



INTA 1200: American Government

Spring 2013

Mon/Wed/Fri 3:05pm – 3:55pm

LOCATION: CoC 16

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Office hours: WF 4pm-4:30pm in CoC 16 or by appointment

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Version 1.3.13

I. Introduction

This course will serve as an undergraduate level introduction to American government. It will explore fundamental concepts, theories, and issues of American politics and policy, with an emphasis on economics. We will do so by examining both the historical and current issues which confront the United States and its place in the world. You will explore how great Western political-economists think about these problems, and examine the events which fostered their ideas. You will discover that American politics have always been in a state of contention. It is a setting in which national and sub-national interest groups are pitted against one another in contests over wealth, security, power, and ideas. While the course is wide ranging, we will often focus on two major and enduring tensions in US politics in particular. The first is the ongoing debate over the proper role of markets versus government in the US economy and social life. The second is the never ending contest between efficiency, equity, and morality in US policy debates. Underlying each of these are fundamental tensions over power, interests, and the question of “who rules?”. One lesson I hope to communicate is that free and competitive political and economic markets are fundamental to a free and competitive society. However, markets require an agile and efficient government in order to function properly. Therefore we need to develop tools of analysis for understanding *why* markets succeed or fail, as well as the tradeoffs between different types of government actions to support markets. All major sides of the various debates over American politics and government will be presented with equal ferocity. The “winner” of these debates, if there is one, is for you to decide. Student performance will be determined by regular quizzes on fundamental concepts. Finally, you will find that judgments of whether policy is “good” or “bad” in the United States often depends on who you are as a political-economic actor: your assets, interests, beliefs, and values. Therefore one goal of this class is to force you to think critically about yours.

II. Approximate Course Calendar*

Monday	Wednesday	Friday
<u>Jan 7:</u> Introduction	Ancient Democracy	Quiz 1 (on class policies)
<u>Jan 14:</u> Market Failures in the Colonies	Economics of Revolution	Quiz 2
<u>Jan 21:</u> TECH HOLIDAY	1789-1865: Economics of Civil War	Market Failures and Reconstruction
<u>Jan 28:</u> Market Failures & Progressives	1930s-1960s: Liberal Revolution	Quiz 3
<u>Feb 4:</u> 1950s-1960s: Race	1950s-1960s II: Race	TBA
<u>Feb 11:</u> 1960s-1980s: Conservatism	1970s-2010: Globalization	Quiz 4
<u>Feb 18:</u> Supreme Court I	Supreme Court II	Supreme Court III
<u>Feb 25:</u> Media I	Media II	Quiz 5 (Last day to drop class)
<u>Mar 4:</u> The Budget	Elections I	Elections II
<u>Mar 11:</u> Health Care	Quiz 6	TBA
<u>Mar 18:</u> SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK
<u>Mar 25:</u> Politics of Trade I	Politics of Trade II	Politics of Trade III
<u>Apr 1:</u> Quiz 7	Politics of Economic Growth	Politics of Inflation v. Jobs
<u>Apr 8:</u> Financial Crises	Comparative Govt: UK	Comparative Govt: European Union
<u>Apr 15:</u> Comparative Govt: Taiwan	Comparative Govt: China	Quiz 8
<u>Apr 22:</u> Georgia Politics	Political Networks	What's US govt and politics about?
<u>Apr 29:</u> FINAL EXAM 2:50pm-5:40pm	NO CLASS	NO CLASS

*Subject to change

III. Required Textbook

I have chosen to require a text that is both high quality *and* widely used so as to maximize the probability that it can be found “used” at vastly reduced prices. There is also a high likelihood that the texts can later be re-sold at close to its “used” price if you should decide to do so. The required materials to be purchased are:

***Keeping the Republic* (5th Brief Edition, bundled with Georgia State Profile)
by Christine Barbour and Gerald C. Wright (Congressional Quarterly Press 2012). Hereafter referred to as “KTR”**

*Any edition of KTR published since 2005 can be substituted. However, since the 5th Brief Edition will be the basis for some of the quiz questions, earlier editions should be used at the student’s own risk. All students are responsible for the Georgia State Profile which is bundled with the 5th edition.

Other assigned readings will be made available on T-Square and the course website. Some assignments are not readings but computer audio files (usually ~20 minutes each) which should be treated as seriously as an in-class lecture or assigned reading (i.e. you are responsible for knowing assigned MP3 material).

