Course Description and Objectives: The aim of this course is to give students a thorough understanding of American political life: the main governmental institutions, the channels for elite and non-elite participation, and the context of social and economic power that shapes political and cultural activity.

The fundamental goal is to help you understand why American government and, to a lesser extent, Georgia state government operates the way they do. Some of the questions we will address in this course include: Why did the Framers of the Constitution create three separate branches of government? What rights does the Constitution bestow on American citizens? What role does the media plays in determining what we, as citizens, think about politics and the government? Why are special interests so prominent in American politics? Why do Congress and the president always seem mired in legislative gridlock? In answering these and other questions, we will use current events to illustrate the general principles of politics and government.

Upon successful completion of the course you will be a better consumer of politics. You will be able to better understand news stories about politics and government. You will be able to cast a more educated vote in succeeding elections and have a working knowledge of both the United States and Georgia’s Constitutions. In short, it is my hope that you will be a better federal and local citizen.

Course Expectations:

Expectation 1: The major form of communication between the instructor and the students outside of the “classroom” will be by CSU email. Go to: http://thehub.clayton.edu and click “service” for information on configuring your laptop computer to comply with IT requirements. It is necessary for you have your computer configured to access CSU email. You will need to take your computer to the HUB, which is located on the ground level of the University Center. Please have your computer configured and set up for CSU email as soon as possible. You can also contact the HUB at 678-466-4357.
**Expectation 2:** Email me directly at joshuameddaugh@clayton.edu. DO NOT email me using D2L (GAview) if you wish to receive a reply. DO NOT respond to listserv messages that I send to the whole class and DO NOT send messages to the class listserv instead of emailing me directly. Doing so will cause the entire class to become privy to the issue you wish to bring to my attention. Use your CSU email address when contacting me. Professionalism in communication is important. Therefore, I require all emails to include a subject, a proper greeting/salutation, and proper grammar. You must also include your class identifier POLS 20898 or 20901 as I teach multiple classes and do not always remember which class a student is in. Failure to follow these guidelines will result in delayed response. If you cannot find the effort to compose a professional email then I will have difficulty finding the effort to reply. Furthermore, I tend to ignore non-CSU emails in my inbox since I use the CSU email purely for CSU business. If you use a non-CSU email address you run the risk of not receiving a reply.

**Expectation 3: Due Date:** All assignments must be completed by May 3, 2015 by 9pm. No extensions will be granted. This is a self-paced course, so you can finish early or wait until the last day to complete the course. Finally, you can access D2L to access grades for tests and papers, the syllabus, and other supplemental information.

**Grading:** Final grades will be determined based on the following points...

**Assessment 1: Major Exams:** (300 possible course points)
There will be three examinations. They are comprised of multiple-choice style and true and false questions covering assigned materials from the textbook, current events, and class lectures. Each exam is 50 questions long. You will have 45 minutes for each exam. They are worth 100 points each.

**Assessment 2: Chapter Quizzes:** (60 possible course points)
After each chapter you must take a quiz before you can move on to the next chapter. Each quiz will be worth 5 points.

**Assessment 3: Discussions:** (30 possible course points)
In order to encourage interaction amongst students there will be discussion forums on 6 chapters that are mandatory for you to participate in. Each post is worth 5 points for a possible 30 points.

**Assessment 4: Geography Tests:** (100 possible course points)
You will be given three geography tests worth 35, 30 and 35 points respectively, for a possible total of 100 points altogether. Use an online atlas to study for these tests. The three tests will be spaced out over the weeks of the course. The blank study maps provided in GAview identical to the maps that will be used for the exam. The countries of the world and the U.S. states will be numbered on the exam maps and you will be asked to identify a country or U.S. state through a choice of numbers. For example: Russia a) 35 b) 30 c) 45 d) 58.

**The 1st Geography test** will cover North, South, Central (Middle) America and two of the larger island nations of the Caribbean Sea - Cuba and the Dominican Republic only.

**The 2nd Geography Test** will cover Europe, the Middle East and Central Asia. There will be 60 nations on this test. Be able to locate the small, but significant nations of the Persian Gulf region.
The 3rd Geography Test will cover Africa, Southeast Asia and Australia. The test is worth 35 possible points, with 70 nations to identify for 1/2 point each.

