

POLS 2000: Introduction to Political Science
University of Georgia
Fall 2016

Instructor:
Dr. Brittany Bramlett
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Office hours:
Before / after class
Or by appointment

Class meets:
Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays, 10:10am to 11:00am, Baldwin Hall, 264

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. Students will practice formulating politically relevant research questions and hypotheses and think about the best way to test their hypotheses.

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 note

There will be times during the semester where we won't meet as a class in our assigned room. This does not mean that class will be canceled. You will be notified via e-mail prior to each virtual class meeting. What does this mean for students?

- Students will have an assignment for the day that corresponds to the readings and schedule on the syllabus.
- Students will be responsible for participating in the assignment, whether it's returning a written assignment via email to the professor or engaging in an online discussion via eLC.
- Students should never hesitate to communicate with the Professor if they have questions about this arrangement. Open communication will be critical.

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

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.

Assignments and grading

Participation (10%)

You are expected to participate in class and group discussions and activities.

Midterm exams 1 & 2 (30% total, 15% each)

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

Final exam (15%)

This is a comprehensive final exam given during the final exam period. Anything from the assigned readings and discussed in class during the semester is considered fair game to show up on the exam.

Research design assignments & final presentation (40% total, 10% each)

You will work in groups of two or three students on three research assignments, which will lead to a final presentation during the last week of class. 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 moderate amount of concise, clear writing.

Assignment 1: Research question and concepts

Assignment 2: Annotated bibliography and hypothesis

Assignment 3: Research design

Assignment 4: Group presentation

Additional details will be available via eLearning Commons and provided by the professor throughout the short semester.

Political scientist presentation (5%)

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. During the second week of class, students will sign up for presentation slots. Each student will give a short (5 minute) 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.

Administrative Items

ELearning

You can find 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 third of 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 (see course attendance policy). 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.

Friday, August 12

Read: Course syllabus

Monday, August 15

Read: "How Political Scientists Conquered Washington"
(<http://www.vox.com/2014/9/2/6088485/how-political-science-conquered-washington>)

Noel, Hans. 2010. "Ten Things that Political Scientists Know that You Don't." *The Forum* 8, 3, Article 12.

Wednesday, August 17

Read: Van Belle Introduction
Baglione Chapter 1

Friday, August 19

Read: Van Belle Chapters 1 and 15

Week 2.

Monday, August 22

Read: Baglione Chapter 1

Wednesday, August 24

Read: Baglione Chapter 1

Political Scientist Presentations 1

Friday, August 26

Read: Van Belle Chapter 2

Week 3.

Monday, August 29

Read: Van Belle Chapter 3

Wednesday, August 31

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

Political Scientist Presentations 2

Friday, September 2

Read: Van Belle Chapter 4

Week 4.

Monday, September 5 – NO CLASS/LABOR DAY

Wednesday, September 7

Read: Baglione Chapter 2

Political Scientist presentations 3

Friday, September 9

Read: Baglione Chapter 2

Week 5.

Monday, September 12 – Midterm exam 1

Wednesday, September 14

Read: Van Belle Chapter 5

Research assignment 1 due

Friday, September 16

Read: Baglione Chapter 3

Political Scientist presentations 4

Week 6.

Monday, September 19

Read: Baglione Chapter 3

“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)

Wednesday, September 21

Read: Van Belle Chapter 6

Friday, September 23

Read: “Donald Trump is surging in the polls. Here’s why he won’t win.”
(<http://www.vox.com/2015/7/2/8881175/donald-trump-president>)

“The Republican Party May Be Failing”
(<http://fivethirtyeight.com/features/the-republican-party-may-be-failing/>)

Week 7.

Monday, September 26

Read: Van Bell Chapter 7

Wednesday, September 28

Read: Baglione Chapters 4
Library session

Friday, September 30

Read: Reynolds, Andrew. 2013. “Representation and Rights: The Impact of LGBT Legislators in Comparative Perspective.” *American Political Science Review* 107, 2, pages 259 – 274.

Week 8.

Monday, October 3

Read: Van Belle Chapter 8

Wednesday, October 5

Read: "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>)

Political Scientist Presentations 5

Friday, October 7

Read: Baglione Chapter 5
Library session

Week 9.

Monday, October 10

Read: Van Belle Chapter 9

Research assignment 2 due

Wednesday, October 12

Read: "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/>)

Political Scientist Presentations 6

Friday, October 14

Read: Baglione Chapter 6

Week 10.

Monday, October 17

Read: Van Belle Chapter 10

Wednesday, October 19

Read: "Mark Cuban calls the NBA All-Star voting system 'embarrassing' and 'positively broken'" (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/early-lead/wp/2015/01/24/mark-cuban-calls-the-nba-all-star-voting-system-embarrassing-and-positively-broken/>)

Political Scientist Presentations 7

Friday, October 21

Read: Van Belle Chapter 11

Week 11.

Monday, October 24

Read: "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/>)

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>

Wednesday, October 26

Read: Van Belle Chapter 12

Friday, October 28 – NO CLASS/FALL BREAK

Week 12.

Monday, October 31

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

Wednesday, November 2

Read: Baglione Chapter 6

Friday, November 4

Read: Baglione 7

Political Scientist Presentations 8

Week 13.

Monday, November 7 – Midterm 2

Wednesday, November 9

Read: Van Belle Chapter 14

Friday, November 11

Read: Baglione Chapter 7

Political Scientist Presentations 9

Week 14.

Monday, November 14

Read: Baglione Chapter 8

Wednesday, November 16

Read: Qualitative research selection

Political Scientist Presentations 10

Friday, November 18

Read: Van Belle Chapter 15

Noel, Hans. 2010. "Ten Things that Political Scientists Know that You Don't." *The Forum* 8, 3, Article 12.

Research assignment 3 due

Week 15.

Monday, November 21 – NO CLASS/THANKSGIVING BREAK

Wednesday, November 23 – NO CLASS/THANKSGIVING BREAK

Friday, November 25 – NO CLASS/THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 16.

Monday, November 28 – Research presentations

Wednesday, November 30 – Research presentations

Friday, December 2 – Research Presentations

Week 17.

Monday, December 5 – Research Presentations

Week 18. Finals period, Wednesday, December 7 – Tuesday, December 13

Monday, December 12: FINAL EXAM, 8:00AM – 11:00AM

List of Due Dates

Midterm exam 1 – Monday, September 12

Midterm exam 2 – Monday, November 7

Final Exam – Monday, December 12

Research assignment 1 – Wednesday, September 14

Research assignment 2 – Monday, October 10

Research assignment 3 – Friday, November 18

Research presentations (assignment 4) – November 28, 30 and December 2, 5

Political scientist presentations –

- Wednesday, August 24
- Wednesday, August 31
- Wednesday, September 7
- Friday, September 16
- Wednesday, October 5
- Wednesday, October 12
- Wednesday, October 19
- Friday, November 4
- Friday, November 11
- Wednesday, November 16

Pop quizzes – ☺