



POLS

1101

H3
Spring 2026

INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN GOVERNMENT (CRN: 5581)

Time: MWF 1:00pm to 1:50pm; **Location:** 203 Young; **Credit:** 3 hours
Professor: Carl Cavalli; **Office:** 338 Hansford; **E-mail:** carl.cavalli@ung.edu
Office Hours: MTW 3:00pm to 5:00pm, or by email or appointment

[Y]ou must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself.
-James Madison

Course Description:

Prerequisite to all POLS 3000/4000-level courses.

This course is an intensive examination of the Constitution and the three governmental divisions. It includes a study of the national government in its relation to the states. Examples from the government of Georgia are included.

Required Readings:

Text:

NOTE: You MUST use the FIFTH edition.



Earlier editions are NOT the same.

FREE online: <https://ung.edu/university-press/books/index.php>
Print version at UNG bookstores, Amazon and B&N
Like us on Facebook: [@basicsofamericangovernment](https://www.facebook.com/basicsofamericangovernment)
Follow us on Instagram: [@americangovernment_basics](https://www.instagram.com/americangovernment_basics)

Carl D. Cavalli (ed). 2025.
The Basics of American Government, Fifth Edition

Web Site:



<https://news.google.com/news/section?&q=Politics>

Google News/Politics

ONLINE: Home – <http://faculty.ung.edu/ccavalli/1101.htm>, D2L (“eLearning”) – <https://ung.view.usg.edu>, Turnitin – <http://turnitin.com>

Course Objectives and Format:

Core IMPACTS course: Citizenship and Social Sciences areas. Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help master course content, and support students’ broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- Citizenship: How do I prepare for my responsibilities as an engaged citizen?
- Social Sciences: How do I understand human experiences and connections?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome: Students will...

- (Citizenship) ...demonstrate knowledge of the history of the United States and Georgia, and the provisions and principles their constitutions.
- (Social Sciences) ...effectively analyze the complexity of human behavior, and how historical, economic, political, social, or geographic relationships develop, persist, or change.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Citizenship: Critical Thinking; Intercultural Competence; Persuasion
- Social Sciences: Intercultural Competence; Perspective-Taking; Persuasion

This is a “Half at a Distance” course. Most weeks we meet part of the week, with online activities filling out the week. We will use D2L online (also known as *eLearning*), but I like to keep things simple. We will not use any “modules”, etc. Unless otherwise noted, all activity and communication will take place via the *announcement* and *discussion* sections. In class, we will engage in as much **discussion** as possible. To that end, *you need to read the assignments before their due date*. Be able to *discuss* and answer *questions* about them. The text lays out the basics (Though not required, you may take advantage of the text’s web site at <http://go.ung.edu/bag> when available). We will start each new topic (usually each week) in class, discussing the appropriate text chapter. Then, online, we will debate class topics and follow related current events in *Google News* (<https://news.google.com/news/section?&q=Politics>) articles. *You* will lead these online activities. In *groups*, **all of you** will present and discuss one or more (depending on class size) articles or debate topics¹. The articles will be posted in the appropriate D2L discussion topics. Of course, you **all** are responsible for **all** class readings. There will also be audio, video and other materials (linked in D2L discussions)—they do not require prior preparation, but you *are* responsible for them. Most weeks, a written assignment will end the topic.

There are **two ‘midterms’ and a final**. Each is worth 20% (20 points) of your final grade. They consist of multiple choice and essay questions. *I will not give makeups unless you 1) notify me or the department asap* (do **not** wait until the next class!); *and 2) verify a family/medical emergency or official school activity in writing*. **Note:** I will *not* schedule any makeups *after* graded exams are *handed back* in class. Most weeks there is a **written exercise**. You will find them in the appropriate D2L discussion topics. Each is worth 5 points, but collectively, they are worth 20% (20 points) of your final grade (Paper grades will be averaged and multiplied by 4). *Do not turn in late papers!* If I accept late papers (and I may not!), you will lose 1 point of your paper grade for each day late. *Additional work* (written work or presentations) may be offered (see FAQs, below) *or required*. Your **presentations/debates** are 10% (10 points) of your grade. Finally, your class **participation** (including your online discussions) **and attendance** are 10% (10 points) of your grade.

Use the table below to keep track of your grades and calculate your course grade:

| Exam | Point / % | Your Grade | Written exercises | Point / % | Your Grade | Other | Point / % | Your Grade | 90+ = A | |
|--------|-----------|------------|---|-----------|------------|-----------------------------|-----------|------------|-------------------|--------------|
| #1 | 20 | _____ | Average of 10 papers (5 pts each) multiplied by four. | 20 | _____ | Debates/Presentations | 10 | _____ | 80 to 89 = B | |
| #2 | 20 | _____ | | | | Participation*/Attend | 10 | _____ | 70 to 79 = C | |
| Final | 20 | _____ | | | | *includes online discussion | | | | 60 to 69 = D |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total: | 60 | _____ | Total: | 20 | _____ | Total: | 20 | _____ | Your Total: _____ | |

I do not **grade** on a curve (You earn what you earn...I *hope* you all earn “A”s!). A typical class average is about a mid- to upper- “C” (“C” is *average* — *not* below average...“B” is *above* average). Just completing the requirements most likely earns a “C” (70-79). “B” (80-89) requires effort *beyond* just requirements. “A” (90-100) requires *extraordinary* performance.

¹ These are video presentations. **Every group member must be visually present in videos.** You will post video links to appropriate D2L discussion topic.

Notes on “attendance”:

1. The UNG **attendance policy** (see the latest UNG *Student Handbook*, or *Bulletin*) applies to this course. While I *will* take attendance, I’m only interested in your general attendance. If you’re only absent once or twice, don’t worry. If you’re absent a *lot* (UNG does not recognize “cuts”), your grade *will* suffer (note also: late=absent!).

