I. GENERAL INFORMATION
INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Randall Parish
TELEPHONE: 706-310-6231
OFFICE: SRC 540
EMAIL: Randall.Parish@ung.edu
OFFICE HOURS: MW 9:00-11:30; 3:00-4:30
CLASS TIMES: TR 12:30-1:45
TR 11:00-12:00

II. TEXT

We the People, 10th Core Edition, by Ginsberg, Lowi, Weir, and Tolbert

III. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Yours is an honors course embedded in a traditional American government course. As an honors student you will participate actively in discussions of how and why the American government works as it does. There will be little extra work for honors students, but more engagement than in traditional American government courses. I encourage you to take ownership of the course – if there is something that is especially interesting to you, bring it up and we can explore it. Respectfully challenge your classmates (and me!), and let's have fun talking politics this spring.

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

This course can be used in Area E in the core curriculum.
This course fulfills the Georgia and U.S. Constitution and History requirement.
This course fulfills the U.S. Perspectives Learning Outcome.

IV. COURSE OBJECTIVES (EXPECTED OUTCOMES)

By the time students have finished this course, they should be able to:
1. Analyze the interaction of political actors and institutions in the United States and their interactions with global actors and forces.
2. Analyze the historical and philosophical roots of America's system of government and the Constitution.
3. Show understanding of Georgia's history and government, including current issues in Georgia politics.
4. Formulate and defend logical arguments in discussing a variety of contemporary political issues.
5. Examine the effects of cultural differences and economic interests of political actors within the United States and between the United States and other global actors.
6. Assess the accuracy, completeness and potential bias of sources of information pertaining to politics and government in the U.S. and world.
7. Analyze the complexity of human behavior as a function of the commonality and diversity within or between groups.
8. Analyze the interaction between culture and history or politics in the United States.
9. Demonstrate recognition and interest in opportunities for civic and political engagement.
10. Analyze the effectiveness of local, state, and federal government in solving problems.
V. COURSE GOAL: Explain why the government does what it does.

**Question: What does the government do?** It makes and enforces laws; sets and collects taxes; deals with other countries; maintains the military and fights wars; makes rules for businesses, organizations, and individuals; builds and maintains infrastructure; and it provides services and other benefits to groups and individuals.

**Question: Why does the government take the specific actions that it does?** Political power – people have different ideas of what the government should do, and they compete to get the government to do what they want. Those with more political power have more say in what the government does.

**Question: What gives some people more political power than others – what is the source of their power?**

1. **Rules** - Constitutional rules define who has a say by dividing power between the branches of government and between the federal government and the states. It also gives individuals and groups special power in a variety of issues.

2. **Politics** – Politics is competition to gain influence, based on power factors like public opinion, elections, party strength, and interest group activities.

3. **Government** – The internal rules and processes of each branch of government give special advantages to one side or the other.

VI. COURSE CALENDAR

Sep 7 – Labor Day Holiday
Sep 10 – Research Proposal Due
Sep 17 – Exam #1
Oct 12 – Withdrawal Deadline
Oct 20 – Exam #2
Nov 23-27 – Thanksgiving Holidays
Nov 3 – Research Paper Due
Nov 19 – Service Learning Reflection Essay Due
Dec 3 – Common Assessment Essay Due
Dec 10 – Final Exam (12:40-2:40)
VII. COURSE POLICIES

1. **Attendance policy.** Students are expected to attend and be on time for all classes, and attendance will be recorded. Attendance will play an important role in determining any final or borderline grades. Barring a legitimate emergency, students may leave class early only if he or she has received permission before the period begins.

2. **Make-up assignments.** Missed exams will receive a zero, and make-up exams will only be issued under extraordinary circumstances. It is the student’s responsibility to provide written documentation from a physician or similar authority to justify a make-up exam. Missed quizzes will receive a zero unless the student provides such documentation. Quizzes missed during an excused absence will be dropped and not count toward the overall average.

3. **Disruptive behaviors.** Students who exhibit behaviors that are considered to obstruct or disrupt this class or its learning activities will be considered under the Board of Regents Policy on Disruptive Behavior. Behaviors which are considered to be inappropriate in this classroom include coming in late and leaving early, using electronic devices for non-class work, interrupting others, talking out of turn, inappropriate behavior during group work, verbal behavior that is disrespectful of other students or the faculty member, or other behaviors that may be disruptive. Students who exhibit such behavior may be temporarily dismissed from the class by the instructor and may be subject to disciplinary procedures outlined in the Student Handbook.

4. **Supplemental Course Information.** Students are responsible for observing the policies on the Academic Success Plan Program, students with disabilities, academic integrity, disruptive behavior, class evaluations, academic exchange, inclement weather, and course grades and withdrawal process found at [http://ung.edu/academic-affairs/policies-and-guidelines/supplemental-syllabus.php](http://ung.edu/academic-affairs/policies-and-guidelines/supplemental-syllabus.php).

