GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Sam Nunn School of International Affairs

International Affairs 1200

**AMERICAN GOVERNMENT IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE**

T/Th 9:35-10:55 Robert Kennedy

Boggs B6 Spring 2014

**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.

1. **Required Texts**

Christine Barbour & Gerald C. Wright, *Keeping the Republic: Power and Citizenship in American Politics,* Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 6th Ed. 2014. (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 and pursue 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.**

Quizzes and Examinations.  The 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 or examination and have a Georgia Tech approved reason for doing so (i.e. ill health, participation in a sports event, etc.) or you took the quiz or examination but no grade has been posted, you must make that known to your designated **Teaching Assistant** **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. If you missed an examination, you must contact the TA to schedule a make-up test. Quizzes and Examinations will include multi-choice, true-false, and matching questions and examinations 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 – February 11**

**Exam # 2 – Mar 13**

**Exam # 3 – May 1**

**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 25%**

**Exam #2 30%**

**Exam #3 35%**

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

**8. Office Hours:** Please contact our TA, Kate D’addamio – [kdaddamio3@gatech.edu](mailto:kdaddamio3@gatech.edu) - before attempting to make an appointment. If she is unable to resolve the issue, then she will contact me and we can set up an appointment to meet.

Tues – Thurs 11-12:00 noon, by appointment.

Office: Ivan Allen College, 781 Marietta St., Room 153

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**

Date Topics and Readings

Jan 7 Introduction to the Course

Jan 9 Origins of American Government (LO-01)

Jan 14 Origins of American Government (LO-01) Con’t

Politics of Early America, Chap 3

Jan 16 Politics: Who Gets What, and How? Text Chap 1 (LO-02)

Jan 21 American Citizens and Political Culture, Text, Chap 2; LO-03

Beginning reading Chap 4, review LO-04

Jan 23 Federalism and the US Constitution, Text, Chap 4; LO-04

Jan 28 Fundamental American Liberties, Text, Chap 5; LO-05.

**Jan 30**  **No Class Today**

Feb 4 The Struggle for Equal Rights, Text, Chap 6; LO-06

**Feb 6** The Struggle for Equal Rights continued, Text, Chap 6; LO-06 and

**Exam Review with TA**

**Feb 11 Exam #1**

Feb 13 Congress, Text, Chap 7, LO-07

**Feb 14 Progress Report on all 1000 & 2000 level courses (S or U)**

Feb 18 The Presidency, Text, Chap 8; LO-08

Feb 20The Bureaucracy, Text, Chap 9; LO-09

Feb 25 The American Legal System and the Courts, Text, Chap 10; LO-10

Feb 27 Public Opinion, Text, Chap 11; LO-11

Mar 4 Political Parties, Text, Chap 12; LO-12

Mar 6Interest Groups, Text Chap 13; LO-13

Mar 11 Exam Review with TA

**Mar 13 Exam #2: Covers info from last exam up through Chapter 13**

**Mar 17-21 Spring Break**

Mar 25 Voting, Campaigning, and Elections, Text, Chap 14; LO-14

Mar 27 The Media, Text, Chap 15; LO-15

Apr 1 State & Local Politics, Text, Chap 16; LO-16

Apr 3, 8, 10 Public Policy: Social & Environmental Policy, Chap 17; LO-17

Apr 15 Public Policy: Economic Policy, Text, Chap 18; LO-18

Apr 17, 22 Public Policy: Foreign and Defense Policy, Text, Chap 19; LO-19

**Apr 24 Exam Review with TA**

**May 1 (Thur) Exam #3 (officially currently scheduled 8-10:30 am), 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. **The exam will last approximately 1 hour. Be there at 9:30 am.**

**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.**