

American Government
in the Comparative Perspective

Jason Rich, Ph.D.
jason.rich@inta.gatech.edu
Office: Habersham 137
Office Hours: Virtual by appointment preferred
On campus appointments availability TTH

Teaching Assistant
Brandon Latimer
jlatimer33@gatech.edu
Office Hours: Virtual by appointment preferred for
Grading questions only

Syllabus as of August 18, 2024

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.

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

- 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.

INTA 1200 American Government in the Comparative Perspective

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Social Sciences area.

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help students master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I understand human experiences and connections?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome:

- Students will effectively analyze the complexity of human behavior, and how historical, economic, political, social, or geographic relationships develop, persist, or change.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Intercultural Competence
 - Perspective-Taking
 - Persuasion
-

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Citizenship area.

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I prepare for my responsibilities as an engaged citizen?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome:

- Students will demonstrate knowledge of the provisions and principles of the United States Constitution and the Constitution of Georgia.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Critical Thinking
 - Intercultural Competence
 - Persuasion
-

COURSE MATERIALS

There is no required textbook for this course. However, there are mandatory readings that are posted to Canvas or will be handed out in class. All readings are subject to change, but students will be notified in advance. Unless otherwise noted, all readings, audio files, or videos are mandatory. In addition, if you feel you would like or need a textbook, one can be recommended to you as well the corresponding pages to what we will be covering.

TEACHING STYLE, BIAS, COURSE RULES AND GUIDELINES

My style is somewhat loose as you will quickly see and will not be a typical lecture class. What you will get is a mix of informative lecture with the addition of various “human interest pieces” and hopefully some humor. So you can expect that after a short amount of time there will be a nice back and forth between myself and the class.

I will attempt to take all bias out. In other words, I will analyze but not give you my opinion nor feelings. Think of me as a sports broadcaster. I just call the game as I see it and do not cheer for either team. I just love the game, which in our case is politics. In addition, I want you to know that I encourage an open exchange of ideas and debate. I am not looking for you to simply agree with everything I am saying. I can assure you I take nothing personally, so feel free to question things, probe for more information, etc. I just may have to cut our discussions short because of time constraints. I do have my own opinions, and when appropriate, I will share them if asked. However, I will always first present things through the analytical lens.

Finally, even though we will keep it loose in here, there still are some rules and guidelines for the class.

- 1) There are a total of three exams in the course. There are no make-up exams unless there is an institutional approved absence (see below). Conflicts with scheduling must be discussed with me ahead of time and not the TA.
- 2) No laptops, tablets, iPads, or other technologies used for taking notes will be permitted in class unless the student has an accommodations letter from the university, they are identified as a note-taker by the university or myself, or I have allowed them in class for that day for everyone. There is little evidence that exists to show that digital technology has on education in typical classrooms (UNESCO, 2023. *Technology in Education*). Thus, this means all notes should be taken by hand through traditional/offline/nontechnology based means. I am willing to reconsider this as we move through the semester.
- 3) Reading pages and assignments are due the day they appear on the syllabus.
- 4) Cell phones are to be placed on vibrate or turned off and must remain out of sight (this means not on your desk, in your lap, etc.). Mobile phone use is also associated with declines in educational improvement and performance as well as increase the likelihood for classroom disruptions (UNESCO, 2023. *Technology in Education*). If you are expecting an emergency call, please let me know before class. In addition, there is no texting during class. Violations of the cell phone policy will impact your participation grade, and thus your course grade directly.
- 5) No recording devices (audio or video) are permitted in class unless the student has an accommodations letter from the university. This is definitely for your protection more than mine.

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> 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. “Accommodations are not retroactive, which means the accommodations are applied once the student has conversed with the instructor either in person, by phone, or by email to discuss accommodation needs.” I am happy to do whatever I can to ensure that you succeed.

CARE Center, Counseling Center, Stamps Health Services, and the Student Center:

These times can be difficult, and if you should need help in dealing with stress and mental health please know there are services available. The **CARE Center** and the **Counseling Center**, and **Stamps Health Services** will offer both in-person and virtual appointments. Student Center services and operations are available on the **Student Center** website. For more information on these and other student services, contact the Vice President and Dean of Students or the **Division of Student Life**.

Recordings of Class Sessions and Required Permissions: Classes may not be recorded by students without the express consent of the instructor unless it is pursuant to an accommodation granted by the Office of Disability services. Class recordings, lectures, presentations, and other materials posted on Canvas are for the sole purpose of educating the students currently enrolled in the course. Students may not record or share the materials or recordings, including screen capturing or automated bots, unless the instructor gives permission. Digitally proctored exams may require students to engage the video camera, but those recordings will not be shared with or disclosed to others without consent unless legally permitted. For classes where participation is voluntary, students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. For classes requiring class participation, if students are identifiable by their names, facial images, voices, and/ or comments, written consent must be obtained before sharing the recording with persons outside of currently enrolled students in the class.

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> or <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/18/>). 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: First and foremost, you cannot participate if you are not in class. Thus, attendance is expected and if you miss a class you are responsible for getting the material from another student. Please before you leave class on the first day find a “note taking buddy” so that if either of you miss you are covered, **Lecture slides will not be available online.** It should be noted that the slides are primarily outlines and only represent a portion of the material. Thus, there is value to being in class.