IV. Assignments

Readings are to be done the night of the assigned date, and prior to the subsequent quiz. For example, a reading assigned on “Fri Jan 20” should be done over that weekend, *not* prior to class on Friday Jan 20. You are not “invited” to do the assigned readings/MP3’s or attend the lectures, you are **required** to do so as a participant in this class. “KTR” indicates a particular chapter in the textbook *Keeping the Republic*.

- Mon Jan 7: “Basics of Free-Market Capitalism” (.pdf available on T-Square)
KTR “Power and Citizenship in American Politics”
- Wed Jan 9: Medieval IPE (MP3 and .doc available on T-Square)
- Fri Jan 11: Early Colonists 1 & 2 (MP3 and .doc available on T-Square)
- Mon Jan 14: Mercantilism (MP3 and .doc available on T-Square)
- Wed Jan 16: KTR “The Politics of the American Founding”
- Fri Jan 18: The Presidency 1-5 (MP3 and .doc available on T-Square) & KTR “The Presidency”
- Mon Jan 21: The Presidency 1-5 (MP3 and .doc available on T-Square) & KTR “The Presidency”
- Wed Jan 23: The Presidency 1-5 (MP3 and .doc available on T-Square) & KTR “The Presidency”
- Fri Jan 25: KTR “Congress”

Mon Jan 28: KTR “Congress”

Wed Jan 30: KTR “Congress”

Fri Feb 01: KTR “Federalism”

Mon Feb 04: KTR “Federalism”

Wed Feb 06: KTR “Federalism”

Fri Feb 08: KTR “The Struggle for Equal Rights”

Mon Feb 11: KTR “The Struggle for Equal Rights”

Wed Feb 13: KTR “The Struggle for Equal Rights”

Fri Feb 15: KTR “The American Legal System and the Courts”

Mon Feb 18: KTR “The American Legal System and the Courts”

Wed Feb 20: KTR “The American Legal System and the Courts”

Fri Feb 22: KTR “The Media”

Mon Feb 25: KTR “The Media”

Wed Feb 27: KTR “The Media”

Fri Mar 01: KTR “Voting, Campaigns, and Elections”

Mon Mar 04: KTR “Voting, Campaigns, and Elections”

Wed Mar 06: KTR “Voting, Campaigns, and Elections”

Fri Mar 08: KTR “Parties and Interest Groups”

Mon Mar 11: KTR “Parties and Interest Groups”

Wed Mar 13: KTR “Parties and Interest Groups”

Fri Mar 15: KTR “The Bureaucracy”

Mon Mar 18: KTR “The Bureaucracy”

Wed Mar 20: KTR “The Bureaucracy”

Fri Mar 22: Rise/Fall of Free Trade (MP3 and .doc available on T-Square)

Mon Mar 25: Basic Gains/Losses From Trade (MP3 and .doc available on T-Square)

Wed Mar 27: Intro to Money—3 Tricks (MP3 and .doc available on T-Square)

Fri Mar 29: “The Economic Organization of a P.O.W Camp” (.pdf available on T-Square)

Mon Apr 01: “The Great Inflation” in *The Coming of The Third Reich*. pp. 103-117 (.pdf avail on T-Square)

Wed Apr 03: *The German Inflation of 1923*. excerpts (.pdf available on T-Square)
 * Bonn, Moritz J. “The Report of an Expert Eyewitness” pp. 97-103.
 * Schreiber, Georg “The Distress of German Learning” pp. 103-109.

Fri Apr 05: “Europe in 12 Lessons” (.pdf available on T-Square)

Mon Apr 08: “Europe in 12 Lessons” (.pdf available on T-Square)

Wed Apr 10: “Europe in 12 Lessons” (.pdf available on T-Square)

Fri Apr 12: KTR “Domestic and Foreign Policy”

Mon Apr 15: KTR “Domestic and Foreign Policy”

Wed Apr 17: KTR “Domestic and Foreign Policy”

Fri Apr 19: CQ Press State Profile: Georgia (bundled with KTR 5th edition)

Mon Apr 22: “Georgia State Government” chart (.pdf available on T-Square)
 “Guide to Georgia Courts” (.pdf available on T-Square)

Wed Apr 24: “Constitution of the State of Georgia” browse, (.pdf available on T-Square)

Fri Apr 26: Review all

V. Course Objectives

By the end of this course you should be able to:

- A) Identify the major policy problems currently facing the United States and explain how leading scholars & policymakers think about these problems.
- B) Analyze, interpret, and explain developments in American politics.
- C) Understand and identify the effects of both national and global economic developments on American

politics and policy.

