* post; such reproduction merely clutters the thread.
- Be positive and constructive in group discussions.
- Respond in a thoughtful and timely manner.

Chat Guidelines:

Because there is no expectation that either students or the instructor will be online at the same time, there will be no course chat room or chat discussions.

3. EXAMINATIONS

There will be three examinations, including the final examination. Each will account for 18 percent of your course grade. On each exam, there will be 10 short-answer questions, and you will have two hours to take the exam once the exam begins. This is the schedule for the three examinations:

Examination / Week	Schedule	Additional Information
First Exam / Week 6	Between Monday, Feb. 15, at noon and Tuesday, Feb. 16, at 8 p.m.	Respondus Monitor*
<p>* The first exam will be proctored. UNG's rules require that one exam be proctored. For that purpose, we will use Respondus Monitor. You will need to use a computer that has a videocamera/microphone. Respondus Monitor will record a video (with audio) as you take the exam. <b>No later than Wednesday, February 3,</b> examine the instructions for using Respondus Monitor, which begin on the Web page at this URL address:  <a href="https://my.ung.edu/departments/distance-education/Pages/faculty-resources/Respondus-Lockdown-Browser.aspx">https://my.ung.edu/departments/distance-education/Pages/faculty-resources/Respondus-Lockdown-Browser.aspx</a>                      On that Web page there is a link to another Web page titled</p>		

<p>"Installing and Using the Respondus LockDown Browser (Students)."                  Begin to implement these instructions <i>in advance of the exam</i>.  <b>Check on the compatibility of your computer with Respondus Lockdown by taking the "Practice for Installing Respondus" quiz available under "Quizzes."</b> Do this by Wednesday, February 3.  <b>The quiz has no effect on your course grade.</b></p>		
Second Exam / Week 12	Between Monday, March 29, at noon and Tuesday, March 30, at 8 p.m.	Not proctored
Final Exam / Week 17	Between Wednesday, May 5, at noon and Thursday, May 6, at 8 p.m.	Not proctored

If you don't take an examination when it is scheduled, the grade will be zero.

#### 4. CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

The integrity code of the University of North Georgia--"On my honor, I will not lie, cheat, steal, plagiarize, evade the truth, or tolerate those who do"--reflects the university's commitment to academic integrity. The "Academic Integrity Policy" (2020-2021 *Undergraduate Bulletin*, at [https://catalog.ung.edu/content.php?catoid=28&navoid=927#academic\\_integrity\\_policy](https://catalog.ung.edu/content.php?catoid=28&navoid=927#academic_integrity_policy) ; see also the *Student Handbook*) is incorporated herein by reference. Please note that in this course, as in all others at UNG, plagiarism and other forms of cheating are expressly prohibited. Any student who commits plagiarism or cheating may receive a reduced grade, which may involve a failing grade. A report of the incident will be provided to the university's Academic Integrity Council. The council and the vice president for academic affairs may take additional action, which may include a formal reprimand, probation, suspension, or expulsion.<sup>1</sup>

#### 5. COMPOSITION

The first week's course content includes instructions about "Composing Messages and Papers." The instructions are incorporated in this syllabus by reference. Please write coherent English. Persistent errors of syntax, grammar, word choice, etc., can adversely affect your scores on assignments.

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<sup>1</sup> If you would like to read a discussion of the *rationale* for the rules about plagiarism, you are welcome to read my essay that is accessible on the Internet at <http://faculty.UNG.edu/bfriedman/Studies/plgrm.htm> .



## 6. THINGS THAT WILL NOT HAPPEN

Requests from students for certain accommodations have become so prevalent in my recent experience that I recognize the need to disclose at the outset that there are three things that will *not* happen in this course: (1) I will *not* distribute a "review sheet" before any examination that essentially discloses what will be on the examination. (2) Test grades will *not* be "curved." (3) I will *not* invite the submission of, or accept, "papers for extra credit."

## 7. COPYRIGHT COMPLIANCE

Both federal and state laws forbid the unlawful duplication of copyrighted computer software or other reproductions of copyrighted material. In accordance with these policies, the University of North Georgia expressly forbids the copying of such materials supplied by or used in the university. Unlawful duplication of copyrighted materials by a user may result in disciplinary action by the university pursuant to the Student Code of Conduct (Non-Academic Infractions--Prohibitions, Theft), and/or possible criminal action by the owner of the copyright.

## 8. INCORPORATION OF OTHER CONTROLLING AUTHORITY

The contents of the following are incorporated by reference:

- All of the rules, regulations, and standards published in UNG's undergraduate and graduate bulletins.
- The supplementary information that appears on the Web page at this URL address:

<http://ung.edu/academic-affairs/policies-and-guidelines/supplemental-syllabus.php>

## 9. ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT

*If you need this document in another format, please contact Kerri McCoy by E-mail ( kerri.mccoy@UNG.edu ) or by telephone (706-864-1628).*

Course Grades

Your instructor uses the conventional grading scale: 90-100%, A; 80-89%, B; 70-79%, C; 60-69%, D; below 60%, F.

Course grades are available on BANNER within about two business days of the end of final examinations. Except in emergency situations, please do not request grades by telephone, E-mail, or similar method.

Schedule of Assignments

<u>Week</u>	<u>Beginning Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading</u>
1	Jan. 11	Welcome Introduction of Participants Orientation to Technology Composing Messages and Papers Protection of Privacy and Intellectual Property "Week 1 - Quiz" (counts as 1 percent of course grade)	
2	Jan. 18	Theories of Democracy and Types of Government	Ch. 1
3	Jan. 25	The U. S. Constitution	Ch. 2
4	Feb. 1	Separation of Powers and Division of Powers	Ch. 3 (pp. 33-48)
5	Feb. 8	Political Socialization Read "Political Socialization and the Communications Media" by Albo and Friedman	
6	Feb. 15	First Examination Interest Groups Also read "The Self-Serving Behavior of Many Charity Executives" by Friedman	Ch. 5 (pp. 99-110, 117-134)
7	Feb. 22	Political Parties and Elections	Ch. 6 (pp. 135-137, 146-178)

<u>Week</u>	<u>Beginning Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading</u>
<b>8</b>	Mar. 1	Congress	Ch. 7
<b>9</b>	Mar. 8	Presidency	Ch. 8 (pp. 217-221, 225-228, 230-236)
<b>10</b>	Mar. 15	Executive Agencies	Ch. 9
<b>11</b>	Mar. 22	Judicial Branch	Ch. 10
<b>12</b>	Mar. 29	Second Examination	
<b>13</b>	Apr. 5	Civil Liberties and Civil Rights	Ch. 11 (pp. 301-321)
<b>14</b>	Apr. 12	Public Policy	Ch. 12
<b>15</b>	Apr. 19	State and Local Government	Ch. 13 (pp. 351-365)
<b>16</b>	Apr. 26	Foreign Policy	Ch. 14 (pp. 395-412)
<b>17</b>	May 3	Final Examination (Wednesday/Thursday)	