

### Introduction to Political Science

POLS 2000  
The University of Georgia  
Prof. Anthony Madonna  
ajmadonn@uga.edu

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### Instructor Info

Instructor: Anthony Madonna  
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Website: <http://ajmadonn.myweb.uga.edu/>  
Office: 407 Baldwin Hall  
Office Hours: W 1-3pm

Syllabus is on the website. Slides and reading assignments will be posted regularly.

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### Bias

**Bias** - to cause partiality or favoritism in (a person); influence, esp. unfairly



Saturday Night Live...

Does bias matter? If so, can it be mitigated? How?

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### Course Description

This course is intended to provide students with a basic understanding of political science. Throughout the semester we will examine different topics of political science research as well as different approaches taken towards understanding those topics. The course involves an in-depth analysis of political actors and institutions. Common modes of scientific analysis in political science will be examined with an emphasis on research design, strategic behavior, rational choice theory and basic statistical techniques. A basic understanding of high school math is assumed.

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### Course Goals

The primary goals of this course are two-fold. First, students should be provided with a conceptual background and toolset that they can use to critically analyze what is written in the newspaper or said in the news today, tomorrow, and in the more distant future. Second, it is expected that upon completion of this course students will be able to both understand and conduct scholarly research.

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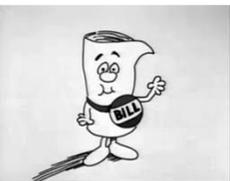
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### Course Goals



- Institutions that govern the American law-making process are complex.
- The historical motivations for choosing these institutions are muddled.
- Modern issues these institutions govern are multifaceted.
- How people view these issues is highly variable.

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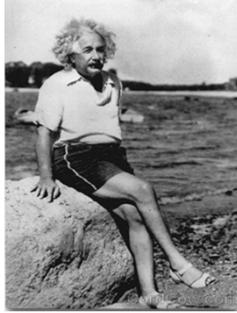
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### Politics is Complicated...

In short...Politics is complicated.

"Politics is more complicated than physics." – Albert Einstein

I don't know if it's more complicated than physics...



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### Politics is Complicated...



When people fail to recognize the complicated nature of politics, they do several things.

They withdraw from it and refuse to engage political issues.

They surround themselves with like-minded individuals, and protect themselves and their views for new/different perspectives.

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### Politics is Complicated...



Simplifying issues and/or failing to engage drastically increases the likelihood politics will fail.

When politics fails, there are often dire consequences.

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### But it is Accessible...

Living in age of cheap information:  
internet, cable television, newspapers.  
Information is available.

- The goal of this course is to provide students with the ability to understand, synthesize and conduct scholarly arguments.

- Gudger University example...

What do you need to successfully engage American politics?

-time, enthusiasm, thick skin



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### Accordingly...



Four things I hope you will take away from this class:

- Read and understand political stories
- Identify and learn how to use good political sources
- Improve your writing
- Be familiar with techniques used in upper-level classes

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### Readings

The following book is required and available at the Campus Bookstore:

Van Belle, Douglas. 2013. A Novel Approach to Politics. 3rd Ed. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Students will not only be expected to have done the reading assignments, but should also be aware of relevant news stories. As such, I recommend reading a daily newspaper – such as the New York Times (<http://www.nytimes.com>) and/or the Washington Post (<http://www.washingtonpost.com>) - or at least checking [cnn.com](http://cnn.com).

- Political blogs? Links on the course website.

CNN, Drudge Report, Politico, Roll Call, Political Wire, Politics1, Five Thirty Eight, The Monkey Cage, The Upshot, Vox

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## News

Americans Elect, "the deep-pocketed nonprofit group that set out to nominate a centrist third-party presidential ticket," admitted that its online nominating process had failed, Politico reports. "The group had qualified for the general election ballot in 27 states, and had generated concern among Democrats and Republicans alike that it could wreak havoc on a close election between President Barack Obama and Mitt Romney. But just after a midnight deadline Monday, the group acknowledged that its complicated online nominating process had failed to generate sufficient interest to push any of the candidates who had declared an interest in its nomination over the threshold in its rules."



A new New York Times/CBS News poll finds 67% of Americans suspect that President Obama was motivated by politics, not policy, when he declared his support for same-sex marriage, while 24% said it was "mostly because he thinks it is right." "The results reinforce the concerns of White House aides and Democratic strategists who worried that the sequence of events leading up to the announcement made it look calculated rather than principled."

During this lull in the campaign season, I'd like to repeat my recommendation to presidential candidates that the best way to choose a vice-presidential nominee is to forget about ticket-balancing, shock value, winning the news cycle, and all the rest, and instead go for quality, there's not much evidence that a VP choice provides electoral benefit. On one hand, we've estimated the VP home-state advantage to be about 3 percentage points, enough to win Ohio perhaps (and I've heard people credit Lieberman for Gore's popular-vote victory (estimated at approx 20,000 votes if all the ballots had been counted) in Florida in 2000). On the other hand, actual choices have include probable big-time vote-losers Quayle and Palin. So the electoral benefits would seem to be a wash at best. As a political scientist, I don't see the evidence that a campaign can improve its chances with an outside-the-box Vice-Presidential nominee.



