

**INTA 1200**  
**American Government**  
**Fall 2022**

**MWF 11:00-11:50pm**  
**Howey Physics Building, L5**

Course Instructor

Prof. Chris McDermott  
Office Hours: MW 10:00am-11:30am

Course Teaching Assistants

Luke Nicholson

**COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**

This course is designed to give students an introduction to American political institutions, actors, and processes but with an added comparative perspective. The student will not only be expected to understand these topics but also be able to critically evaluate them.

Note: This course can be used to satisfy the Social Science or US Perspectives requirement for undergraduates. It also satisfies the state's "Legislative" requirement for a course on Georgia History/Constitution. For more details, please see the "Core Curriculum" section of the Georgia Tech Catalog or meet with your undergraduate advisor.

- Understand the background and historical context that shapes the American political system.
- Gain a broad understanding of the institutions, actors, participants, and processes of politics and government in America.
- Understand how government, politics, and policy impact your daily life.
- Understand the basic structure and operations of GA state government
- Understand how the American governmental system is similar to and different from other structures around the world.
- Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of principal contemporary global challenges in the field of international affairs

**COURSE MATERIALS**

There is no required textbook for this course. However, there are mandatory readings that will be posted to Canvas. All readings are subject to change but students will be notified in advance. Unless otherwise noted, all readings, audio files, or videos are mandatory.

**TEACHING STYLE, OFFICE HOURS, & GUIDELINES**

My goal is to make this course both informative and enjoyable, taking all bias out of our discussions. In other words, I will analyze and discuss but not give you my opinion or feelings. Some days I will assign a video to watch instead of a lecture, which will be shown in class. In addition, I am working on several guest lectures that include former practitioners in government or the military. I will let you know what dates these guest lectures might occur.

***Most importantly, I do not punish students for having to deal with difficult situations, we are all human. I am flexible and willing to work with everyone. I ask that you contact me via email as soon as you know there is an issue, and that you please provide me with appropriate documentation. Communication is paramount and I can only help you if you talk to me.***

## **UNIVERSITY and COURSE POLICIES**

***Statement of Inclusion:*** The Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts supports the Georgia Institute of Technology's commitment to creating a campus free of discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status. We further affirm the importance of cultivating an intellectual climate that allows us to better understand the similarities and differences of those who constitute the Georgia Tech community, as well as the necessity of working against inequalities that may also manifest here as they do in the broader society.

***Request for Modification*** - If you are a learner that requires some adaptations for you to succeed in this course or are a student with disabilities that requires accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability at (404) 894-2563 or <http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu> (Links to an external site.) as soon as possible to make an appointment to discuss your needs and obtain the appropriate accommodations letter. Any student requiring instructional modifications due to a documented disability should make an appointment to meet with me as soon as possible so that the appropriate accommodations can be made. I am happy to do whatever I can to ensure that you succeed.

***Academic Integrity*** - By attending Georgia Tech you have all committed to upholding the ideals of honor and integrity as well as refusing to betray this trust that has been bestowed upon you as a member of our academic community (<http://www.policylibrary.gatech.edu/student-affairs/academic-honor-code> (Links to an external site.) or <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/18/>). (Links to an external site.) Any student who is suspected of violations of this honor code including but not limited to cheating or plagiarizing on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be automatically reported to the Office of Student Integrity. This office will investigate the incident as well as recommend the penalties for the violations.

***Attendance and Participation*** – **You are expected to attend class and recitation every day. However, you will have three (3) free unexcused absences, no questions asked. You will lose a half letter grade for each unexcused absence after the three free ones.**

\*Excused Absence policy – This course will follow the University's policy for excused absences. Absences for medical or personal emergencies will be excused upon verification by the Office of Student Life. You can find an outline of the policy here <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/policies/student-absence-regulations/> (Links to an external site.) This would apply to illness as well as personal emergencies. Please review this page if you are not familiar with it. In addition, all institute approved absences will honored, which would include university sanctioned function, athletics, etc. when accompanied by the appropriate documentation. Absences resulting from oversleeping, alarms not going off, computer crashes, drink or food specials, lost wallets, lost purses, or dogs eating papers, books, flash drives, etc. will not be considered approved absences.

