

POLS 2000: Introduction to Political Science
University of Georgia
Spring 2018

Instructor:
Dr. Brittany Bramlett
bbram@uga.edu

Office meeting times:
Before / after class
Or by appointment

Class meets:
Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9:30am to 10:45am, Baldwin Hall, 0101D

Course description

The aim of this course is to get excited about political science! This means introducing students to the research questions that political scientists ask and the ways they go about answering those questions. This process gives us something informative to say about politics. Students will familiarize themselves with the discipline and the research process 1) by learning about the different, but overlapping subfields within the political science discipline, and 2) by comprehending and practicing the research designs and methods used in the discipline.

Course objectives

Students will:

- Develop a working knowledge of the questions studied by political scientists
- Formulate research questions with their peers and individually
- Learn about the analytical tools and data used by political scientists
- Learn the course material by working independently and with a group
- Improve critical thinking and communication skills by considering the breadth of scholarship produced by political scientists and the research approaches they use

Course texts

You are required to gain access to the two books listed below. They are available at the campus bookstore.

- 1) Van Belle, Douglas A. 2015. *A Novel Approach to Politics*. 4th Edition. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.
- 2) Baglione, Lisa. 2015. *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science: A Practical Guide to Inquiry, Structure, and Methods*. 3rd Edition. Washington DC: CQ Press.

Other assigned readings can be located via ELearning Commons or with links provided in the syllabus.

¹ Instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus as needed.

Assignments and grading

Exams 1 & 2 (40% total, 20% each)

Anything from the assigned readings and discussed during class is considered fair game to show up on the exam.

Research design assignments (40% total, 10% each)

You will work in groups of two or three students on three research assignments. I will assign students to groups during the first few weeks of the semester. You'll receive feedback from peers and the professor at each stage. These assignments will require a substantial amount of brainstorming and a relatively small amount of concise, clear writing.

Assignment 1: Research question and concepts

Assignment 2: Annotated bibliography and hypothesis

Assignment 3: Research design

Each group will submit one paper, per assignment. Additional details will be available via eLearning Commons and provided by the professor throughout the short semester.

Literature review (10%)

Students will complete a literature review of a topic in political science. This assignment allows students to explore a research question in some depth, discovering past and current work and remaining puzzles. Students may write their literature review based on questions developed through their group work, but each student must complete their own literature review independently at the end of the semester. Additional details will be available via eLearning Commons and provided by the professor throughout the short semester.

Political scientists group presentation (10%)

We will spend time learning about the discipline of political science by learning about the research of contemporary political scientists and how it relates to our studies and our lives. Presentations will take place during the last couple of weeks of class. Each group will give a presentation on a political scientist (chosen from a list provided by the professor) and their research. Additional assignment details will be provided and available on eLearning Commons.

Participation & attendance (10%)

Students are expected to attend class and participate in class discussions, large and small. There will be a lot of opportunities to do this. This is a great way to get to know students in the class/ major in addition to learning the material in a different way.

Administrative Items

ELearning

You will submit writing assignments and locate additional reading assignments for our class via the ELearning Commons (<https://uga.view.usg.edu/>). You should sign into the ELearning Commons using your UGA MyId and password. If you are registered for the class, the course link should show up on your ELearning Commons homepage. I may post additional documents useful for your class, so you will want to check in throughout the semester.

Missed deadlines

If you have a conflict with a due date or will miss class repeatedly, please come talk to me about it as soon as you know about it. This way we can work something out and your grade may not suffer. If you have an emergency conflict (i.e. personal, family or medical emergencies), you should e-mail me within the week of the missed due date to discuss the timely completion of the assignment. Documentation is required for make-up exams. If you miss a deadline for a non-emergency, most assignments (NOT exams) can still be completed and will be accepted for up to a week—but they will be penalized a letter grade for every additional day late.

Classroom safety

If the fire alarm sounds, we will exit the building and reassemble across the street (Jackson) to make sure everyone exited the building. If there is a tornado warning, we will move downstairs to shelter and account for everyone. If you have concerns about other emergencies or if you have special circumstances that I need to know about in case of an emergency, please speak to me after class. If you have questions about evacuation locations or shelter locations, contact OEP (Office of Emergency Preparedness).