- D) Deconstruct large political-economic phenomena into their constituent interest groups (both causes & effects).
- E) Understand & identify how your own interests (e.g. your job, financial security) are affected by events in American politics, and what steps you can take to protect or advance your interests.
- F) Advance to higher-level study of specific economic & political issues.

VI. Class Conduct

A) Attendance is mandatory.

Why? First, this class (or one like it) is specifically required by the University System of Georgia Board of Regents. Second, many students request this rule. Third, research shows that student attendance correlates strongly with performance.

Regardless, students may miss up to three classes (but not quizzes) after the last registration day (usually Friday of the first week of class) without penalty. Thereafter, each absence will result in a grade deduction of 10% of one quiz (e.g. a student with 10 absences will have one full quiz's worth of points deducted from his/her final grade). Students are responsible for any material, assignments, or announcements covered in classes missed. A daily attendance sheet will be passed out every lecture. **Be aware that signing the daily attendance sheet indicates your full attendance that day. Signing the attendance sheet but not attending the full class, or having a friend sign on your behalf, is a form of academic misconduct, constitutes an honor code violation, and can result in a severe grade penalty.**

B) No in-class distractions! Specifically:

- i. **No electronics: laptops, cellphones, ipads, e-readers, cameras, recording devices.**
- ii. **No food or drink (except water).** Except for students with verifiable medical excuses.

If it runs on electricity and it's primary job is to deal with information, then turn it off (or put it on vibrate). Why? Electronics, food, and drink interfere with the classroom teaching-learning environment. Students breaking this rule will be asked to leave or drop the class.

C) Class starts at 3:05, ends promptly at 3:55.

If you show up late, enter quietly. If you show up so late or leave so early that you miss the sign-up sheet, then you will be counted as absent. Also if you consistently sign the attendance sheet and leave soon thereafter, then eventually you'll be noticed and considered absent nonetheless.

D) Students are required to check their email and the class website mzak.net/inta1200 once per day.

E) Your grade = 8 quizzes + 1 final,

- a. All test questions are ranked equally unless otherwise specified. All tests will be based on the required readings, MP3 lectures, and the 9am -10am lecture. There will be study guides for the quizzes. Your grade will *not* benefit from "face time" with the professor or TA, or from agreeing with the professor's or TA's political/policy stances or philosophies.
- b. No make-up quizzes.
 - i. Students who miss a quiz without a valid Tech excuse*, will receive "0" points for that quiz. For example, say there are 1000 points possible in the class. Then a perfect student who misses a 100 point quiz would get a final grade of 900/1000.
 - ii. Students who miss a quiz with a valid Tech excuse*, will have that quiz eliminated from their grade calculation (both denominator & numerator). For example, say there are 1000

points possible in the class. Then a perfect student who misses (with a valid excuse) a 100 point quiz would get a final grade of 900/900

- iii. Students who miss a quiz with a valid Tech excuse* should present the excuse to the TA for verification. Students should bring evidence of excuse validity (i.e. doctor's notes with contact info). Excuses that cannot be verified will be rendered invalid.

[*Valid Tech excuse = Absences for medical or personal emergencies will be excused upon verification by the TA or professor. Absences for school athletics will be excused only if they are in accordance with the schedules approved and circulated by the Student Academic & Financial Affairs Committee for Travel or the Associate Athletic Director (Academic Services). Absences due to military service will be handled on a case-by-case basis and subject to verification. Unfortunately, job interviews, research conferences, and family/friend visits do not count as a valid Tech excuse for missing a quiz or exam in this class. **Excuses (together with supporting evidence or documents) should be presented to the TA as soon as possible and NOT LATER than 5pm of the final day of class.**

F) **If you do miss class for a non-emergency or non-approved event, do *not* apologize or explain why.** We completely understand that "life happens" and that you have priorities other than this class. However, unless it's a valid Tech excuse (see above), it will not affect grading policy. That is, if you miss class for some awesome extra-curricular adventure or opportunity, we're not offended...but we cannot grant you a special tutoring session, extension, or make-up either. You will be responsible for any material, assignments, or announcements covered in class that you missed.

G) **Your first stop for all grading, administrative, class policy issues, etc. should always be the TA.** The TA acts as triage, addressing most matters herself and passing on others to the Professor. The TA has no authority to bend any class rule or policy. I reserve the right to overrule the TA on any issue.