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## Readings



Additional readings will be posted on the course website. Many of these readings will be highly technical in nature. As such, students are not expected to understand *all* aspects of each paper. However, they will be held accountable for a basic understanding of the paper's theory and applications.

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## Grades

Your grade in this class will be assigned according to the following:

- **Class Attendance/Participation (10% of final grade):** One of the goals for this class is for students to become comfortable discussing political institutions, issues, events and research. Hence, they will be encouraged to attend and participate in course discussions. More than one absence will result in a lowering of a student's discussion section grade. A student's participation grade may also include several small quizzes or assignments.

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## Grades

- **Midterm Exams (40% of final grade):** Two midterm examinations (worth 20% each) will be given during the course. The dates are listed on the syllabus as **Friday, February 20th** and **Friday, April 10th**. These exams will consist of multiple choice and short essay questions. They may also feature several exercises where students will apply techniques discussed in class. The midterm examination will be non-cumulative. If a student is unable to take one of the exams on the scheduled date, they should contact the course instructor beforehand. Missed exams will only be excused for a documented illness (documentation must be provided by a physician) or a death in the family. If a student is excused from an exam, their final exam will be weighted accordingly.
- **Final Exam (20% of final grade):** For the 9:30 class, the final exam is scheduled for **Monday, May 4th** from 8:00 to 11:00am in the regular classroom, Baldwin 305. For the 11:15 class, the final exam is scheduled for **Friday, May 1st** from 12:00 to 3:00pm in the regular classroom, Baldwin 305. Like the midterm, it will feature a mix of multiple choice and short essay questions. It may also feature several exercises where students will apply techniques discussed in class. The final exam will be non-cumulative.

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## The Test - Matching



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|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Tet Offensive_____ | a) The 1984 Detroit Tigers |
| 2. Alan Trammell_____ | b) Vietnam War             |
| 3. Huey Lewis_____    | c) force and balance       |
| 4. Newton_____        | d) The News                |

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## The Test – Multiple Choice

1. Which of the following refers to an economic system where society controls the means of production?
  - a) mercantalism
  - b) capitalism
  - c) imperialism
  - d) socialism
2. This theorist argued that life in the state of nature was "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short."
  - a) John Locke
  - b) Thomas Hobbes
  - c) Adam Smith
  - d) Steve Perry

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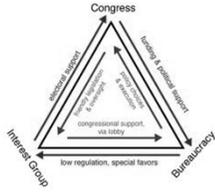
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## The Test – Short Essay



1. Imagine the semester has just ended. It is 9:00 on a Friday night and you and some friends are at a party. Across the room you spot someone attractive. Your eyes meet. You walk over to them and introduce yourself. Your new friend then asks you to explain what an iron triangle is and how it works. What do you say?

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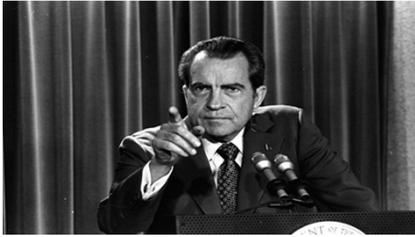
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## Exams



**DO NOT MISS AN EXAM DATE!**

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## Grades

- **Research Paper (30% of final grade):** – Students will be expected to complete a research design proposal. The paper should be a maximum of 12 pages in length (typed, double-spaced, one inch margins, Times New Roman, 12 point font, Chicago-style citations). Students will be allowed to choose the topic of their paper, provided it is related to political science. The instructor will be available during office hours and via e-mail for consultation. The paper should feature a review of the relevant scholarly literature, a well developed theory, and a detailed discussion of a potential test of that theory. The paper is due **Friday, April 24th** at 5:00pm. E-mailed papers will not be accepted. Papers will be docked a full letter grade for each day they are late. A more detailed discussion of the paper project can be found on the website.

Final course grades will be assigned as follows: 100-93 = A, 90-92 = A-, 87-89 = B+, 83-86 = B, 80-82 = B-, 77-79 = C+, 73-76 = C, 70-72 = C-, 60-69 = D, and 60-0. **Extra credit will not be given in this course.** A grade of a C or higher is necessary in order to be admitted as a Political Science major. The withdrawal date for this semester is May 29. Please speak with the instructor before withdrawing.

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### Cheating and Plagiarism



Will not be tolerated. Further information regarding academic honesty can be found at <http://www.uga.edu/honesty/>.

[INSERT ANGRY WIKIPEDIA RANT HERE]

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### Classroom/Section Behavior



Students should behave professionally throughout the course. Disruptive behavior of any kind will not be tolerated. This includes cell phone usage, excessive talking and derogatory or offensive comments made during discussion. Students will be held responsible for all material discussed or assigned.

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### Classroom Behavior



Again – politics is complicated. Please be respectful of opposing viewpoints.

