

# **POLS 2000: Introduction to Political Science**

Fall 2019

Tuesday & Thursday, 9:30-10:45am

Baldwin Hall 104

**Professor:** Geoff Sheagley

**Office:** Baldwin Hall 380G

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**Office Hours:** Tuesday 2-3:30pm, or by appointment.

## **Course Description**

This course is an introduction to the systematic study of politics. We will learn about how political scientists ask and go about answering research questions. The primary objectives of this class are that you will become a more intelligent consumer of political science research and have a grounding in how to conduct political science research.

We will cover topics like the scientific method, how to design and implement surveys, how to ask and refine research questions, and the advantages & limitations of different kinds of research designs. The course will culminate with you presenting results from an original survey that you and your classmates will help design.

## **Course Project**

Our class will work collaboratively to design, execute, and analyze an original political survey related to the 2018 midterm election. The design and analysis of this project will serve as your final project for this course.

## **Course Texts**

You are required to use the following text for our class. It is available at the campus bookstore. If you choose to purchase it from another location, make sure you obtain the correct edition.

- *The Craft of Political Research (10<sup>th</sup> Edition)*. Philip Shively. ISBN: 1138284378

Other required readings can be accessed using eLearning Commons (eLC).

## **Contacting the Instructor**

I encourage you to come to office hours if you are having difficulty with the course material and/or assignments. Note, office hours are intended for clarifying material, not for making up for a class that you missed with an unexcused absence. It is also helpful for you to email me in advance to identify that you're planning to come by and what you would like to discuss

## Grading

Your letter grade in the class reflects the percentage of the total number of available points you obtain in the class. The distribution I use is:

Grade	Percent
A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D	60-69
F	<60

The following are each of the areas in which points are assigned in the class.

### 1. Research Project (40%)

A large portion of your grade in this class will be based on you successfully completing an original research project. This project will be completed in a number of individual assignments that culminate with a presentation and short memo that detail your key findings. I will distribute a detailed assignment sheet early in the semester.

### 2. Midterm Exam (25%)

We will have a midterm exam covering the first half of our class material.

### 3. Final Exam (25%)

We will have a final exam that focuses on material covered after the midterm.

### 4. Participation (10%)

The participation portion of this grade will be based on your regular attendance, successful completion of in-class activities, and participation in class discussion.

## **Class Administration**

### eLearning

You will submit assignments and obtain additional reading assignments from the eLearning site associated with our class (<https://uga.view.usg.edu>). Check the site periodically for any updates to the course readings.

### Qualtrics

You will use the software platform Qualtrics to field your survey. Qualtrics allows you to easily write survey questions, collect responses, and analyze your results. Best yet, it is free to use for all UGA undergraduates. If you have not already done so for another class, you need to submit a request to EITS to activate your account. You can find more information here: [https://eits.uga.edu/web\\_and\\_applications/qualtrics/](https://eits.uga.edu/web_and_applications/qualtrics/)

### Class participation

Participation is a graded portion of this class. This includes attending class and actively participating. If you are unable to attend a class and you have a valid excuse, such as a note from a doctor, please inform me.

### Technology (Laptops, Tablets, Cell Phones, etc.)

You are welcome to use a laptop or a tablet to take notes and to access the course material during class. There will also be some class sessions where it will be important to have access to one of these devices to work on our survey. I will provide advanced notice about those sessions. Smartphones are not permitted in class. Please make sure these devices are silenced during our class.

### Deadlines

All assignments are due *at the beginning of class* on the due date. If an assignment is turned in after the beginning of class on the due date 10% will be deducted from your assignment grade. An additional 10% will be deducted for each day the assignment is late. For example, if you turn in an assignment one day after it was due, it will be deducted 20% (10% for not being turned in at the start of class on the day it was due and another 10% for being turned in one day later). Assignments turned in more than 3 days late will receive an F.