Assessment 5: Georgia Constitution & Government: (10 points)
The Georgia Constitution is at the back of the textbook and sample questions and answers are provided at the end of this syllabus. There will be 48 questions covering the Georgia Constitution and government. They will be drawn from the sample questions below.

Assessment 6: Civic Engagement Project (20 points)
Attend one of the following during the semester: a city council meeting, a school board meeting, a political event, a meeting of any political party or interest group, a court proceeding (as an observer, not a participant unless there in an official capacity), or other politically based event. Provide proof that you were there (a photograph of yourself at the meeting). Provide proof as if you were presenting evidence for a case in court: prove to me without a doubt that you were there. Hand in at least 2 pages of actual text summarizing what went on at the event and what you learned. Papers are worth up to 15 points and the proof is worth 5 points. Papers are due in the drop box by 9pm on May 3, 2015.

Assessment 7: Extra Credit: (10 points)
Students will have the opportunity to complete one extra credit assignment this semester. For this assignment, you may select a scholarly article from a peer-reviewed American Political Science journal that pertains to one of the topics covered in class. You will read the article and then write a 2-3-page paper summarizing the research, including the purpose of the research, the design used, and the researchers’ findings. This assignment may be completed any time during the semester, but papers are due in the drop box by 9pm on May 3, 2015. If you choose to complete this assignment, you will receive a guaranteed 3 points and up to 10 points added to your overall score.

Grading:

520 Total points.
485 – 520 = A
430 – 484 = B
375 – 429 = C
320 – 374 = D
0 – 319 = F

I will not give anyone “just one point” or more simply because you ask. The grade you receive is the grade YOU HAVE EARNED.
Georgia Constitution & Government Study Questions

1. State and local governments today employ more people than the national government.
   True - False

2. The United States can best be described as a/an ________________ system.
   a. unitary  b. federalist  c. confederation

3. Article _______ of the United States Constitution lists the powers of Congress.
   a. One  b. Two  c. Three  d. Four

4. Article _______ of the United States Constitution is the federal supremacy clause.
   a. One  b. Three  c. Five  d. Six

5. The constitutions, laws and policies of the 50 states cannot contradict the United States Constitution.
   True - False

6. The ______ amendment to the United States Constitution often is called the "states’ rights" amendment.
   a. 1st  b. 5th  c. 10th  d. 12th

7. The longest of the state constitutions in total words is the __________ Constitution.
   a. Alabama  b. California  c. Georgia  d. Mississippi

8. Georgia has had _______ constitutions.
   a. one  b. four  c. ten  d. thirteen

9. The United States Constitution has a Bill of Rights, but the Georgia Constitution does not.
   True – False
10. Both the United States Congress and the Georgia General Assembly are bicameral.

True - False

11. Both the United States Constitution and Georgia Constitution permit judicial review.

True - False

12. The United States Constitution has more articles than the Georgia Constitution.

True – False

13. Georgia voters must approve all amendments to the state constitution.

True - False

14. The Georgia Constitution requires the state to have a balanced budget.

True - False

15. The Governor of Georgia does not possess the power of the line-item veto.

True – False

16. Georgia elects almost all its judges on a nonpartisan ballot.

True - False

17. All legislators in Georgia (both House and Senate) serve two-year terms.

True - False

18. Georgia has a cabinet system like the executive branch of the federal government.

True – False

19. The Georgia Constitution limits the number of counties at __________.

a. 89 b. 100 c. 123 d. 159 e. no set number
20. Georgia’s first constitution became effective in ________.
a. 1723 b. 1777 c. 1789 d. 1801

21. The first Georgia constitution disestablished the Anglican Church.
   True – False

22. The first Georgia constitution established a state supreme court.
   True – False

23. Georgia was the first state to ratify the United States Constitution.
   True – False

24. In the second Georgia constitution slaves were counted for representation purposes
   as _________ of a person.
   a. not counted at all b. ½ c. 3/5 d. one whole

25. Georgia’s constitutions made no provision for public education until the 20th century.
   True – False

26. At one point the Georgia legislature elected the governor.
   True – False

27. The main author of the Confederate Constitution was also the author of the Georgia
   constitution under the confederacy.
   True - False

28. After the Civil War northern troops remained in Georgia until ________.
   a. 1865 b. 1868 c. 1876 d. 1899

29. The county-unit system in Georgia tended to give disproportionate strength to urban areas such as Atlanta.
   True – False
30. In 1963 the United States Supreme Court declared the Georgia county-unit system unconstitutional.

