

# POLS 1150: POLITICS AND SOCIETY

TR 2:00-3:15pm

A & S 2-75



Prof. Keith Lee

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Office Hours:  
Monday-Thursday  
3:30-4:45pm  
or by appointment

## Course Description:

A study of the structures and processes of American national government. The course is taught in three parts: (1) “The American Political System” covering the Constitution, federalism, civil liberties, and civil rights, (2) “People and Politics” covering public opinion, elections, political parties, interest groups, and the media, and (3) “The Institutions of Government” covering Congress, the presidency, the courts, and the bureaucracy. We will also spend an appreciable amount of time discussing current events and how these events tie into the material presented in the course.

### Learning Outcomes:

- Be able to recall the controversies and compromise surrounding our nation’s founding, to include the role of federalism, civil rights, and civil liberties when the Constitution was written;
- Be able to evaluate the role of the public in shaping policy outcomes through elections, political parties, interest groups, and the media;
- Be able to explain the roles of the three governing institutions at the national level as well as how the bureaucracy is incorporated in the government;
- Be able to think critically about current events, specifically to argue articulately and logically when confronted with opposing views.\*

### Required Textbooks:

*American Government and Politics Today + Mindtap* and *The Government of Georgia*

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\*This is something new I have added to the syllabus because I have seen an incredible amount of illogical discourse and intellectual dishonesty used by politicians and news media. This is an attempt to teach you how to craft a better argument than what is being modeled on TV. This exercise is not intended to teach you how to WIN arguments, but to be more mindful on how you argue.

## Course Requirements:

- **Quizzes:** You will have a quiz on each chapter to assess your mastery of the material, particularly the learning outcomes listed at the beginning of each chapter. The quizzes will be administered in MindTap. Your total quiz grade (400 points total; 16 quizzes worth 25 points each) will be divided by 5 and the final number applied to your final grade. In other words, if you score 100% on each quiz you would receive an 80 point (or 8%) increase on your final grade.
- **Discussion Posts:** You will have a discussion post on each chapter. This discussion post should be **NO MORE THAN** 750 words. To receive full credit you will need to post a thorough, well researched argument to MindTap and respond to at least one other student's discussion post. Responses should enhance your classmate's argument in some way, meaning "Cool story, bro!" is not a sufficient response. Discussion posts and responses will be written in MindTap. You will have 16 discussion posts each worth 25 points for a total of 400 points.
- **Unit Assessment:** You will have three assessments covering the three sections outlined in the course description above. These assessments will vary in nature and will be explained in detail at the beginning of each unit.
- **Final Exam:** You will have a comprehensive, two-hour final exam that will be administered during the final exam period. The final exam is an assessment of your mastery of the course material, particularly the learning outcomes outlined above. The final exam will be given on the final exam date/time assigned by the college, also listed below, unless other arrangements have been made.
- **GA Constitution Exam:** This exam is required by the state of Georgia and will be graded as pass/fail. You cannot pass the class if you fail this exam, regardless of how well you do in the other areas.

## Grade Distribution:

Discussion Posts	400 points	(40%)
Unit Assessments	300 points	(30%)
Final Exam	300 points	(30%)
Total	1000 points	(100%)

## Letter Grade Distribution:

>= 900 points	A
800 - 899 points	B
700 - 799 points	C
600 - 699 points	D
<600 points	F

## Important Dates:

08/15	1st Day of Classes
08/17	Last Day to Add Classes
08/19	Last Day to Drop Classes
09/05	Labor Day
09/19	<b>Unit 1 Assessment Due</b>
10/05	Midterm Feedback Due
10/10-11	Fall Break
10/13	Last Day to Drop and Receive a “W”
10/24	<b>Unit 2 Assessment Due</b>
11/23-25	Thanksgiving Break
12/05	<b>Unit 3 Assessment Due</b>
12/05	Last Day of Classes
12/08	<b>Final Exam (1:00pm)</b>

## Course Policies:

- **Office Hours and Contact:** Office hours are stated on the front page of the syllabus. I will be in my office to assist students during the times listed UNLESS an emergency arises in which case I will send out a message using Remind. Students should contact me via email. Students will put their name, their course, and the subject in the subject line (e.g., Keith Lee – POLS 1150 – Question about the Syllabus). You can sign up for Remind with this link: <http://remind.com/join/f16po>
- **Late Policy:** No assignments will be accepted after the due date. Every assignment will be posted with ample time to complete them, thus a medical/family emergency on the due date is not an acceptable excuse. Get your work done early and you will not have any issues.
- **Attendance and Absences:** There is not an attendance policy for this course, however it is the absentee’s responsibility to get all missing notes or materials as the exams cover material from lectures and discussion sessions.
- **Classroom Behavior:** Instructors have the responsibility to set and maintain standards of classroom behavior appropriate to the discipline and method of teaching. Students may not engage in any activity which the instructor deems disruptive or counterproductive to the goals of the class, especially speaking while others are speaking. Disruptive behavior will result in the student being asked to leave.
- **Technology:** I allow tablets and computers (no cell phones) in the classroom. However, I reserve the right to revoke this privilege in the event that it becomes a problem. Please sit in the back of the classroom if you are going to be using your laptop so that you do not distract your neighbor behind you when you inevitably stumble on Twitter, Reddit, Tumblr, and any other site that tempt you.