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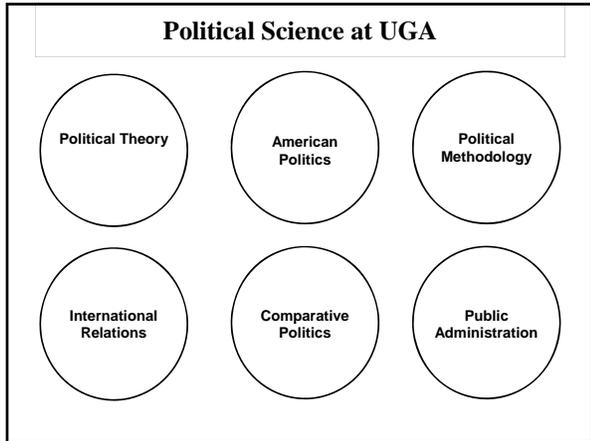
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### What do you do with a Political Science Degree?

Assorted areas students have gone on to with a political science degree:

**Political Theory** employment

- Lobbying/NGO employment
- Law school
- Graduate school (MPA, MPP)
- Journalism

**International Relations**

- Data analysis/management

**Political**

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### General Tips to Succeed in College

1. [DISCLAIMER ABOUT ADVICE]

- There isn't "one" way to do well in College.
- Everyone who advises you is in some way biased – you might be wired a different way.
- That being said....

2. Be prepared to work hard.

- Everyone here is smart. Or at least smart enough...
- Even if you are not graded on a curve, you are competing.

"Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent." -- Calvin Coolidge

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### General Tips to Succeed in College



3. E-mail Etiquette...
  - Pick a PROFESSIONAL e-mail.
  - Address e-mails to faculty properly...
  - Sign your e-mails...
4. If you are not an early morning person, don't pretend...
  - You may not know your first year.
5. Introduce yourself to faculty and other students.
  - Attend office hours
  - Form a study group
  - But avoid "oversharing"...
  - Learn names!
6. Show up.
  - Seems obvious – but you'll be surprised.
  - It is extremely easy to do nothing.
  - On time.

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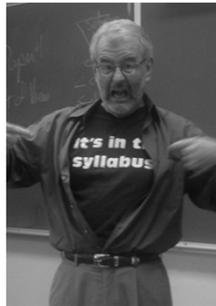
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### General Tips to Succeed in College

6. Know classroom etiquette
  - Participate and be polite!
  - Cellphones should be off.
  - If you had a rough night, sit in the back.
7. Read the syllabus!
  - Reread the syllabus.
  - It's not an iTunes agreement.
8. Do the reading!
  - Or at least "skim" the reading.
  - Even if you don't think you have to...
9. Questions? Ask.
  - A tough prospect for good student...
  - Odds are that someone else is thinking the same things.
  - I don't always have a good handle on what students "know".



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### Become a Student of "College"

1. Scout your classes...
  - Tons of information online. There's no excuse for being "surprised".
  - Don't just pick classes that fit your schedule.
  - Faculty that teach at the best times...
2. Bite only what you can chew.
  - Too many classes – or too many difficult classes – has terrifying results.
  - Dropping/withdrawing is often the safe play. Know the withdrawal deadline.
3. It's a big campus, plan accordingly...
  - Don't schedule classes back to back if you can't get there.
4. Understand what faculty do...



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## Understand Faculty



1. Know the differences...
  - Graduates students, visiting, assistant professors, associates, full, etc...
2. Getting a job...
  - Applied to 62 jobs, 7 interviews, 3 offers...
  - No geographic connection to the area.
3. Research...
  - The bulk of my time pre-tenure...
  - "A mile deep and an inch wide"
  - Conferences – Or "four fun-packed days at New Orleans Budget Inn."
  - Publishing: It's horrific.
  - Interested?!? Ask!
4. Teaching...
  - 2-2.
  - Outside the classroom: meetings, e-mails, etc...
5. Service...
  - Committees, committees and more committees

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## Tests

1. Does the book have a website?
  - If so – check it out.
  - Practice quizzes, test bank questions, etc...
2. Listen to the Professor on test day!
  - If I give you a "hint" number 8 is "A" – it's actually A.
3. Check and double-check.
  - Don't make silly mistakes.
4. Leave nothing blank.
  - Bull#\$%^ is an important life skill.
  - "C" is a hell of a guess.
5. Questions?
  - Please, please ask!
  - Worst case scenario I tell you to "go to hell."
  - Before and after the test...



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## Other General Tips...



1. Study Abroad!
  - It's worth the money.
2. Yes. You have to buy the book.
  - Or at least you should.
3. Minimize debt.
  - If you don't need the credit card, don't take it.
4. CURO.
  - Differentiate yourself if you are thinking graduate school.
5. Not every class you take has to be vocational.
  - And it may end up vocational.
6. Challenge yourself. It's harder after college.
  - It's easy to insulate here.
7. Book "bucket list".
8. Be careful with what you post online.
  - It will be taken out of context.
9. Slow down.
  - It's ok to take a year.

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## Conclusion



Questions?

Concerns?

Angry Rants?

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