**POLS 2000**

**Introduction to Political Science**

University of Georgia

Fall 2017

Days: Tuesday and Thursday

Time: 11:00 AM-12:15 AM

Room: 327 Park Hall

Office Hours: Wednesday, 1:00 PM-2:00 PM

(or by appointment)

Instructor: Professor Ben Kantack

Office: 380B Baldwin Hall

Email: ben.kantack@uga.edu

(preferred form of contact)

Telephone: 706-542-8203

**Course Description**

The purpose of this class is to introduce students to political science. Politics is a complicated system of actors and institutions, but, like all such systems, it can be studied using the scientific method. Political scientists strive to understand the political world by formulating theories and hypotheses, gathering data, and testing their intuitions to discover the underlying mechanisms that explain everything from why people vote for certain candidates to why nations go to war. As a class, we will adopt a scientific mindset as we explore the many interactions between individuals, groups, and institutions that constitute politics.

**Course Objectives**

By the end of this course, students will be able to do the following:

* Understand the basic concepts of politics and political science
* Compare and contrast political systems around the world
* Analyze political events from a scientific perspective
* Take part in politics as an informed participant

**Required Textbooks**

This course requires one textbook:

* Roskin, Michael G., Robert L. Cord, James A. Medeiros, and Walter S. Jones. 2017. *Political Science: An Introduction. 14th Edition.*

The textbook is available from the [University of Georgia Bookstore](http://www.bkstr.com/georgiastore/home) and from online retailers. Note that this textbook is available in several editions. Students may elect to obtain older editions to save money; however, those who do so will assume the responsibility of coping with any changes in chapter numbers, page numbers, and content between editions.

**Other Course Content**

To complement textbook readings, students will frequently be assigned to read, watch, or play additional content. This complementary content will be related to the textbook readings and serve primarily as a basis for in-class discussion.

Students will be expected to complete both textbook readings and complementary content *before* the class sessions in which they are assigned.

**Grading Breakdown**

Grades will be allocated as follows:

* *Class Participation* (20% of total grade): Each class session will include opportunities for discussion. Credit will be given for students who make a topical contribution to the discussion based on course material.
* *“Political Science Workshop” Paper* (20% of total grade): Throughout the course students will learn about the scientific method as it is applied to the study of politics. This will culminate in a research design paper in which students come up with an original research question, develop a theory and hypothesis (or hypotheses) and propose (but not carry out) a research design for answering that question. Details will be given in class.
* *Exams* (60% of total grade): Two equally-weighted exams, one midterm and one final, will be given. The final exam is designed to be non-cumulative; however, students’ understanding of concepts covered by the midterm may indirectly influence their performance on the final.

**Grading Scale**

93 – 100: 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

0 – 59: F

**Extra Credit Policy**

From time to time, extra credit will be offered as part of in-class activities. These opportunities are conditional on attendance and cannot be made up outside of class. No other forms of extra credit will be available.

**Attendance Policy**

Attendance will not be graded. To deal with absences, each student’s lowest two class participation grades will be automatically dropped. Class participation cannot be made up outside of class. Students who are absent should consult their classmates for notes from the day(s) they were absent.

Students who will be absent on the day of an exam must notify the instructor before the start of class on the day of the missed exam so that a make-up exam can be scheduled. If the instructor is not notified in advance, a 10% penalty will be assessed on the make-up exam grade for each full or partial day that elapses before the student arranges a make-up exam date.

**Discussion Policy**

Political discussions have a tendency to become heated. The purpose of class discussion is to think critically about aspects of politics, not to rehash cable news-style arguments over which candidate, party, or policy is right or wrong. Students should feel free to respectfully challenge one another’s opinions in class and should in turn expect to have their opinions respectfully challenged by other students or the instructor.

**Electronic Devices Policy**

Use of laptop computers is allowed for class purposes only. Use of cell phones is prohibited. Students whose use of electronic devices becomes disruptive will be asked to put away the disruptive device and may be asked to leave the classroom.

**Academic Integrity Policy**

As a University of Georgia student, you have agreed to abide by the University’s academic honesty policy, “A Culture of Honesty,” and the Student Honor Code. All academic work must meet the standards described in “A Culture of Honesty” found at [www.uga.edu/honesty](file:///C:\Users\Ben\Desktop\Georgia%20Syllabi\www.uga.edu\honesty). Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation. Questions related to course assignments and the academic honesty policy should be directed to the instructor.

**Disability Accommodation Policy**

Students desiring disability accommodations should consult the [Disability Resource Center](https://drc.uga.edu/) and should notify the instructor as soon as possible.

