

**POLS 2000: Introduction to Political Science**  
University of Georgia  
Spring 2021

Instructor:

Dr. Brittany Bramlett<sup>1</sup>  
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Class meets:

Our assigned room is a large lecture hall and can safely include at least 25 people at a time. This means that 2 groups of students (each with about 20 to 25 people) will meet rotating Tuesdays & Thursdays at 11:10am to 12:25pm in Sanford Hall 0213.

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

- 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

- 1) Van Belle, Douglas A. 2020. *A Novel Approach to Politics*. 6th Edition. Sage Publishing.
- 2) Baglione, Lisa. 2020. *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science: A Practical Guide to Inquiry, Structure, and Methods*. 4th Edition. Sage Publishing.

\*\*\*Older versions of both textbooks work fine!

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

### **Participation (15%)**

Most weeks there will be some form of class participation and discussion. This will take place in person and occasionally via Zoom, depending on the week, so please pay attention to the syllabus and weekly emails. Students are expected to attend and participate for full credit.

### **Exams 1 & 2 (40% total, 20% each)**

Students will complete the exams individually via eLC and outside of class. Students will take the exam during our normal class time, beginning at 11:10am on the assigned day. Anything from the eLC modules is considered fair game to show up on the quizzes, and students may use their books and notes. Each exam is non-cumulative, only covering recent material.

### **Research design assignments (30% total, 10% each)**

You will work in groups of three or four students on three research assignments. I will assign students to groups during the first few weeks of the semester. There will be time set aside for group work in-class, on the group's designated day. Groups can also work outside of class time as needed. Students will 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 eLC 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

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

Each student will be required to meet with the professor (via email) during the second half of the semester to discuss preparation for the final literature review paper. Students should attend this meeting with a topic, proposed bibliography, and at least 2 questions about the assignment for Dr. Bramlett.

### **Literature review (10%):**

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 eLC and provided by the professor throughout the short semester.

### **Political scientist project (extra credit opportunity, 10 points added to either exam)**

Students may spend time learning about the discipline of political science through learning about the research of contemporary political scientists and how it relates to our studies and our lives. Students may choose a political scientist to research and present online. Students can submit the assignment at one of two points during the semester. Additional assignment details will be provided and available on eLC.

## Administrative Items

### **E-Learning**

Students must become acquainted with eLearning Commons for this class (<https://uga.view.usg.edu/>). Sign into eLC using your UGA MyId and password. If registered for the class, the course link should show up on the student's eLC homepage. Significant content will be available via eLC. Students must check in to eLC multiple times a week. Students will submit all assignments via eLC.

### **Missed deadlines**

A student who has a conflict with a due date should let the professor know ASAP. Typically things can be worked out, so the student's grade will not suffer. We are living during a pandemic. Flexibility is key, but communication also helps.

### **Classroom safety**

Students should wear masks inside Sanford Hall and abide by social distancing guidelines.

### **Disability resource center**

If the student anticipates needing classroom or exam accommodations due to the impact of a disability or medical condition, they 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. Students and faculty are responsible for knowing and complying with the policy and procedures. Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism, cheating and much more. It's in the student's 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>

### **Mental Health and Wellness Resources:**

If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit <https://sco.uga.edu>. They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services.

UGA has several resources for a student seeking mental health services

(<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) or crisis support

(<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies>).

If you need help managing stress anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit BeWellUGA (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) for a list of FREE workshops, classes, mentoring, and health coaching led by licensed clinicians and health educators in the University Health Center. Additional resources can be accessed through the UGA App.

## Tentative Course Outline

### **Course intro.**

eLC intro module:

- Welcome video
- Course syllabus
- Student survey

Participation & discussion: Course introduction

- Thursday, January 14 – Everyone meet via Zoom

### **Week 1.**

eLC module 1:

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

Participation & discussion

- Tuesday, January 19 – Group 1 joins in person
- Thursday, January 21 – Group 2 joins in person

### **Week 2.**

eLC module 2:

- Van Belle Chapter 15
- Van Belle Chapter 1
- Noel, Hans. 2010. “Ten Things that Political Scientists Know that You Don’t.” *The Forum* 8, 3, Article 12.
- Baglione Chapter 1

Participation & discussion:

- Tuesday, January 26 – Group 1 joins in person
- Thursday, January 28 – Group 2 joins in person

### Week 3.

eLC module 3:

- Van Belle Chapter 2
- “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))

Participation & discussion:

- Tuesday, February 2 – Group 1 joins in person
- Thursday, February 4 – Group 2 joins in person

### Week 4.

eLC module 4:

