

POLS 1101
Introduction to American Government
Fall 2013
Discussion Sections: Dr. Madonna

Teaching Assistant: Steven Walter

Time and Place: Friday, 11:15am-12:05pm, MLC 247
& 12:20-1:10pm, MLC 247

Email: swalter7@uga.edu

Office Hours: Friday 10:00-11:00am & 1:15-2:15pm, MLC Jittery Joes & by appointment

***The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced by the instructor may be necessary.**

Purpose of Discussion Sections: Breakout/Discussion sessions are intended to help students develop a familiarity and understanding of the American Political System by applying the material gained during the lectures. The purpose of our weekly discussion sections is to give students the opportunity for more personalized instruction. We expect students to come to class prepared, well-versed on the required readings, and ready to participate. In the Friday discussion sections, students will have the opportunity to seek specific clarification for individual questions and concerns in a small-group setting where their questions and the response can benefit the other students.

Required Readings (Discussion): *Georgia Politics in a State of Change*

Grades: Your discussion section grade counts for 10% of your entire course grade. **Ten percent represents the difference between two letter grades**, and is even more significant when you take into account the University's +/- grading system. The discussion section grade will be based on the following distribution:

Attendance / Participation:	5%
Reading Quizzes:	5%

Remember, just showing up does not count as participation; participation counts as participation.

Class Format: The sessions can include, but are not limited to:

- ❖ Expansion and reiteration of concepts from lecture and readings,
- ❖ Reading quizzes on the assigned section readings,
- ❖ Group activities and presentations,
- ❖ Discussion and debate over current events or additional short articles relevant to the course,
- ❖ Presentation of video, Internet, or radio clips relevant to the course,

- ❖ Review for Exams
- ❖ Discussion of Exam Results

The Friday before exams will be test reviews. It is important that you have started to study by then, so that the review will reveal where you still have to invest extra study and where you are already well prepared.

Resources: All information on the lecture and break-out section can be found on Dr. Madonna's website: <http://ajmadonn.myweb.uga.edu/>. If you do not find the answer to your question on the website contact your TA first before you approach Dr. Madonna.

Attendance: Attendance in section is mandatory and you must attend the section you signed up for on OASIS. An unexcused absence will count as a zero for that week's Attendance/Participation component of your grade. You are allowed one absence during the semester for any reason. After that one absence you must provide proper documentation addressing the absence. If you plan to miss class and have a valid excuse (sports, medical, academic, etc.), please let your TA know ahead of time and provide appropriate documentation. Also, it is vital that you show up to class **prepared and on time**. Students will be considered absent if they arrive after attendance has been taken at the beginning of class.

Quizzes: Reading quizzes will be randomly administered throughout the semester. These quizzes will be designed to evaluate whether or not you have completed the assigned reading for the day and will consist of multiple choice and true/false questions. More details about quizzes will be available later in the semester.

Tests/Grading Policy: Only university-approved excuses are reasons to miss exams. Your TA does all the grading in this course. On days where exams are handed back, they will go over the answers. If you wish to discuss a grade with them other than a mathematical error, you must wait until 24 hours after getting the test back. Please carefully read over your answers and the TAs comments. If you still want to talk after that, you can email them or come to their office hours.

HOPE: If you receive the HOPE Scholarship, please keep in mind that you are eligible only on a conditional basis. You must maintain a minimum 3.3 GPA. Keeping HOPE is **your** responsibility. Remember, the TA will not change your grades to help you keep HOPE. Please do not come to them about this.

Academic Honesty: All academic work must meet the standards contained in "A Culture of Honesty." Students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. The link to more detailed information about academic honesty can be found at: <http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/honesty/acadhon.htm>

Disability or Health Related Issues: Students with a disability or a health related issue who need a class accommodation should make arrangements with the Office of Student Disabilities and speak with their TA as soon as possible.

Miscellaneous Requests:

1. Please turn off your cell phone.
2. While class is in session, please refrain from any rude or distracting activities. Such behavior includes sleeping, reading or studying for other classes, text messaging, surfing the Internet or Facebook, reading newspapers, completing the crossword puzzle in the *Red & Black*, etc. Persistent violations may affect your participation grade.
3. Due to the nature of this course, it is imperative that you share your beliefs and opinions, and it is also important for you to respect the opinions of others in your class. The discussion we have in here will be fun, but please keep your rhetoric reasonable, responsible, and respectful.

Scheduled Topics and Readings

Aug16	Section Introduction/Overview
Aug 23	The Federalist Papers (Federalist 10 and Federalist 51)
Aug 30	Georgia Politics (BG 1 & BG 2)
Sep 6	The Georgia Constitution (BG 3 & BG 4)
Sep 13	Review – Exam 1
Sep 20	Local Government (BG 8)
Sep 27	The General Assembly (BG 5)
Oct 4	The Executive Branch (BG 6)
Oct 11	The Judicial System (BG 7)
Oct 18	Review – Exam 2
Oct 25	Georgia Voting (BG 9 & BG 13)
Nov 1	No Class – Fall Break
Nov 8	Political Parties/Review – Exam 3 (BG 11)
Nov 15	Georgiamanders (BG 10)
Nov 22	Education Policy (BG 14)
Nov 29	No Class – Thanksgiving Break
Dec 3*	Review – Final Exam
Dec 9**	Final Exam

*The University operates a Friday class schedule on Tuesday, December 3rd. As such, students will meet in section

**The final exam is currently scheduled for 8:00-11:00am. It will be held in MLC 102 unless further notice is given