

**POLS 2000: Introduction to Political Science**  
University of Georgia  
Fall 2019

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

Class meets:  
Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays, 9:05am to 9:55am, 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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

### **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.

### **Literature review conference (5%)**

Each student will be required to meet with the professor during the second half of the semester to discuss preparation for the final literature review paper assignment. Students should attend this meeting with a written topic and proposed bibliography.

### **Literature review (15%):**

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.

### **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.

## 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.**

Wednesday, August 14

- Course syllabus

Friday, August 16

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

### **Week 2.**

Monday, August 19

- “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](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.

Wednesday, August 21

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

Friday, August 23

- Van Belle Chapter 1

### **Week 3.**

Monday, August 26

- Baglione Chapter 1
- Group introductions

Wednesday, August 28

- Van Belle Chapter 2

Friday, August 30

- “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](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 2 – Labor Day, No class

Wednesday, September 4

- Van Belle Chapter 3

Friday, September 6

- Baglione Chapter 2

#### **Week 5.**

Monday, September 9

- Baglione Chapter 2
- Political Scientist Presentation 1

Wednesday, September 11

- Van Belle Chapter 4

Friday, September 13

- Van Belle Chapter 5

#### **Week 6.**

Monday, September 16

- *Planet Money*, “Episode 640: The Bottom of the Well”  
(<https://www.npr.org/templates/transcript/transcript.php?storyId=425392169>)
- Political Scientist Presentation 2

Wednesday, September 18

- Van Belle Chapter 6
- Research assignment 1 due

Friday, September 20

- Baglione Chapter 3

#### **Week 7.**

Monday, September 23

- “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](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/30/science/michael-lacour-gay-marriage-science-study-retraction.html?_r=0))
- Political Scientist Presentation 3

Wednesday, September 25

- Exam 1

Friday, September 27

- Literature review workday

### Week 8.

Monday, September 30

- Baglione Chapter 4/5

Wednesday, October 2

- Baglione Chapter 4/5
- Political Scientist Presentation 4

Friday, October 4

- Van Bell Chapter 7

### Week 9.

Monday, October 7

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

Wednesday, October 9

- "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](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))
- Political Scientist Presentation 5

Friday, October 11

- 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>)

### Week 10.

Monday, October 14

- Deadline for literature review conferencing

Wednesday, October 16

- Van Belle Chapter 8
- Research assignment 2 due

Friday, October 18

- Van Belle Chapter 9

### **Week 11.**

Monday, October 21

- Van Belle Chapter 10

Wednesday, October 23

- "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/>)

Friday, October 25

- Baglione Chapter 7

### **Week 12.**

Monday, October 28

- Baglione Chapter 7

Wednesday, October 30

- Van Belle Chapter 11

Friday, November 1 – Fall break, No class

### **Week 13.**

Monday, November 4

- "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/>

Wednesday, November 6

- Baglione Chapter 8

Friday, November 8

- Baglione Chapter 8

### **Week 14.**

Monday, November 11

- Van Belle Chapter 12

Wednesday, November 13

- Van Belle Chapter 12
- Research assignment 3 due

Friday, November 15

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

**Week 15.**

Monday, November 18

- Van Belle Chapter 14
- Political Scientist Presentation 6

Wednesday, November 20

- "How the Trump Era Is Molding the Next Generation of Voters" (<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/01/upshot/trump-era-molding-young-voters.html>)
- Political Scientist Presentation 7

Friday, November 22

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

**Week 16.**

Monday, November 25

- Literature review work day

**Wednesday, November 27 to Friday, November 29 – Thanksgiving break, No class**

**Week 17.**

Monday, December 2

- Exam 2

Wednesday, December 4

- Literature review due

**Finals period, Friday, December 6 – Thursday, December 12**



## List of Due Dates

Exam 1 – Wednesday, September 25

Exam 2 – Monday, December 2

Literature review – Wednesday, December 4

Research assignment 1 – Wednesday, September 18

Research assignment 2 – Wednesday, October 16

Research assignment 3 – Wednesday, November 13

Political scientist presentations –

Political scientist presentation 1	Monday, September 9
Political scientist presentation 2	Monday, September 16
Political scientist presentation 3	Monday, September 23
Political scientist presentation 4	Wednesday, October 2
Political scientist presentation 5	Wednesday, October 9
Political scientist presentation 6	Monday, November 18
Political scientist presentation 7	Wednesday, November 20