True - False

31. The current Georgia constitution was implemented in _______.

32. The Georgia Constitution can be amended in a two-step process. The first step is the proposal of an amendment by 2/3’s of both houses of the General Assembly.

True - False

33. The second step is ratification (approval) by 2/3’s of the electorate voting on the proposed amendment.

True – False

34. The Governor of Georgia can veto a constitutional amendment.

True – False

35. In Georgia voters can get an issue on the ballot through the initiative process.

True – False

36. The majority of proposed amendments to the Georgia Constitution are approved by the General Assembly.

True - False

37. The presiding officer of the Georgia House of Representatives is called the _______.
   a. Chairperson b. Speaker c. Majority Leader

38. The Leader of the Georgia Senate is _____________________.
   a. chosen by the Senators in a vote b. the Leader of the majority party c. the Lt. Governor of the state d. appointed by the Governor
39. The Georgia General Assembly meets every other year.

True – False

40. The Georgia General Assembly is limited to a _______ day session.

a. 20  b. 30  c. 40  d. 50

41. There are no age or residency requirements for election to the Georgia General Assembly other than being a registered voter.

True – False

42. The Governor may call the Georgia General Assembly into special session.

True - False

43. If the Georgia legislature wished to recognize the outstanding accomplishments of an individual or an organization, the General Assembly would pass a ____________________ describing their achievements.

a. resolution  b. statute  c. law  d. general motion

44. Only members of the General Assembly may introduce legislation.

True - False

45. The Georgia Constitution requires that legislation dealing with public revenues be first introduced in the Senate, and then later in the House.

True – False

46. Bills in the Georgia General Assembly are constitutionally restricted to one purpose.

True - False

47. The legislature may approve tax legislation by a simple majority vote of both houses of the legislature.

True - False
48. A 2/3’s vote of both houses of the General Assembly is required to override the Governor’s veto of legislation.

True – False

49. The Georgia Constitution requires the Governor to prepare the state’s budget and submit it to the legislature.

True – False

50. Georgia voters elect more officials who serve in the Georgia executive branch than is the case in the executive branch at the federal level.

True - False

51. The Governor of Georgia can only serve two consecutive terms.

True - False

52. Other statewide elected officials (e.g., Agriculture Commissioner, Insurance Commissioner) are limited to two consecutive terms.

True – False

53. As with the federal government, Georgia’s fiscal year begins on October 1st each year.

True – False

54. If a bill is passed by the General Assembly and the Governor takes no action (i.e., neither signs nor vetoes it), the bill automatically dies.

True – False

55. The Georgia Governor may exercise power over college-level education in the state by serving on the Board of Regents.

True – False
56. In Georgia the __________________________ regulates telephone services and utilities such as natural gas and electricity.

   a. General Assembly  
   b. Public Service Commission  
   c. Department of Transportation  
   d. Attorney General

57. There are no constitutional qualifications to be a judge in Georgia.

   True – False

58. Members of the Georgia Supreme Court, like the United States Supreme Court, serve life terms.

   True – False

59. Non-felony traffic violation cases (e.g., a speeding ticket) are tried in Superior Court.

   True – False

60. The Georgia Supreme Court is required by the state constitution to grant the request of a Georgia resident for an appeal of their conviction in a Superior Court felony case.

   True – False

**Answer Key**

1. T  
2. B  
3. A  
4. D  
5. T  
6. C  
7. A  
8. C
9. F
10. T
11. T
12. F
13. T
14. T
15. F
16. T
17. T
18. F
19. D
20. B
21. T
22. F
23. F
24. C
25. F
26. T
27. T
28. C
29. F
30. T
31. C
32. T
33. F
34. F
35. F
36. T
37. B
38. C
39. F
40. C
41. F
42. T
43. A
44. T
45. F
46. T
47. F
48. T
49. T
50. T
51. T
52. F
53. F
54. F