Disability resource center

If you anticipate needing classroom or exam accommodations due to the impact of a disability or medical condition, you must register for services with the Disability Resource Center. Additional information can be found here: <http://drc.uga.edu/>

Withdrawal policy

Undergraduate students can only withdraw from four courses and receive a withdrawal-passing (WP) grade while enrolled at the University. Students can drop any class without penalty during the drop/add period at the beginning of every semester. Dropped courses during the drop/add period do not qualify as withdrawals. Instructors have the ability to withdraw a student from the class due to excessive absences. Please carefully review the policy in its entirety here: <http://www.reg.uga.edu/policies/withdrawals>

UGA culture of honesty policy

The policy is in place to encourage academic honesty among students, faculty and other members of the university community. You and I are responsible for knowing and complying with the policy and procedures. Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism, cheating and much more. It's in your best interest to understand what constitutes dishonest work, as defined by the University. Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive an F for the course, and their names will be forwarded to the University. Please carefully review the policy in its entirety here: <https://ovpi.uga.edu/academic-honesty/academic-honesty-policy>

Tentative Course Outline

Week 1.

Thursday, January 4

- Course syllabus

Tuesday, January 9

- Van Belle Introduction
- Van Belle Chapter 15
- “How Political Scientists Conquered Washington”
(<http://www.vox.com/2014/9/2/6088485/how-political-science-conquered-washington>)
- “Why political science is not an election casualty”
(https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2016/11/15/why-political-science-is-not-an-election-casualty/?utm_term=.d9ed0affa035)
- Gelman, Andrew & Julia Azari. 2017. “19 Things We Learned from the 2016 Election.” *Statistics and Public Policy* 4, 1, Issue 1.

Thursday, January 11

- Van Belle Chapter 1
- Noel, Hans. 2010. “Ten Things that Political Scientists Know that You Don’t.” *The Forum* 8, 3, Article 12.

Week 2.

Tuesday, January 16

- Van Belle Chapter 2
- “Well-governed failed states? Not an oxymoron!”
(https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2014/10/01/well-governed-failed-states-not-an-oxymoron/?utm_term=.ca0d885af24a)

Thursday, January 18

- Baglione Chapter 1

Week 3.

Tuesday, January 23

- Van Belle Chapter 3
- “The Psychology Behind Why Some Kids Go Unvaccinated”
(<http://www.npr.org/2015/02/04/383724467/the-psychology-behind-why-some-kids-go-unvaccinated>)

Thursday, January 25

- Van Belle Chapter 4
- *Planet Money*, “Episode 630: Free Parking”
(<https://www.npr.org/templates/transcript/transcript.php?storyId=412240643>)
- Baglione Chapter 2

Week 4.

Tuesday, January 30

- Van Belle Chapter 5
- “Europeans have lost faith in their governments and institutions. Why? We did the research.” (https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/09/22/europeans-have-lost-faith-in-their-governments-and-institutions-why-we-did-the-research/?utm_term=.b1ba55ea9da5)

Thursday, February 1

- Van Belle Chapter 6
- “How authoritarianism is shaping American politics (and it’s not just about Trump)” https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/05/10/how-authoritarianism-is-shaping-american-politics-and-its-not-just-about-trump/?utm_term=.7b09a04b2b04
- Baglione Chapter 3

Week 5.

Tuesday, February 6

- “As A Major Retraction Shows, We’re All Vulnerable To Faked Data” (<http://fivethirtyeight.com/datalab/as-a-major-retraction-shows-were-all-vulnerable-to-faked-data/>)
- “Study Using Gay Canvassers Erred in Methods, Not Results, Author Says” (http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/30/science/michael-lacour-gay-marriage-science-study-retraction.html?_r=0)
- Van Bell Chapter 7

Thursday, February 8

- “Yes, Mitch McConnell’s secretive lawmaking is really unusual—in these 4 ways” (https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/06/19/yes-mitch-mcconnells-secretive-lawmaking-is-really-unusual-in-these-4-ways/?utm_term=.ff2b9b3ef358)
- Research assignment work day

Week 6.