5. **Academic Dishonesty.** Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated, and at a minimum, any student caught cheating will receive a zero for the assignment. Plagiarism involves using the work of another person and presenting it as one’s own. Any of the following acts constitutes plagiarism unless the source of each quotation or piece of borrowed material is clearly acknowledged. Please see me if you have any question on what should be cited in your research paper.
   - Copying out part(s) of any document or audio-visual material (including computer based material);
   - Using or extracting another person’s concepts, experimental results, or conclusions;
   - Summarizing another person’s work;
   - In an assignment where there was collaborative preparatory work, submitting substantially the same final version of any material as another student (Macquarie University glossary of university terms).

6. **Communication.** UNG email is the official means of communication at the college. Be sure to check your UNG email regularly, at least once per day.

7. **Student Disability Services.** This university is committed to equal access to its programs, services, and activities, and welcomes otherwise qualified students with disabilities. Students who require accommodations and services must register with Disability Services and submit supporting documentation. Disability Services provides accommodation memos for eligible students to give to their instructors. Students are responsible for making arrangements with instructors, and must give reasonable prior notice of the need for accommodation.

   Contact Information for Disability Services: Erin Williams, ewilliams@gsc.edu, Administration Building, Room 112, 706-310-6202

8. **Accessibility Statement.** If you need this syllabus in another format, please email Randall.Parish@ung.edu or call 706-310-6231.
VIII. COURSE ACTIVITIES AND GRADING

1. **Quizzes**. There will be a series of unannounced quizzes throughout the course with questions taken from the assigned chapter’s homework, averaging one quiz per week. Missed quizzes will receive a grade of zero unless you bring a note from a physician or a similar explanation for missing class. Quizzes will also receive a grade of zero if you leave class after a quiz without previously coordinating an approved absence with me.

   In addition to the unannounced quizzes, you will have several other activities that will count toward the quiz grade. Some activities will be in class, while others will be take-home assignments. I will drop the worst grade from final grade calculations, and the average of all quizzes will count for 170 points on your final grade.

2. **Exams**. There will be three exams corresponding to the three phases of the course. The exams, based on course readings as well as class discussions, will have multiple choice, short answer, and essay components. Study guides for all exams are posted on eLearning. Each exam will be worth 170 points on the final grade.

3. **Out-of-class project (Choose one)**. You will complete one of two out-of-class projects this semester. You may either complete a research project leading to an 8-10 page essay, or you may participate in a service learning project (that also has a writing component) with a local government or nonprofit agency. The number of service learning positions is limited, so this project may not be open to everyone. Both projects, which are described below, allow you to dig into a specific political issue, either in the library or with a community partner. The goal is to develop a deeper understanding of how government and politics work to create policies. You must let me know by Tuesday August 25 which project you prefer.

   **Option 1: Research paper**. If you choose this option, you will write a 6-8 page research paper (not counting the title and reference pages) on a topic chosen from the handout found in eLearning. The object of this project is for you to explain the political reasons that the United States or a state government adopted a particular policy. In this context politics is the conflict between political actors fighting for what they want from government. The actors with the most power win, and your research will explore the power factors leading to that outcome. Discuss the topic with me during office hours, and follow the schedule below to complete the project.

   a. **By September 10 submit a 1-2 page research proposal** that describes your research project. Use Step 4 of “Writing Your Research Paper” (found on eLearning under “Research Project”) as a guide to writing the proposal. Be sure that your research question and hypotheses explore how politics affected your topic. The proposal should have:

      1) a brief description of the topic (give me enough background to understand what the topic is about and also use this intro to set up your puzzle, which will be stated in the research question),
      2) a research question,
      3) hypotheses (possible answers to the research question), and
      4) a list of at least ten sources.

   Since a solid proposal is crucial to the research paper, I will insist that you complete a satisfactory proposal before writing the paper. See the grading rubric on eLearning to see what I expect. Acceptable proposals: 1) earn at least 20 on both the research question and the hypotheses sections, and 2) earn at least 70 overall. If your proposal does not meet these criteria we will schedule an appointment during my office hours to talk over your project. Then you will turn in a second proposal, and we will repeat this process until you have a solid proposal. Since the research proposal is so important to the research project, I will not accept the final research paper until you have completed an acceptable proposal. The research proposal will count for 50 points on the final grade.
b. The research paper is due on November 3. Be sure to include the final research proposal along with your paper. The paper will count for 150 points on your final grade. See the grading sheet on eLearning for what I expect.

c. Research paper guidelines.
   1) Use at least ten sources – find your sources on the library’s Galileo data bases.
   2) Format the paper according to the APA style.
   3) Double-space and use 12 point font and one-inch margins.
   4) Spelling, grammar, and writing quality count.
   5) Proposals and research papers are due in hard copy in class on the assigned date. Late papers receive a deduction of ten percent per day, beginning after class on the due date (five percent deduction after class on the due date).