## Georgia College Policies

- **Religious Observance Policy:** Students are permitted to miss class in observance of religious holidays and other activities observed by a religious group of which the student is a member without academic penalty. Exercising of one's rights under this policy is subject to the GC Honor Code. Students who miss class in observance of a religious holiday or event are required to make up the coursework missed as a result from the absence. The nature of the make-up assignments and the deadline for completion of such assignments are at the sole discretion of the instructor. Failure to follow the prescribed procedures voids all student rights under this policy.
- **Assistance for Student Needs Related to Disability:** If you have a disability as described by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, you may be eligible to receive accommodations to assist in programmatic and physical accessibility. Disability Services can assist you in formulating a reasonable accommodation plan and in providing support in developing appropriate accommodations to ensure equal access to all GC programs and facilities. Course requirements will not be waived, but accommodations may assist you in meeting the requirements. For documentation requirements and for additional information, we recommend that you contact Disability Services located in Lanier Hall at 478-445-5931.
- **Student Rating of Instruction Survey:** Near the end of the semester, you will be asked to complete an online survey. Your responses are valued because they give important feedback to instructors to help improve student learning. All responses are completely confidential and your name is not stored with your responses in any way.
- **Academic Honesty:** The integrity of students and their written and oral work is a critical component of the academic process. The submission of another's work as one's own is plagiarism and will be dealt with using the procedures outlined in the GC Catalog. Remember that allowing another student to copy one's own work violates standards of academic integrity.
- **Fire Drills:** Fire drills will be conducted annually. In the event of a fire alarm, students will exit the building in a quick and orderly manner through the nearest hallway exit. Learn the floor plan and exits of the building. Do not use elevators. If you encounter heavy smoke, crawl on the floor so as to gain fresh air. Assist disabled persons and others if possible without endangering your own life. Assemble for a head count on the front lawn of main campus or other designated assembly area.
- **Electronic Recording Policy:** Electronic video and/or audio recording is not permitted during any class unless the student obtains permission from the instructor and every student present. If permission is granted, any distribution of the recording is prohibited. Violation of this policy is grounds for removal from the class and referral for disciplinary action. Students granted specific electronic recording accommodations from Disability Services do not require special permission; however, the instructor must be notified. Any distribution is prohibited.

## Course Outline:

The following outline is tentative. The weekly coverage might change as it depends on the progress of the class. However, you must keep up with the reading assignments. The book chapter listed in the “Chapter” column should be read **PRIOR** to the beginning of the first class the following week. For example, you should have Chapter 1 read before we begin classroom instruction on Chapter 2. We will spend some time before each class answering any questions related to the reading.

<b>Week</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Topic</b>
01	08/15-08/19	Chapter 1	The American Political System
02	08/22-08/26	Chapter 2	Constitution
03	08/29-09/02	Chapter 3	Federalism
04	09/05-09/09	Chapter 4	Civil Liberties
05	09/12-09/16	Chapter 5	Civil Rights
<b>Unit 1 Assessment Due 09/19 by 5:00 pm</b>			
06	09/19-09/23	Chapter 6	Public Opinion and Political Socialization
07	09/26-09/30	Chapter 7	Interest Groups
08	10/03-10/07	Chapter 8	Political Parties
09	10/10-10/14	Chapter 9	Campaigns and Elections
10	10/17-10/21	Chapter 10	News Media
<b>Unit 2 Assessment Due 10/24 by 5:00 pm</b>			
11	10/24-10/27	Chapter 11	Congress
12	10/31-11/04	Chapter 12	Presidency
13	11/07-11/11	Chapter 13	The Bureaucracy
14	11/14-11/18	Chapter 14	The Courts
15	11/21-11/24	Chapter 15	Domestic and Economic Policy
16	11/28-12/01	Chapter 16	Foreign Policy
<b>Unit 3 Assessment Due 12/05 by 5:00 pm</b>			
17	12/08		<b>Final Exam at 1:00 PM!</b>