Classroom Policies - **Professional behavior will be required of all students at all times.** We live in a politically charged environment and *everyone* is entitled to their own beliefs and opinions, but you are to treat the professor, teaching assistants, and your peers with respect. The following behavior is not appropriate: foul language, bigoted language, and disrespect toward other students or professor. **Students engaging in these behaviors will be removed from class and reported to the appropriate personnel.**

**I do not post my PowerPoints on Canvas and I do not provide study guides.** This is why attending class and recitation is so important, you have no other way to obtain class information except by attending class. If you are sick and cannot attend class, ask your neighbor for their notes or reach out to the TA.

Correspondence - All course-related concerns/email will be addressed. Monday through Friday, your emails sent to the TA or I will be returned within 48 hours. When contacting us, please CC'd both the TA and myself in your emails.

TA Recitation – Every Friday will be used as a TA recitation period for you to ask questions of course material, exams questions, or general course inquiries with the TA.

## **FACULTY/STUDENT AGREEMENT**

### **Preamble**

The Georgia Tech community believes that it is important to continually strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. Therefore, we herein endeavors to enumerate the specific expectations of each side. However, this document is not intended to be either comprehensive or limiting in regards to the Institute's statutes. Ultimately, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. We remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech, agree to abide by these principles in our time here, and will encourage each other to uphold these responsibilities.

### **Student Expectations**

We hold that all students have the right to expect:

1. a positive, respectful, and engaged academic environment inside and outside the classroom;
2. to attend classes at regularly scheduled times without undue variations and without penalty if the student cannot attend instructional, lab, or examination hours not institutionally scheduled; to have their instructor of record be present during most scheduled lecture periods.
3. to receive a syllabus which should include an outline of the course objectives, evaluation criteria, and any other requirements for successful completion of each course during the first week of class meetings and to be clearly informed of any changes made to the syllabus during the semester with reasonable time to adjust to these changes;
4. to consult with faculty outside of usual classroom times through regularly scheduled office hours or a mutually convenient appointment;

5. to have reasonable access to Institute facilities and equipment in order to complete course assignments and/or objectives;
6. to have reasonable time to learn course material prior to the administration of an examination;
7. to receive a clear explanation of the faculty's definition and interpretation of academic misconduct within the course that extends over and beyond those clearly defined in the Georgia Tech Honor Code;
8. to have reasonable access to graded materials for assignments, projects, or exams, to review graded material in a timely fashion, and to have a clear explanation of grading criteria and grade determination;
9. to have their letter grade in a class based on their performance based on course criteria and not solely on their performance relative to their classmates;
10. faculty to adhere to formal Institute policies, rules and regulations, such as the policy on Final Instructional Class Days and Reading Periods, and the confidentiality policies of FERPA.
11. faculty to be supportive of students' desires and needs to find rewarding careers after graduation from Georgia Tech. Faculty should be flexible in allowing students to attend the Georgia Tech All Majors Career Fair that occurs in the Fall and Spring Semesters and should refrain when possible from scheduling quizzes or tests on those days;
12. faculty to be flexible during the semester when students have off campus interviews for jobs or graduate/professional schools and should allow students to make up missed work when possible.
13. to be allowed to make up course assignments that were due prior to the student's addition of that course during Phase II registration.

### **Faculty Expectations**

We hold that all faculty members have the right to expect:

1. a positive, respectful, and engaged academic environment inside and outside the classroom;
2. students to appear regularly for class meetings in a timely fashion;
3. to select qualified Teaching Assistants in accordance with departmental protocols as well as the right to delegate grading, studio and laboratory instruction, tutoring, and other academic activities to these individuals;
4. students to appear at office hours or a mutually convenient appointment for official matters of academic concern;
5. full attendance at examination, midterms, presentations, studios, and laboratories, with the exception of formal pre-approved excused absences or emergency situations;
6. students to be prepared for class, appearing with appropriate materials and having completed assigned readings and homework;
7. full engagement within the classroom, including meaningful focus during lectures, appropriate and relevant questions, and class participation;
8. to cancel class due to emergency situations and to cover missed material during subsequent class meeting times at the discretion of the instructor;
9. students to act with integrity and to adhere to the principles of the Georgia Tech Student Honor Code;
10. students to adhere to the formal Institute policies, such as the Student Code of Conduct.

11. students to make every effort to minimize their absences from scheduled lectures, laboratories, and studios during the Georgia Tech All Majors Career Fair that occurs in the Fall and Spring Semesters, and to notify them in advance if they intend to miss class to attend the Georgia Tech All Majors Career Fair;
12. students to notify them as soon as possible when they have off campus interviews for jobs or graduate/professional schools that conflict with class attendance.
13. students would be responsible for obtaining and completing any missed assignments or material in a timely manner when they add a course during Phase II registration after the first class meeting.