### Valid Absence Excuses

If you have a significant conflict that causes you to miss class (e.g., a personal, family, or medical emergency), you should email me within a week of the missed due date to make sure you can complete the assignment or exam in a timely manner. Documentation is required for any makeup exam.

### Academic Honesty

The University of Georgia has an academic honesty policy. Academic integrity is required for a positive learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own, can result in disciplinary action. Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive an F in the course. Additionally, I will forward your name to the University. You can read the policies in their entirety here: [https://honesty.uga.edu/Academic-Honesty-Policy/Definitions for Purposes of this Policy/](https://honesty.uga.edu/Academic-Honesty-Policy/Definitions%20for%20Purposes%20of%20this%20Policy/)

### 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>

## Class Schedule

Below you will find an outline of our class schedule. This is a tentative schedule and I may modify it during the semester. If I do so, I will make an announcement in class and post a revised schedule on eLC.

### Week 1 – Introductions

8/15 – Course review & syllabus discussion

### Week 2 – Causality

8/20 – What is political science?

- *Craft* – Ch. 1
- Malici and Smith, Ch. 1

8/22 – Too much science?

- Smith 2002, Lupia 2000, Sides 2005

### Week 3 – The Research Process

8/27 – Causality & Research

- *Craft* – Ch. 2 (14-22)
- Kellstedt and Whitten (3-19)

8/29 – No Class

### Week 4 – Variables & Hypotheses

9/3 – Research Topics

- *Craft* – Ch. 2 (22-end)
- Putman 1995 (optional)

9/5 – The Literature Review

- Johnson & Reynolds (102-124)
- **Due:** Paper Assignment 1

### Week 5 – Research Designs

9/10 – Measurement 1 (Accuracy)

- *Craft* – Ch. 4

9/12 – Hypotheses

- Johnson and Reynolds 102-124

## Week 6 – Research Designs

9/17 – Causal Analysis

- *Craft* – Ch. 6

9/19 – Experiments

- McDermott 2002
- Butler and Broockman 2011

## Week 7 – Research Designs Cont.

9/24 – Observational Studies

- Kellstedt and Whitten (78-88)
- Dancey and Sheagley 2013

9/26 – No class

## Week 8 – Midterm Exam

10/1 – Midterm Exam Review

10/3 – Midterm Exam

## Week 9 – Measurement

10/8 - Writing Survey Questions

- Johnson & Reynolds 327-341; Raskinski 1989

10/10 – Measurement 2 (Precision)

- *Craft* – Ch. 5

## Week 9 – Survey Methods

10/15 – Survey Question Peer Review

- No Readings

10/17 – Survey Sampling

- *Craft* – Ch. 7 (101-108; 112-115)
- Squire 1988

## Week 10 – Descriptive Statistics

10/22 – Descriptive Statistics (Central Tendency)

- Jaisingh (Ch. 2)
- Due: Assignment 2

10/24 – Descriptive Statistics (Visualizations)

- Jaisingh (Ch. 1)

Week 11 – Statistics Cont.

10/29 – Crosstabulations

- *Craft* – Ch. 8 (117-119)
- *Craft* – Ch. 9 (138-142)

10/31 – Controlled Comparisons

- TBD

Week 12 – Statistics Cont.

11/5 – Correlation/Regression

- *Craft* – Ch. 8 (119-135)

11/7 - Correlation/Regression

- *Craft* – Ch. 8 (119-135)

Week 13 – Wrapping up

11/12 – Flex/Catchup Day

- No Readings

11/14 – Wrap Up

- Noel 2010
- Leonhart 2011

Week 14 – Survey Workshops (No new readings)

11/19 – Workshop

11/21 – Workshop

- Final Exam Review

Week 15 (Thanksgiving Break)

11/26 - TBD

- TBD

11/28 – Thanksgiving

- No class

Week 16 – Presentations

12/3 – Final Presentations

- **Due: Final Memos**

**Final Exam**

- 12/10, 8:00am – 10:00am