

POLS 2000: Introduction to Political Science

Fall 2019

Baldwin 302

MWF 9:05-9:55am

Instructor: Anthony Madonna
Email: ajmadonn@uga.edu
Website: www.tonymadonna.com/

Office: 407 Baldwin Hall
Hours: MW 11:00-12:00pm
Phone: (314) 313-9937

Course Description:

This course is intended to provide students with a basic understanding of political science. Throughout the semester we will examine different topics of political science research as well as different approaches taken towards understanding those topics. The course involves an in-depth analysis of political actors and institutions. Common modes of scientific analysis in political science will be examined with an emphasis on research design, strategic behavior, rational choice theory and basic statistical techniques. A basic understanding of high school math is assumed.

Course Goals:

The primary goals of this course are two-fold. First, students should be provided with a conceptual background and toolset that they can use to critically analyze what is written in the newspaper or said in the news today, tomorrow, and in the more distant future. Second, it is expected that upon completion of this course students will be able to both understand and conduct scholarly research.

Required Books and Readings:

The following book is required and available at the Campus Bookstore:

Van Belle, Douglas. 2015. *A Novel Approach to Politics*. 4th Ed. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

Students will not only be expected to have done the reading assignments, but should also be aware of relevant news stories. As such, I recommend reading a daily newspaper – such as the New York Times and/or the Washington Post – or at least checking cnn.com. Other political blogs that students may find useful include FiveThirtyEight, Political Wire, The Monkey Cage, The Upshot, Vox, the Drudge Report and Roll Call.

Additional readings will be posted on the course website. Many of these readings will be highly technical in nature. As such, students are not expected to understand all aspects of each paper. However, they will be held accountable for a basic understanding of the paper's theory and applications.

Course Grading:

Your grade in this class will be assigned according to the following:

1. **Class Attendance/Participation (10% of final grade):** One of the goals for this class is for students to become comfortable discussing political institutions, issues, events and research. Hence, they will be encouraged to attend and participate in course discussions. Students will be given one point for attending the class, and an additional point for adequate participation. The lowest two attendance/participation grades will be dropped. A student's participation grade may also include several small quizzes or assignments.
2. **Midterm Exams (40% of final grade):** Two midterm examinations (worth 20% each) will be given during the course. The dates are listed on the syllabus as Monday, **September 30th** and Wednesday, **November 13th**. These exams will consist of multiple choice and short essay questions. They may also feature several exercises where students will apply techniques discussed in class. The midterm examination will be non-cumulative. If a student is unable to take one of the exams on the scheduled date, they should contact the course instructor beforehand. Missed exams will only be excused for a documented illness (documentation must be provided by a physician) or a death in the family. If a student is excused from an exam, their final exam will be weighted accordingly.
3. **Research Paper (30% of final grade):** Students will be expected to complete a research design proposal. The paper should be a maximum of 12 pages in length (typed, double-spaced, one inch margins, Times New Roman, 12 point font, Chicago style citations). Students will be allowed to choose the topic of their paper, provided it is related to political science. The instructor will be available during office hours and through e-mail for consultation. The paper should feature a review of the relevant scholarly literature, a well developed theory, and a detailed discussion of a potential test of that theory. The paper is due Monday, **December 2nd** at 5:00pm. *E-mailed papers will not be accepted.* Papers will be docked a full letter grade for each day they are late. A more detailed discussion of the paper project can be found here.
4. **Final Exam (20% of final grade):** The final exam is scheduled for Wednesday, **December 11th** from 8:00 to 11:00am in the regular classroom, Baldwin Hall 302. Like the midterms, it will feature a mix of multiple choice and short essay questions. It may also feature several exercises where students will apply techniques discussed in class. The final exam will be non-cumulative.

Final course grades will be assigned as follows: 100-93 = 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, and 60-0. **Extra credit will not be given in this course.** A grade of a C or higher is necessary in order to be admitted as a Political Science major. The withdrawal date for this semester is Monday, **October 21st**.

Disabilities:

Students with disabilities of any kind are strongly encouraged to notify the instructor and the Office for Disability Services at the beginning of the semester, so appropriate accommodations can be made.