~~H) Websites and online material are generally *not* accepted as legitimate sources for use or citation in your papers and presentations. Exceptions to this policy will be discussed in class.~~

H) Students will treat each other and the professor with respect. Constructive questioning and criticism are welcome & encouraged. Personal attacks & insults are not. The rule of thumb here is that critical comments and questions should be maturely phrased in a manner that encourages constructive and open debate; they should not be phrased as insults, threats, or in a manner that shuts down conversation or debate.

I) Students are expected to read and abide by the Georgia Tech Student Code of Conduct and the Academic Honor Code. All violations will be reported. The complete text of these two Codes may be found at:
www.deanofstudents.gatech.edu/integrity/policies/index.html

VII. Email Policy

~~A) General communications from the professor to the class will be posted on the class website. Students are required to check the class blog daily, and are responsible for all communications on it regarding assignments and grades.~~

B) Personal or confidential communications from the professor/TA to you will sent by email. **You are therefore required to have a functioning email account**, check it daily, to alert the professor if you are not receiving emails on it, and to provide a functioning email address if this one fails to operate properly.

C) We will check email at irregular intervals between 9am and 6pm every weekday; we reserve the right to check and respond to emails more often than this.

D) Your emails will be responded to within 72 hours of their receipt, if not faster, conditional on the following:

- Include the course number in the "Subject" line of your emails.
- Write a meaningful subject line (e.g. "INTA 1200—can you discuss the US recession more?")
- If you have a general question, check the syllabus, website, T-Square *before* emailing...the answers might be in there!
- Be sure to do the readings and listen to the lectures thoroughly *before* emailing questions about the

material...the answers might be in there too!

It is the student's responsibility to adhere to these guidelines. Any e-mail not adhering to these guidelines may be mistaken for spam (or a joke) and discarded.

~~E) Unless specifically instructed, assignments are always to be submitted in hard copy form only; electronic submissions serve only as backups & confirmations. (i.e. I don't have time to download, print, & staple 50 papers).~~

F) Absences: Only send email about absences or missed deadlines if they are the result of medical issues or serious personal emergencies (e.g. fires, natural disasters, death in the family). Otherwise, do not send email about absences. Also, do not send email to apologize for missing class or assignment deadlines.

VIII. Plagiarism Policy¹

The full plagiarism policy, along with citations guidelines, are described on the class website. In brief, plagiarism is defined, for the purposes of this class, as: copying, borrowing, or appropriating another person's work **and** presenting it as your own in a paper or oral presentation, deliberately or by accident. Acts of plagiarism will be reported in accordance with the Honor Code. In order to avoid being charged with plagiarism, if you use the words, ideas, phrasing, charts, graphs, or data of another person or from published material, then you must either: 1) use quotation marks around the words **and** cite the source, or 2) paraphrase or summarize acceptably using your own words **and** cite the source. The plagiarism policy is not restricted to books, but also applies to video & audio content, websites, blogs, wiki's, and podcasts. Plagiarism includes putting your name on a group project to which you have minimally contributed.

IX. Bias

All major sides of the various debates over American politics and government will be presented with equal ferocity. The "winner" of these debates, if there is one, is for you to decide. I am *not* trying to turn you into Republicans, Democrats, liberals, conservatives, or any kind of "-ist" except for social scientists. The purpose of this course is merely to outline the general landscape of American government and politics, and to give you the analytical tools to decide issues for yourself.

Note however that all people have biases, and you should interpret all statements with that in mind. Therefore, although I will try to be as objective as possible, you should know my personal biases:

1) I am a non-partisan, moderate, centrist. I support policies and policymakers based on their ability to solve national and international problems. I also judge policymakers on their sound judgment, honesty, and integrity. I do not judge policies or policymakers on their political party, personal lives, physical characteristics, or "conservative" or "liberal" leanings or origins.

2) As for policies and ideologies: I tend to prefer free market solutions; I generally support government intervention only in the event of market failure; I tend to prefer economic efficiency over economic equality, unless inequality becomes so great that it threatens domestic security. I support neither "less" nor "more" government, but smarter and more efficient government. I also believe that it is each individual's personal responsibility, not the government's job, to maintain national morality.

3) I tend towards positive rather than normative aspects of politics, and I have a very strong bias towards scientific methods in general (e.g. controlled experiments, natural experiments, statistical analysis, qualitative case studies) and the use of (most types of) empirical evidence to substantiate theoretical claims.

