

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

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

Class meets:
Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays, 10:10am to 11:00am, Baldwin Hall, 0104

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. 2018. *A Novel Approach to Politics*. 5th Edition. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.
- 2) Baglione, Lisa. 2016. *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 (30% total, 15% each)

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

Research design assignments (30% 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. 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.

Assignment 1: Research question and concepts

Assignment 2: Annotated bibliography and hypothesis

Assignment 3: Research design

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 throughout the semester, and students will sign up with their group during the second week 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.

Final assignment options (20%):

Literature review

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.

Final exam

This is a comprehensive exam covering all material from the semester. As with the previous exams, anything from the assigned readings and discussed during class is considered fair game to show up on the exam.

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. I take attendance every day for a couple of reasons: 1) I want to learn student names, and 2) if you're not present, you cannot participate. When calculating attendance and participation at the end of the semester, I typically allow for two unexcused absences that will not count against your grade. Be sure to provide documentation for any absences wished to be excused.

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 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.

Monday, August 13

- Course syllabus

Wednesday, August 15

- Van Belle Introduction
- “How Political Scientists Conquered Washington”
(<http://www.vox.com/2014/9/2/6088485/how-political-science-conquered-washington>)

Friday, August 17

- “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.

Week 2.

Monday, August 20

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

Wednesday, August 22

- Van Belle Chapter 1

Friday, August 24

- Baglione Chapter 1
- Group introductions

Week 3.

Monday, August 27

- Van Belle Chapter 2

Wednesday, August 29

- Van Belle Chapter 3

Friday, August 31

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

Week 4.

Monday, September 3 – Labor Day, No Classes

Wednesday, September 5

- Baglione Chapter 2

Friday, September 7

- Baglione Chapter 2
- Political Scientist Presentation 1

Week 5.

Monday, September 11

- Van Belle Chapter 4

Wednesday, September 13

- Van Belle Chapter 5

Friday, September 15

- *Planet Money*, “Episode 630: Free Parking”
(<https://www.npr.org/templates/transcript/transcript.php?storyId=412240643>)
- Political Science Presentation 2

Week 6.

Monday, September 17

- Van Belle Chapter 6
- Research assignment 1 due

Wednesday, September 19

- Baglione Chapter 3

Friday, September 21

- “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)
- Political Scientist Presentation 3

Week 7.

Monday, September 24

- Exam 1

Wednesday, September 26

- Baglione Chapter 4/5

Friday, September 28

- Baglione Chapter 4/5

Week 8.

Monday, October 1

- Van Bell Chapter 7

Wednesday, October 3

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

Friday, October 5

- “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)
- “What is regular order worth?” (<http://www.legbranch.com/theblog/2018/4/2/what-is-regular-order-worth>)
- Political Scientist Presentation 4

Week 9.

Monday, October 8

- Baglione Chapter 6
- “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>)

Wednesday, October 10

- Van Belle Chapter 8

Friday, October 12

- Baglione Chapter 6
- Political Scientist Presentation 5

Week 10.

Monday, October 15

- Van Belle Chapter 9
- Research assignment 2 due

Wednesday, October 17

- Van Belle Chapter 10

Friday, October 19

- “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/>)

Week 11.

Monday, October 22

- Baglione Chapter 7

Wednesday, October 24

- Baglione Chapter 7

Friday, October 26 – Fall Break, No Classes

Week 12.

Monday, October 29

- Van Belle Chapter 11

Wednesday, October 31

- “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/>

Friday, November 2

- 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>
- Political Scientist Presentation 6

Week 13.

Monday, November 5

- Baglione Chapter 8

Wednesday, November 7

- Baglione Chapter 8

Friday, November 9

- Baglione 4
- Literature review work day
- Research assignment 3 due

Week 14.

Monday, November 12

- Van Belle Chapter 12

Wednesday, November 14

- Van Belle Chapter 12

Friday, November 16

- Coggins, Bridget. 2011. “Friends in High Places: International Politics and the Emergence of States from Secessionism.” *International Organization*, 65, 3, pages 433 – 467.
- Political Scientist Presentation 7

Thanksgiving Break (Monday, November 19 – Friday, November 23)

Week 15.

Monday, November 26

- Van Belle Chapter 14

Wednesday, November 28

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

Friday, November 30

- Exam 2

Week 16.

Monday, December 3

- Literature review & final exam review work day

Tuesday, December 4 (Friday Class Schedule in Effect, Classes End)

- Literature review & final exam review work day

Finals period, Thursday, December 6 – Wednesday, December 12

- Final exam is Friday, December 7 at 8:00am to 11:00am

List of Due Dates

Exam 1 – Monday, September 24

Exam 2 – Friday, November 30

Final exam or literature review – Friday, December 7

Research assignment 1 – Monday, September 17

Research assignment 2 – Monday, October 15

Research assignment 3 – Friday, November 9

Political scientist presentations –

Political scientist presentation 1	Friday, September 7
Political scientist presentation 2	Friday, September 15
Political scientist presentation 3	Friday, September 21
Political scientist presentation 4	Friday, October 5
Political scientist presentation 5	Friday, October 12
Political scientist presentation 6	Friday, November 2
Political scientist presentation 7	Friday, November 16