

GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Sam Nunn School of International Affairs
International Affairs 1200
AMERICAN GOVERNMENT IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

T/Th 1:35 pm – 2:55 pm
CULC 144

Robert Kennedy
Spring 2011

1. Objectives

The objective of this course is to help you better understand how America's government functions and how the American political system works. If you are like most Americans, you already have a basic understanding of how America is governed, but have spent little time thinking about how and why American democracy functions the way it does and how and why its institutions and political system differ from those of other nations. This course is designed to expand the student's awareness of the American political system -- its philosophical origins, its institutions, the distribution of political power, the processes, the complexities, and the basic factors that influence American political behavior and domestic and foreign policy formulation.

It also will provide you with a general understanding of how the American political system differs from others so that you can develop a better appreciation of the benefits and trade-offs of political life in the United States by comparing the institutions and processes of American government with those of other countries.

2. Class Format: Because of the size of the class, the course will be mostly taught in the lecture format. Students are encouraged to raise questions or comments at anytime during the sessions.

2. Required Texts

Christine Barbour & Gerald C. Wright, *Keeping the Republic: Power and Citizenship in American Politics*, Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 4th Ed. 2009. (Hereafter referred to as "Text")

4. Prerequisites: None

5. Course Requirements

General: Course members will be expected to attend all classes, complete all assigned readings, and participate in classroom discussions on the subjects addressed in the readings and lectures. Lectures during the course may not cover the readings and will often present new ideas and information. Students are responsible for the information contained in the readings, whether it is covered or not in lectures, as well as for the information in the lectures. In addition to the regularly course readings, students are encouraged to read at least one **major daily newspaper in its print or internet media version** and watch at least one of the nightly **news broadcast**.

Quizzes and Examinations. There will be occasional, unannounced quizzes on the readings and/or material provided during the lecture. **There will be no make up quizzes.** If you miss a quiz and have an approved excuse or you took the quiz but no grade has been posted, you must make that known to the professor **by email within a week of the date of the quiz.** If you fail to do so, you will not be given credit for an excused absence. If you are feeling ill and can't come to class, visit the health clinic or your doctor to document your absence. If you have an excused

absence, your overall quiz grade will be the average of the quizzes you took. Quizzes and Examinations will include multi-choice, true-false, and matching questions and will only be given on the announced dates. A medical or other Georgia Tech approved excuse is the only permissible reasons for missing quizzes or examinations. All electronic equipment (cell phones, iphones, blackberries, blueberries, raspberries, computers, etc.) must be **put away/hidden from view** during exams. Students found using any such electronic devices will receive an automatic zero for the exam. Exams are currently **tentatively schedule** on the following dates. However, dates may change. It is the student's responsibility to stay current on the course schedule. Examinations missed for authorized reasons must be taken as soon as possible.

Exam # 1 – September 22

Exam # 2 – November 1

Exam # 3 – December 15 (tentative)

6. Grading: A = 90-100; B = 80-89; C = 70-79; D = 60-69; F = below 60. Those who take the course on a pass or fail basis must have a minimum grade of 70. **Grades will not be curved in this course.**

Quizzes	10%
Exam # 1	20%
Exam #2	30%
Exam #3	40%

Examinations will cover only the material covered since the previous examination.

8. Office Hours: Please check with a TA before attempting to make an appointment. Point of Contact: Zachery Lindberg. Email will be forthcoming.

Tues – Thurs 3-4 pm by appointment.

Office: Ivan Allen College, 781 Marietta St Room 146

Please make an appointment by telephone (404-894-0682) or email (robert.kennedy@inta.gatech.edu) so you don't have to hang around the office waiting.

9. Course Outline and Assignments

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topics and Readings</u>
Aug 23	Introduction to the Course
Aug 25	Origins of American Government (LO-01)
Aug 30	Origins of American Government (LO-01) Con't Politics of Early America, Chap 3
Sep 1	Politics: Who Gets What, and How? Text Chap 1 (LO-02)
Sep 6	American Citizens and Political Culture, Text, Chap 2; LO-03
Sep 8	Federalism and the US Constitution, Text, Chap 4; LO-04

Sep 13	Fundamental American Liberties, Text, Chap 5; LO-05.
Sep 15	The Struggle for Equal Rights, Text, Chap 6; LO-06
Sep 20	The Struggle for Equal Rights, Text, Chap 6; LO-06 and Exam Review with TA
Sep 22	Exam #1
Sep 27	Congress, Text, Chap 7, LO-07
Sep 29	The Presidency, Text, Chap 8; LO-08
Sep 30	Progress Report on all 1000 & 2000 level courses (S or U)
Oct 4	The Bureaucracy, Text, Chap 9; LO-09
Oct 6	The American Legal System and the Courts, Text, Chap 10; LO-10
Oct 11	Public Opinion, Text, Chap 11; LO-11
Oct 13	Political Parties, Text, Chap 12; LO-12
Oct 17, 18	Fall Recess
Oct 20	Possible Guest lecturer
Oct 25	Interest Groups, Text Chap 13; LO-13
Oct 27	Exam Review with TA
Nov 1	Exam #2: Covers info from last exam up through Chapter 13
Nov 3	Voting, Campaigning, and Elections, Text, Chap 14; LO-14
Nov 8	The Media, Text, Chap 15; LO-15
Nov 10	State & Local Politics, Text, Chap 16; LO-16
Nov 15, 17	Public Policy: Social Policy, Text, Chap 17; LO-17
Nov 22, 29	Public Policy: Economic Policy, Text, Chap 18; LO-18
Nov 24,25	Thanksgiving Holiday

Dec 1, 6 Public Policy: Foreign and Defense Policy, Text, Chap 19; LO-19

Dec 8 Exam Review with TA

Dec 15 (Thurs) Exam #3 (currently scheduled 2:50 pm – 3:50 pm, check with registrar's schedule in the Oscar the week before for any changes. The last examination will be on the information covered since the previous exam, including information presented during the student reports. The exam will last approximately 1 hour. Be there on time.

Important Note: This schedule is subject to change. Changes will be announced in class. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to ascertain if there have been changes to the schedule.