4) I see economic prosperity, individual freedom & personal autonomy, and national security as being three mutually supportive phenomena *not* mutually exclusive ones. I also believe them to

¹ Brennecke, Patricia. 2005. *Academic Integrity at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology: A Handbook for Students* (MIT: Cambridge, MA).

be the nation's top priorities. I am a pragmatist in that I generally support policies that have been empirically shown to foster these three goals.

5) I tend to support decentralization, competition, and check-and-balances for all large political & economic groups.

6) I believe that change, flexibility, and adaptability are usually good things.

7) Finally, I strongly believe that fear and laziness, especially in the intellectual realm, are the root causes of all social problems. Therefore my greatest bias is to force you to bravely and industriously apply your minds to the problems of American politics. But know that **you will NOT score any points for adopting my ideological or policy positions!** Scientifically rigorous disagreement is both welcomed and encouraged.

X. Grades

Your grade will be determined by: how well you *communicate* to me that you *understand* the *fundamental* definitions, concepts, and causal relationships of American government and politics *as presented in the lectures and readings*.

It bears repeating that your personal (dis)agreement with the definitions, concepts, & relationships presented in this class will not affect your grade. You do however need to show that you understand these fundamentals as they are currently accepted by the community of top researchers in American politics, government, policy, and economics. You need not agree with them, but you do need to show that you understand them. Your understanding of the course material will be communicated to me via the following (see course website for details):

100% = Quizzes and final exam. All test questions are weighted equally throughout the course, unless otherwise specified. All material assigned up until midnight before a quiz is fair game on that quiz. Extra credit assignments are not available in this course.

For individual assignments (papers, tests, etc), grades in this course are not rigidly related to numerical scores, distribution functions, predetermined percentages, or your knowledge of academic jargon. As can be seen from the following grade descriptions, individual assignment grading in this course is related more directly to a student's demonstrated mastery of the material. This also means that the relative performance of one's peers is less important, though not irrelevant, to one's grade. Finally, in determining an assignment's grade, consideration is given for elegance of presentation, creativity, imagination, and originality *only* where these have been appropriately be called for, and where mastery of the fundamentals has already been demonstrated. A satisfactorily completed individual assignment will receive one of the following grades:

A: Exceptionally good performance demonstrating a superior understanding of the subject matter, a foundation of extensive knowledge, and a skillful use of concepts and/or materials.

B: Good performance demonstrating capacity to use the appropriate concepts, a good understanding of the subject matter, and an ability to handle the problems and materials encountered in the subject.

C: Adequate performance demonstrating an adequate understanding of the subject matter, an ability to handle relatively simple problems, and adequate preparation for moving on to more advanced work in the field.

Other grades awarded include:

D: Minimally acceptable performance demonstrating at least partial familiarity with the subject matter and some capacity to deal with relatively simple problems, but also demonstrating deficiencies serious enough to make it inadvisable to proceed further in the field without additional work.

F: Failed. Has not demonstrated familiarity with the subject matter, nor the capacity to deal with simple problems in a manner recognizable to the consensus of mainstream academic practitioners within the field.

Note that this course's internal grading system includes plus (+) and minus (-) modifiers for use with the letter grades A, B, C, and D. However, they are not officially part of students' grades, they do not appear on Georgia Tech transcripts, and they do not affect internally or externally reported grade-point averages.

XI. Grade Change Policy

Legitimate requests for grade changes are welcome and encouraged. However, you should resist the temptation to file a frivolous request just hoping to "get lucky". Simple computational or clerical errors should be brought to the TA's attention immediately. Otherwise:

A) Requests for grade changes must:

- i) be submitted to the TA in writing, both electronically and in hard-copy, and
- ii) be submitted not sooner than 7 days and not later than 28 days after receiving the graded assignment, and
- iii) be no longer than 600 words, and
- iv) be accompanied by the original completed test/paper (attached to the hard copy)

B) Requests for grade changes should:

- i) identify what was required in the assignment, and
- ii) describe *precisely* how these requirements were fulfilled at a level above the received grade, and
- iii) address any relevant comments written by the professor on the graded assignment (if applicable) and explain why they do not apply.

Approach a grade change request as if arguing a legal case: you should have strong and convincing arguments and evidence to support your request. Be aware that appeals to the practices of other professors generally do not constitute good argument or evidence. Note also that grade changes requests can result in re-grades both up or down (or left unchanged). That is, if the greater scrutiny demanded by a grade change request reveals your assignment to deserve a lower grade than previously awarded, then the lower grade may be assigned (i.e. be sure that you are not "looking a gift horse in the mouth" *before* you file a grade change request).