Option 2: Service Learning Project. If you choose this option, you will work throughout the semester on a project with a local government or nonprofit agency. In service learning, students work with community organizations, applying what they learn in class to help with issues that the community partners identify. Service learning students will commit to working two hours per week with a local government supervisor to complete a specific task. The project is worth a total of 200 points, divided between the three graded activities below.

a. Graded Activities.
   1) Participation. Your worksite supervisor will evaluate your performance on the job and record your hours worked. Your participation grade, based largely on that report, will be worth 40 points. Be sure to let me know immediately if you have problems meeting the work requirements.

   2) Weekly blogs. You will submit a weekly blog on the elearning Discussion Board in which you reflect on your service-learning activities that week. The blog will be due by midnight each Thursday from Sep 3 until the end of the project. Make your blogs very descriptive – let the reader see your workplace and the people there, feel your impressions and reactions to the people and work, and understand the political forces behind your service. I will grade the entries using the rubric on elearning, and the average will be worth 100 points. Make sure that your blog fully covers these points:

      a) Describe your actions that week – what did you do? Describe the setting and people, including your supervisor, co-workers, and clients. Analyze how the week’s activities contributed to the project and your agency’s goals.

      b) Describe your reaction to the week’s activities. What were your impressions of the people and the work? What was your emotional reaction?

      c) Respond to my specific questions for the week that will be posted on the Discussion Board.

      d) Each week I will make comments on your blog. In the subsequent week be sure to respond directly to my comment.

      e) Review your classmates’ blogs and make comments on the Discussion Board. Describe your reaction to their activities and compare their experience to your own. Based on the quality of your review, you may earn up to 2 extra credit points.

   3) Project reflection essay. Prior to class on November 19 you will submit on the elearning Dropbox a 3-5 page essay in which you reflect on the overall project. I will provide guidance for the essay on learning. The essay will be worth 60 points.
4. **Talking Politics.** One of the major activities in politics is just talking – taking a stand on current issues and trying to convince others of your position. In this course you will have several opportunities to practice the political skill of communication. The activities include:

a. Write a letter to an elected politician – due Sep 24 (25 points).
   b. Write a letter to the opinion page of a newspaper – due Oct 1 (25 points).
   c. Post weekly to the class discussion board (2 points per post; 30 total for the semester).

Instructions for each activity are found on elearning. The three activities together total 80 points, but you may do more discussion posts or other letters for extra credit.

5. **Course assessment essay.** To compare learning across the campuses, every POLS 1101 student will write a 500-750 word essay analyzing a contemporary issue as reported in a news outlet. Instructions and questions to guide your analysis are posted on elearning. You will submit the essay on the elearning Dropbox prior to class on December 3. The essay will be worth 40 points.

6. **Extra credit.** There will be a variety of other extra credit opportunities throughout the course. Each opportunity will be described on the eLearning website, and each must be completed by the last day of the semester, unless another deadline is cited on the website. I will add any extra credit points directly into your semester point totals.

7. **Grade points:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grade Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quiz average</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>900 – 1000  = A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam #1</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>800 – 899   = B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam #2</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>700 – 799   = C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam #3</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>600 – 699   = D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out-of-class project</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>Below 600   = F</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acting/talking politics</td>
<td>80</td>
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<tr>
<td>Common assessment essay</td>
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<td>Extra credit</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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**IX. CLASS SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNED READINGS**

**Phase I: Constitutional Foundations (the Rules)**

Aug 18: Course Introduction

Aug 20: The Constitution (Chapter 2)

Aug 25: The Constitution (Chapter 2)

Aug 27: Semester Research Project (Writing Your Research Paper, on elearning)

Sep 1: Federalism (Chapter 3)

Sep 3: Federalism (Chapter 3)

Sep 7: Labor Day Holiday
Sep 8: Civil Liberties (Chapter 4)

Sep 10: Civil Rights (Chapter 5) Research Proposal Due

Sep 15: Civil Rights (Chapter 5)

Sep 17: Exam #1

Phase II: Political Behavior

Sep 22: Public Opinion (Chapter 6)

Sep 24: Public Opinion (Chapter 6) Letter to elected politician due

Sep 29: The Media (Chapter 7)

Oct 1: Parties (Chapter 9) Letter to newspaper due

Oct 6: Parties (Chapter 9)

Oct 8: Campaigns and Elections (Chapter 10)

Oct 13: Interest Groups (Chapter 11)

Oct 15: Interest Groups (Chapter 11)

Oct 20: Exam #2

Phase III: Institutions of Government

Oct 22: The Congress (Chapter 12)

Oct 27: The Congress (Chapter 12)

Oct 29: The Congress (Chapter 12)

Nov 3: The Presidency (Chapter 13) Research Papers Due

Nov 5: The Presidency (Chapter 13)

Nov 10: Bureaucracy (Chapter 14)

Nov 12: The Courts (Chapter 15)

Nov 17: The Courts (Chapter 15)

Nov 19: Research Project Presentations/Discussion

Nov 23-27: Thanksgiving Holidays

Dec 1: Georgia Government (Readings to be announced)
Dec 3: Course Conclusion Common Assessment Essay Due

Dec 10: Final Exam (12:40-2:40)