**Course Schedule**

NOTE: The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

* Tuesday, August 15: Course Overview and Introduction
* Thursday, August 17: Political Science and Politics
  + Read: RCMJ, Chapter 1 (2-27)
* Tuesday, August 22: Ideologies
  + Read: RCMJ, Chapter 2 (28-48)
  + Read: [“How France’s Brand of Populism Differs from What Drove Brexit and Trump”](http://hbr.org/2017/04/how-frances-brand-of-populism-differs-from-what-drove-brexit-and-trump)
* Thursday, August 24: States
  + Read: RCMJ, Chapter 3 (49-67)
  + Read: [Excerpt from Weber, “Politics as a Vocation”](http://benkantack.com/CultureWar_Ch4.pdf)
* Tuesday, August 29: Constitutions and Rights
  + Read: RCMJ, Chapter 4 (68-85)
  + Read: [“Theresa May Wants Social Media Companies to Create](http://www.dailydot.com/layer8/uk-theresa-may-encryption-terrorism-social-media/)

[Controversial ‘Backdoors’ for Police”](http://www.dailydot.com/layer8/uk-theresa-may-encryption-terrorism-social-media/)

**Submit your research question via email by 11:59 PM on Wednesday, August 30.**

* Thursday, August 31: Political Science Workshop I
* Tuesday, September 5: Regimes, Part I
  + Read: RCMJ, Chapter 5 (86-107)
* Thursday, September 7: Regimes, Part II
  + Read: [Bueno de Mesquita and Smith, *The Dictator’s Handbook* (Chapter 1)](http://benkantack.com/TheDictatorsHandbook_Ch1.pdf)
* Tuesday, September 12: Political Culture
  + Read: RCMJ, Chapter 6 (109-126)
  + Read: [“South Korea’s President Was Impeached. North Korea Is Increasingly Threatening. Here’s What You Need to Know.”](http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/03/12/south-koreas-president-was-impeached-north-korea-is-increasingly-threatening-heres-what-you-need-to-know/)
* Thursday, September 14: Public Opinion I
  + Read: RCMJ, Chapter 7 (127-146)
* Tuesday, September 19: Public Opinion, Part II
  + Read: [“Twins Study Confirms Genetic Role of Politics”](http://news.unl.edu/newsrooms/today/article/twins-study-confirms-genetic-role-of-politics/)
* Thursday, September 21: Political Communication
  + Read: RCMJ, Chapter 8 (148-167)
  + Read: [“The Fake News Problem Isn’t Nearly as Bad as You Might Think”](http://www.vox.com/conversations/2017/1/27/14266228/donald-trump-hillary-clinton-fake-news-media-2016-election)
* Tuesday, September 26: Interest Groups
  + Read: RCMJ, Chapter 9 (168-186)
* Thursday, September 28: Political Science Workshop II
* Tuesday, October 3: Review for Midterm Exam
* Thursday, October 5: Midterm Exam
* Tuesday, October 10: Parties, Part I
  + Read: RCMJ, Chapter 10 (187-206)
* Thursday, October 12: Parties, Part II
  + Read: [“How to Fix Our Polarized Politics? Strengthen Political Parties.”](http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2014/02/06/how-to-fix-our-polarized-politics-strengthen-political-parties/)
* Tuesday, October 17: Elections, Part I
  + Read: RCMJ, Chapter 11 (207-226)
* Thursday, October 19: Elections, Part II
  + Read: [“Five Things We Learned from the UK Election”](http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/06/09/five-things-we-just-learned-from-the-u-k-elections/)
* Tuesday, October 24: Legislatures, Part I
  + Read: RCMJ, Chapter 12 (228-247)
* Thursday, October 26: Legislatures, Part II
  + Read: [“Congress Less Popular than Cockroaches, Traffic Jams”](http://benkantack.com/PPP_CongressPoll.pdf)
* Tuesday, October 31: Executives and Bureaucracies, Part I
  + Read: RCMJ, Chapter 13 (248-268)
* Thursday, November 2: Executives and Bureaucracies, Part II
  + Play: [Papers, Please (beta)](http://bit.ly/161CCGY)

(or watch a playthrough [here](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tw0KLbCpV10))

**Submit your theory and hypothesis/hypotheses via email by 11:59 PM on Monday, November 6.**

* Tuesday, November 7: Political Science Workshop III
* Thursday, November 9: Judiciaries
  + Read: RCMJ, Chapter 14 (269-289)
  + Read: [“Gorsuch’s Confirmation Shattered Political Conventions. Here is Why.”](http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/04/10/neil-gorsuchs-confirmation-shattered-political-conventions-here-is-why/?utm_term=.417c95a9e9be)
* Tuesday, November 14: Political Economy
  + Read: RCMJ, Chapter 15 (291-310)
  + Watch: [“The European Debt Crisis Visualized”](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kbcvdKwmCtg)
* Thursday, November 16: Violence and Revolution
  + Read: RCMJ, Chapter 16 (311-330)
* Tuesday, November 28: International Relations
  + Read: RCMJ, Chapter 17 (331-350)
  + Watch: [“The Middle East’s Cold War, Explained”](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=veMFCFyOwFI)
* Thursday, November 30: Review for Final Exam

**Submit your research design paper via email by 11:59 PM on Friday, December 1.**

**FINAL EXAM: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7 (12:00PM-3:00PM)**