2. Any in-class or D2L **announcements** are considered sufficient notice. So, *attendance matters*, and please check your email and D2L often.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs): See <http://faculty.ung.edu/ccavalli/1101faq.htm>

Course Schedule:

Legend: **BAG #** = Cavalli (ed.), *Basics of American Government*, 5th Edition chapters (see Required Readings). Following the chapter numbers are **chapter titles/topics**. **Present. #** = **student debates/article presentations** (see updates on presentation web page). **Paper** = **Written exercises** (see D2L). Assignments or activities are in **bold type**. Audio/Video titles are *Italicized* (see D2L; NOTE: Videos are subject to change). [**Class days**]. **Discussion/Papers**. **Exams**. **Off days**.

| Monday: Mostly Lecture. D2L: | | Present | Discuss | Wednesday: Lecture/activity | | Friday: Paper / Exam / Other | |
|---|---|-------------------------|---------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | | [5pm Wed] [8pm Thur] | | | | [due 8pm Fri] | |
| 01/12 | Intro ("Hello, my name is...") | ↑ due dates ↑ | | 01/14 | BAG 1—Democracy/Gov't | 01/16 | Democ/Gov (cont) Drop/add ends |
| 01/19 | —MLK BDay— | 1. Founders | | 01/21 | BAG 2,3—Const./Federalism | 01/23 | Const/Fed (cont) video |
| 01/26 | Constitution/Federalism (cont) | 2. Liberal/Conservative | | 01/28 | BAG 4—Pol. Soc./Media | 01/30 | Pol. Soc./Media Ideology |
| 02/02 | Pol. Soc./Media (continued) | 3. Media | | 02/04 | Media (continued) | Online | Media |
| 02/09 | BAG 5—Interest Groups | 4. Interest Groups | | 02/11 | Interest Groups (continued) | Online | Interest Groups |
| 02/16 | BAG 6—Parties/Elections | 5. Elections | | 02/18 | Parties/Elections (continued) | 02/20 | —Exam #1— |
| 02/23 | BAG 7—Congress (basics) | ----- | | 02/25 | Gerrymander | Online | ----- |
| 03/02 | BAG 7—Congress (legislation) | 6. Congress | | 03/04 | The Filibuster | Online | Congress |
| 03/09 | —Spring Break (Beer! Beaches!! Bikinis!!!, Headaches! Hangovers!! Home!!!)— | | | | | | |
| 03/16 | BAG 8—Presidency | 7. President | | 03/18 | Presidential Power | Online | ----- |
| 03/23 | BAG 9—Executive Agencies | 8. Red Tape | | 03/25 | Executive Agencies (cont) | Online | Pres./Exec.; Withdraw ends |
| 03/30 | BAG 10—Federal Judiciary | 9. Judiciary | | 04/01 | Judiciary (continued) | 04/03 | —Exam #2— |
| 04/06 | BAG 11—Civil Liberties | 10. Moot Court | | 04/08 | Civil Liberties (continued) | Online | ----- |
| 04/13 | BAG 11—Civil Rights | 11. Affirmative Action | | 04/15 | Civil Rights (continued) | Online | Liberties/Rights |
| 04/20 | BAG 12—Public Policy | 12: Welfare | | 04/22 | Global Depression | Online | Public Policy |
| 04/27 | BAG 14—Foreign Policy | 13: Foreign Policy | | 04/29 | Cold War excerpts | 05/01 | For. Policy For. Pol. paper |
| NOTE: Class Cancellations: we will pick up where we left off – and meet Fridays if needed: Final Exam: Friday, 05/08: 12:40pm to 2:40pm | | | | | | | |

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Text-only version of course schedule: <http://faculty.ung.edu/ccavalli/1101sch-txt.htm>

STAY INFORMED: UNG Political Science and International Affairs on social media! Blog: <http://blog.ung.edu/psia-news/>



CHEAT = FAIL. Cheating or plagiarizing will result in an automatic zero for the exam or assignment, a zero for participation and attendance, AND forfeiture of all extra credit. At my discretion, it may ALSO result in academic integrity charges and an “F” for the course.

UNG Integrity Code: “I will not lie, cheat, steal, plagiarize, evade the truth or tolerate those that do.”

All students in this class are bound by the above Integrity Code. For information on Academic Integrity as defined by UNG, see the *UNG Undergraduate Catalog* (http://catalog.ung.edu/content.php?catoid=12&navoid=252#Academic_Integrity_Policy). See also <http://www.plagiarism.org/>.

Plagiarism in any form is a violation of UNG Academic Integrity policies and will not be tolerated:

Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Terms and Conditions of Use posted on the Turnitin.com site.

The use of Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) is prohibited by the student code of conduct. This includes ChatGPT, Grammarly, Microsoft Copilot, and all other A.I., and applies to all written/online work.

UNG Early Intervention required statement:

As part of UNG’s Early Intervention commitment to your academic success, I may refer you to university services designed to help you succeed. Please understand that such referrals are not a form of punishment – they are intended to help you. In turn, I expect you to take advantage of the offer.

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

Accessibility Statement: If you need this document in another format, please email me (carl.cavalli@ung.edu) or call 706-864-1872.

Find more information here: <https://ung.edu/web-communications/web-accessibility/accessible-documents.php>.



Accommodations for disabilities: <https://ung.edu/student-accessibility-services/>

The University of North Georgia is committed to equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. If you believe that you have a disability requiring an accommodation, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the instructor and the Office of Student Accessibility Services. In this case, contact Student Accessibility Services, in the Stewart Student Success Center, Room 233 (706-867-2782, accessibility-dah@ung.edu).