Tuesday, February 13

- Reynolds, Andrew. 2013. “Representation and Rights: The Impact of LGBT Legislators in Comparative Perspective.” *American Political Science Review* 107, 2, pages 259 – 274.
- Baglione Chapter 4
- Research assignment 1 due

Thursday, February 15

- Exam 1

Week 7.

Tuesday, February 20

- Van Belle Chapter 8
- “If a Tech Company Had Built the Federal Health Care Website” (<http://www.npr.org/blogs/alltechconsidered/2013/10/17/235739367/if-a-tech-company-had-built-the-federal-health-care-website>)

Thursday, February 22

- Van Belle Chapter 9
- “How Supreme Court Justices ‘benchslapped’ each other in the Hobby Lobby Case” (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2014/07/01/how-supreme-court-justices-benchslapped-each-other-in-the-hobby-lobby-case/>)
- Baglione Chapter 5

Week 8.

Tuesday, February 27

- Van Belle Chapter 10
- “Will Catalonia’s separatists win in December? The voting system is stacked in their favor.” (https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/11/08/will-catalonias-separatists-win-in-december-the-voting-system-is-stacked-in-their-favor/?utm_term=.70057f136612)

Thursday, March 1

- Chapter 1 from *A New Engagement?*
- “Conceptualizing and Measuring Participation in the Age of the Internet: Is Online Political Engagement Really Different to Offline?” by Rachel Gibson and Marta Cantijoch in *Journal of Politics* in 2013

Week 9.

Tuesday, March 6

- Baglione Chapter 5
- Baglione Chapter 6

Thursday, March 8

- Research assignment work day
- Research assignment 2 due

Spring break – Monday, March 12 – Friday, March 16

Week 10.

Tuesday, March 20

- Van Belle Chapter 11
- “No, we’re not arguing from the same facts. How can democracies make good decisions if citizens are misinformed?”
(<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2015/07/21/no-were-not-arguing-from-the-same-facts-how-can-democracies-make-good-decisions-if-citizens-are-misinformed/>)

Thursday, March 22

- Nyhan, B., Reifler, J., & Ubel, P. A. (2013). The Hazards of Correcting Myths About Health Care Reform: *Medical Care*, 51(2), 127–132.
<http://doi.org/10.1097/MLR.0b013e318279486b>
- Baglione Chapter 7

Week 11.

Tuesday, March 27

- “Political Polarization in the American Public” (<http://www.people-press.org/2014/06/12/political-polarization-in-the-american-public/>)
- <http://www.npr.org/2016/12/11/505154631/a-finders-guide-to-facts>
- <http://libguides.libraries.wsu.edu/c.php?g=616286&p=4287809>
- <https://www.allsides.com/>
- <http://graphics.wsj.com/blue-feed-red-feed/>

Thursday, March 29

- Baglione Chapter 7
- Baglione Chapter 8

Week 12.

Tuesday, April 3

- Van Belle Chapter 12

Thursday, April 5

- “Challenges to the Contemporary World Order”
(<http://duckofminerva.com/2017/12/challenges-to-the-contemporary-world-order.html#more-31591>)
- Research assignment work day
- Research assignment 3 due

Week 13.

Tuesday, April 10

- Coggins, Bridget. 2011. "Friends in High Places: International Politics and the Emergence of States from Secessionism." *International Organization*, 65, 3, pages 433 – 467.
- Van Belle Chapter 14

Thursday, April 12 – Wrap up

- Van Belle Chapter 15
- Noel, Hans. 2010. "Ten Things that Political Scientists Know that You Don't." *The Forum* 8, 3, Article 12.
- Presentations

Week 14.

Tuesday, April 17

- Exam 2

Thursday, April 19

- Presentations

Week 15.

Tuesday, April 24 – Last day of class

- Presentations
- Literature review due

Finals period, Friday, April 27 – Thursday, May 3

Final exam date/time, Thursday, May 3, 8:00AM – 11:00AM

List of Due Dates

Exam 1 – Thursday, February 15

Exam 2 – Tuesday, April 17

Literature review – Tuesday, April 24

Research assignment 1 – Tuesday, February 13

Research assignment 2 – Thursday, March 8

Research assignment 3 – Thursday, April 5

Political scientist presentations – Thursday, April 12
 Thursday, April 19
 Tuesday, April 24