



POLS
1101
H3
Fall 2026

INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN GOVERNMENT (CRN: 1045)

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: M 12-1pm, 3-5:30pm; W 3-5:30pm, 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: ISBN- 978-1-959203-11-7

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
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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:

Outcomes: Students will analyze the complexity of human **behavior** as a function of the commonality and diversity within or between groups; analyze the **interaction** between culture and history or politics in the United States; and **understand** the US and Georgia systems of constitutional government (separation/division of powers, checks/balances, civil liberties/rights). Students will also read and analyze primary source documents to support their understanding of the US and Georgia constitutional systems.

Core IMPACTS: Citizenship and Social Sciences. 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	_____	Grand Total: 100
									Your Total: _____

Technical Support – IT Help Desk: email: helpdesk@ung.edu; Ph.: 706-864-1922; Visit: <https://ung.edu/information-technology/contact.php>

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

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.

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 (in class) / Other	
		[5pm Wed] [8pm Thur]			[due 8pm Fri]		
08/10	Intro ("Hello, my name is...")	↑ due dates ↑		08/12	BAG 1 —Democracy/Gov't	08/14	Democ/Gov (cont) Drop/add end
08/17	BAG 2,3 —Const./Federalism	1. Founders		08/19	Constitution/Federalism (cont)	08/21	Const/Fed (cont) <i>Liberty!</i> video
08/24	BAG 4 —Pol. Soc./Media	2. Liberal/Conserv.		08/26	Political Socialization	08/28	Pol. Soc./Media Ideology
08/31	Pol.Soc./Media (continued)	3. Media		09/02	Media; BAG 5 —Int. Groups	Online	Media
09/07	—LaborDay—	4. Interest Groups		09/09	Interest Groups (continued)	Online	Interest Groups
09/14	BAG 6 —Parties/Elections	5. Elections		09/16	Parties/Elections (continued)	09/18	—Exam #1—
09/21	BAG 7 —Congress (basics)	-----		09/23	<i>Gerrymander</i>	Online	-----
09/28	BAG 7 —Congress (legislation)	6. Congress		09/30	<i>The Filibuster</i>	Online	Congress
10/05	BAG 8 —Presidency	7. President		10/07	Presidential Power	Online	-----
10/12	BAG 9 —Bureaucracy	8. Red Tape		10/14	Bureaucracy (continued)	Online	Pres./Exec.; Withdraw ends 10/16
10/19	BAG 10 —Federal Judiciary	9. Judiciary		10/21	Judiciary (continued)	10/23	—Exam #2—
10/26	BAG 11 —Civil Liberties	10. Moot Court		10/28	Civil Liberties (continued)	Online	----- <i>[Friday is my birthday, be nice]</i>
11/02	BAG 11 —Civil Rights	11. Affirmative Action		11/04	Civil Rights (continued)	Online	Liberties/Rights
11/09	BAG 12 —Public Policy	12: Welfare		11/11	—Out partying... I mean at a conference—	Online	Public Policy
11/16	BAG 14 —Foreign Policy	13: Foreign Policy		11/18	<i>Cold War</i> excerpts	11/20	Foreign Policy For. Pol. paper
11/23	—11/23-27: Thanksgiving Break (Turkey! Football!! Relatives who stay too long!!!!)—						
NOTE Class Cancellations: we will pick up where we left off -- and meet Fridays if needed Final Exam: Friday, 12/04: 12:40pm to 2:40pm							

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

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CHEAT = FAIL. Cheating (including A.I. use – see below) 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 student code of conduct: Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) use is prohibited unless approved by instructors. This includes ChatGPT, Grammarly, Microsoft Copilot, and all other A.I., and applies to all exams and written/online work. Any Turnitin A.I. score of 50% or more will be submitted to D2L’s Copyleaks. If Copyleaks also returns a score of 50% or more, I will initiate Academic Integrity procedures.

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.

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>

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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).