*All policies subject to review by the professor and are subject to change with written notice to the students ahead of time.*

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

Exams (E1-25%, E2-25%, E3-25%, E4-25%) - The exams will test your knowledge of the material covered in lecture, assigned videos, guest lectures, as well as any supplemental readings. As we get closer to the first exam. I will give greater details on format and best practices. Each exam covers only a designated section of the course.

There are no make-up exams unless there is an Institute approved absence (see above).

- Conflicts with scheduling must be discussed with me no later than **ONE WEEK** prior to the exam.
- Exams will consist of a blend of 40 multiple choice questions, term identification, and True/False.
  - **Exams will be administered on Canvas and completed on the day it is assigned.**
    - You may complete the exam wherever you wish.
    - The exam will only be available/open during class time (e.g. 11-11:50am).
    - If you miss the exam, I only allow make-ups if you provide formal Institute documentation that excuses you missing the exam. Otherwise it is a zero.
    - You cannot take the exam earlier or later than the assigned date without appropriate documentation from the Institute.
  - **You will have 50 minutes to complete the exam unless you have submitted ODS documentation to me.**
  - **Questions will be “shuffled,”** so each exam for each student will be unique to them.
  - **Respondus Lockdown Browser will be used.**
  - A curve will be used, if necessary.

## **GRADING PROCEDURES**

A = 100-90; B = 89-80; C = 79-70; D = 69-60; F = 59 and below. Mid-term grades or progress reports will be listed as S = Satisfactory, meaning 70 and above, or U = Unsatisfactory, indicating a grade below 70. ***If you are taking the class Pass/Fail, then the same mid-term grade standard will also be applied for a final grade of "S" = Satisfactory as well.***

I do round grades up (e.g. if you have an 89, I treat that as an A, and so on and so forth). **Do not email me asking for extra credit in order to bump your grade up (especially from a B to an A), this does not help your case and I will not answer the email.** If you are seriously struggling with course content or are worried about your grade, please reach out to me and ask for help. I will do everything I can to help you.

## **WEEKLY READINGS AND SCHEDULE**

This is meant as a guide and students will be notified of any changes. Students should note that for each exam, they are accountable for all of the readings and lectures up until that point and if there are schedule changes those will not impact exam dates. Finally, additional readings or videos may be added.

***\*\*The syllabus is subject to change and students will be notified of changes via Canvas\*\****

August 21 – Syllabus and Course Introduction

August 23 - American Political Foundation & Culture

August 25 – Declaration of Independence & Articles of Confederation

August 28 – The Constitution

Readings:

Federalist #15 and #51.

August 10 – Federalism

*September 1 – Recitation w/ TAs*

***September 4 - No Class – Labor Day***

**September 6 – Exam I**

September 8 – Legislative I

September 11 – Legislative II

September 13 – Executive I

*September 15 – Recitation w/ TAs*

September 18 – Executive II

Readings:

Richard Neustadt “The Power to Persuade,” from *Presidential Power*

September 20– The Bureaucracy

*September 22 – Recitation w/ TAs*

September 25 – Judicial I

September 27 – Judicial II

*September 29 – Recitation w/ TAs*

**October 2 – EXAM II**

October 4 - Elections and Voting

October 6 – Simulation Exercise

***October 9 – No Class – Fall Break***

October 11 - Public Opinion

October 13 - Interest Groups

Readings:

Federalist #10; Mancur Olson, “The Logic of Collective Action”

October 16 – Political Parties I

October 19 – Political Parties II

*October 20 - Recitation w/ TAs*

October 23 - Civil Liberties

October 25 - Civil Rights

Readings:

Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from Birmingham Jail”

*October 27 - Recitation w/ TAs*

**October 30 – EXAM III**

November 1 - US Domestic Policy I

November 3 - US Domestic Policy II

November 6 - US Foreign Policy I

November 8 - US Foreign Policy II

*November 10 – Recitation w/ TAs*

November 13 – Simulation Exercise

November 15 – Simulation Exercise

*November 17 – Recitation w/ TAs*

November 20 – Georgia Government I

November 22 - Georgia Government II

*November 24 – Recitation w/ TAs*

November 27

November 29

December 1

December 4

**Day of Final – EXAM IV**