*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/> 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. **This policy only applies to exams and will not apply to reading/homework assignments unless you have a prolonged absence or condition.**

Classroom Policies: Professional behavior will be required of all students at all times. The following behavior is not appropriate: ***use of cell phones, texting***, extraneous conversations, and disrespect toward other students or professor. ***Students engaging in these behaviors may be asked to leave class.*** In addition, no audio or video recording is allowed in class unless approved by the professor in accordance with an accommodation letter.

Correspondence: All course-related concerns/email will be addressed first to your TA. Monday through Friday, your email will be returned within 48 hours. If you have not received a reply within that time frame, please email me directly.

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

COURSE STRUCTURE

Exams (E1-25%, E2-25%, E3-25%) - The exams will test your knowledge of the material covered in lecture, the text, as well as any supplemental readings. The test itself will be made up of term identification, multiple choice, short answer and True/False. As we get closer to the first exam I will give greater details on format and best practices, however, each exam covers only a designated section of the course. **Thus, the final exam is not cumulative.** As such, it will be the same format as the other exams including the length of time you have to take the exam (75 minutes unless there are accommodations). In addition, if an exam is scheduled to be taken on Canvas, it will utilize institute approved anti-cheating/plagiarism/anti-AI technology. I will address this as we move closer to the exam dates should we do any of the exams online.

Written Assignments/quizzes (10% total) - Short out-of-class writing assignments or quizzes on readings and discussion questions. They will be submitted through Canvas and Turnitin software is active. Generally there are between 6-8 written assignments a semester but this number can vary. I will be dropping your lowest homework score.

Short Paper Topic (10% total)- This will be a short paper due later in the semester. In part it will be based on lecture material and in part based on a posted reading. Further details will come as we get closer to the assignment including a grading rubric for the assignment.

Participation (5%) - In class participation measurements. You can have two missed classes before it will impact your grade and generally there are 7-10 in class participation measurements in a semester.

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. Thus, a 70 is required for passing.***

In addition, Canvas will be used only for posting grades and NOT GRADE CALCULATION. Thus, students should not use any calculation made by the system as being representative of their actual grade in the class.

WEEKLY READINGS AND SCHEDULE

This is meant as a guide and students will be notified of any changes. I have attempted to provide a full schedule to provide those who wanted more structure based on their survey results just that. However, it is likely that this schedule will change, be imperfect, and/or be thrown off by the course of events either in our environment or the ‘real world’. In addition, I can assure you readings will be added.

August 20- Syllabus and Introduction Lecture on “Political Science”

August 22- Government Types and Culture

Myths of Political Science and the Articles of Confederation

Readings:

1) Elazar, “The Three Political Cultures”

August 27-Constitution I

Drafting the Constitution

August 29- Constitution II/Federalism

Readings:

- 1) Federalist #15
- 2) Federalist #51

September 3- Finish Federalism/Begin Congress

September 5- Congress

Readings:

- 1) Edmund Burke, "Speech to the Electors of Bristol"
- 2) David R. Mayhew excerpt from *Congress: The Electoral Connection*

September 10- Congress continued

Readings

- 1) Citizens Against Government Waste

September 12 Catch up lectures/begin Executive

September 17-Exam 1

September 19- Executive Roles and structure

(TA Lecture)

September 24- Finish Executive/Maybe Bureaucracy

September 26- Bureaucracy

October 1- Finish Bureaucracy/Begin Judiciary I

Readings:

- 1) Federalist #78
- 2) David O'Brien "The Court in American Life"

October 3- Judiciary

October 8- Elections and Voting

October 10-Elections and Voting

October 15 **No class fall break**

October 17- Wrap Elections/begin public opinion

October 22- Public Opinion I

Readings:

- 1) George Gallup, "Polling the Public"
- 2) "Four Pollsters"

October 24- Wrap Public Opinion

October 29 **EXAM II**

October 31- Understanding and Exploring Gen Z Public Opinion

November 5-Understanding and Exploring Gen Z Public Opinion

Reading: TBD

Paper Assignment is handed out (date could change)

November 7- Interest groups

Readings:

1) *Federalist #10*

2) Mancur Olson, "The Logic of Collective Action"

November 12- Interest Groups/Begin Political Parties

November 14- Political Parties

Readings:

1) Fiorina, "What Culture Wars?"

2) Wilson, "How Divided are We?"

November 19- Guest Speaker (John Tien, Former Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security)

<https://www.jktien.com>

US foreign Policy/National Security

Reading: TBD

November 21- Comparative Foreign Policy

Paper Assignment is due

November 26- Catch up Class/Topic TBD

No class November 27 Thanksgiving recess

December 3- Georgia Government, Institutions, and Constitution

Final exam Thursday, December 12 11:20-2:10

Additional Important Dates to keep in mind. Please confirm dates on your own at

<https://registrar.gatech.edu/calendar>

August 23- Last day to register, make schedule changes, and/or drop without a "W" grade for Fall Semester 2024 by 4pm.

October 7- Midterm progress reports posted

October 26- Deadline to change grade mode from Letter/Grade to Pass/Fail (and vice versa) and last day to withdraw from individual courses with "W" grades