Instructor Availability:

Students seeking to contact the instructor are encouraged to stop by during scheduled office hours. Students who are unable to attend office hours should e-mail ahead of time to ensure instructor availability.

Classroom Behavior:

Students should behave professionally throughout the course. Due to the large size of the course, disruptive behavior of any kind will not be tolerated. This includes cell phone usage, excessive talking and derogatory or offensive comments made during discussion. Lecture attendance is not mandatory, but students will be held responsible for all material discussed or assigned.

Cheating and Plagiarism:

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated in this course. Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will have their names forwarded to the University. It is each student's responsibility to know what constitutes plagiarism. Further information regarding academic honesty can be found at <http://www.uga.edu/honesty/>.

Tentative Lecture Outline/Readings Schedule:

Week	Topic	Readings
Aug 14	Course Overview/Syllabus	
Aug 16	Introduction	Van Belle Ch. 1
Aug 19	Introduction	
Aug 21	Why Government?	Van Belle Ch. 2
Aug 23	Why Government?	
Aug 26	Governing Society	Van Belle Ch. 3
Aug 28	Governing Society (<i>cont</i>)	
Aug 30	No Class (APSA)	
Sep 2	No Class (Labor Day)	
Sep 4	Government in the Economy	Van Belle Ch. 4
Sep 6	Government in the Economy (<i>cont</i>)	
Sep 9	Structuring Political Institutions	Van Belle Ch. 5
Sep 11	Structuring Political Institutions (<i>cont</i>)	
Sep 13	Institutions—The Executive	Van Belle Ch. 6
Sep 16	Institutions—The Executive (<i>cont</i>)	
Sep 18	Institutions—Legislatures	Van Belle Ch. 7
Sep 20	Institutions—Legislatures (<i>cont</i>)	
Sep 23	Institutions—Bureaucracy	Van Belle Ch. 8
Sep 25	Institutions—Bureaucracy (<i>cont</i>)	
Sep 27	Institutions—Courts	Van Belle Ch. 9
Sep 30	Midterm 1	

Tentative Lecture Outline/Readings Schedule (*cont*):

Date	Topic	Reading
Oct 2	Pop Culture and Political Science	
Oct 4	Pop Culture and Political Science	
Oct 7	Pop Culture and Political Science	
Oct 9	How to Write a Research Paper	
Oct 11	Rational Choice	The Rochester School
Oct 14	Rational Choice (<i>cont</i>)	
Oct 16	Introduction to Statistics	Agresti and Finlay Ch. 3
Oct 18	Ordinary Least Squares	Agresti and Finlay Ch. 9
Oct 21	Candidate Quality	Carson et al.
Oct 23	Spatial Modeling	Shepsle and Bonchek Ch. 5
Oct 25	Spatial Modeling (<i>cont</i>)	
Oct 28	Spatial Modeling (<i>cont</i>)	
Oct 30	Applied Spatial Modeling	Supreme Court Appointments
Nov 1	<i>No Class (Fall Break)</i>	
Nov 4	Applied Spatial Modeling (<i>cont</i>)	
Nov 6	Voting Methods	Shepsle and Bonchek Ch. 7
Nov 8	Voting Methods (<i>cont</i>)	
Nov 11	Voting Methods (<i>cont</i>)	
Nov 13	<i>Midterm 2</i>	
Nov 15	Campaign Spending	Jacobson
Nov 18	Campaign Spending (<i>cont</i>)	Green and Krasno

Tentative Lecture Outline/Readings Schedule (*cont*):

Date	Topic	Reading
Nov 20	How to Write a Research Paper (<i>cont</i>)	
Nov 22	Parties in Congress	Krehbiel
Nov 25	Parties in Congress (<i>cont</i>)	Binder et al.
Nov 27	<i>No Class (Thanksgiving Break)</i>	
Nov 29	<i>No Class (Thanksgiving Break)</i>	
Dec 2	Parties in Congress (<i>cont</i>) <i>Paper Due</i>	
Dec 4	Review	
Dec 11	<i>Final Exam</i>	

Readings not from Van Belle are either linked on the syllabus or will be provided via e-mail.