- Van Belle Chapter 3
- “The Psychology Behind Why Some Kids Go Unvaccinated”  
(<http://www.npr.org/2015/02/04/383724467/the-psychology-behind-why-some-kids-go-unvaccinated>)
- Baglione Chapter 2

Participation & discussion:

- Tuesday, February 9 – Group 1 joins in person
- Thursday, February 11 – Group 2 joins in person

### Week 5.

eLC module 5:

- Van Belle Chapter 4
- Van Belle Chapter 5
- *Planet Money*, “Episode 640: The Bottom of the Well”  
(<https://www.npr.org/templates/transcript/transcript.php?storyId=425392169>)

Participation & discussion:

- Tuesday, February 16 – Group 1 joins in person
- Thursday, February 18 – Group 2 joins in person

Due: Research assignment 1

- Thursday, February 18 by midnight via eLC

## Week 6.

eLC module 6:

- Van Belle Chapter 6
- Baglione Chapter 3

Participation & discussion:

- Tuesday, February 23 – Group 1 joins in person
- Thursday, February 25 – Group 2 joins in person

Due: Political Scientist project due (extra credit opportunity)

- Thursday, February 25 by midnight via eLC

## Week 7.

eLC module 7:

- “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))
- Baglione Chapter 4/5

Participation & discussion:

- Tuesday, March 2 – Everyone via Zoom

Due: Exam 1

- Thursday, March 4 at 11:10am via eLC

## Week 8.

eLC module 8:

- Literature review conferencing

## Week 9.

eLC module 9:

- Van Bell Chapter 7
- “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))
- Break down the research: Reynolds, Andrew. 2013. “Representation and Rights: The Impact of LGBT Legislators in Comparative Perspective.” *American Political Science Review* 107, 2, pages 259 – 274.

Participation & discussion:

- Tuesday, March 16 – Group 1 joins in person
- Thursday, March 18 – Group 2 joins in person

Due: Research assignment 2

- Thursday, March 18 by midnight via eLC

### **Week 10.**

eLC module 10:

- Van Belle Chapter 8
- “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>)
- Baglione Chapter 6

Participation & discussion:

- Tuesday, March 23 – Group 1 joins in
- Thursday, March 25 – Group 2 joins in

### **Week 11.**

eLC module 11:

- Van Belle Chapter 9
- “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/>)
- Van Belle Chapter 10

Participation & discussion:

- Tuesday, March 30 – Group 1 joins in
- Thursday, April 1 – Group 2 joins in

### **Week 12.**

eLC module 12:

- Baglione Chapter 7
- Baglione Chapter 8

Participation & discussion:

- Tuesday, April 6 – Everyone meet via Zoom

No Class (Instructional Break)

- Thursday, April 8

### **Week 13.**

eLC module 13:

- Van Belle Chapter 11
- <http://www.npr.org/2016/12/11/505154631/a-finders-guide-to-facts>
- <https://www.allsides.com/>
- <http://graphics.wsj.com/blue-feed-red-feed/>

Participation & discussion:

- Tuesday, April 13 – Group 1 joins in
- Thursday, April 15 – Group 2 joins in

Due: Research assignment 3

- Thursday, April 15 by midnight via eLC

### **Week 14.**

eLC module 14:

- Van Belle Chapter 12
- Van Belle Chapter 14
- “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>)

Participation & discussion:

- Tuesday, April 20 – Group 1 in person
- Thursday, April 22 – Group 2 in person

Due: Political Scientist project due (extra credit opportunity)

- Thursday, April 22 by midnight via eLC

### **Week 15.**

eLC module 15:

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

Participation & discussion:

- Tuesday, April 27 – Everyone meet via Zoom

Due: Exam 2

- Thursday, April 29 at 11:10am via eLC

## Week 16.

Due: Literature review

- Thursday, May 6 at midnight via eLC

### List of Due Dates

Exam 1 – Thursday, March 4

Exam 2 – Thursday, April 29

Political Scientist project (extra credit opportunity) – Thursday, February 25  
Or Thursday, April 22

Literature review – Thursday, May 6

Research assignment 1 – Thursday, February 18

Research assignment 2 – Thursday, March 18

Research assignment 3 – Thursday, April 15

In-person meeting dates:

Group 1      Tuesday, January 19  
                  Tuesday, January 26  
                  Tuesday, February 2  
                  Tuesday, February 9  
                  Tuesday, February 16  
                  Tuesday, February 23  
                  Tuesday, March 16  
                  Tuesday, March 23  
                  Tuesday, March 30  
                  Tuesday, April 13  
                  Tuesday, April 20

Group 2      Thursday, January 21  
                  Thursday, January 28  
                  Thursday, February 4  
                  Thursday, February 11  
                  Thursday, February 18  
                  Thursday, February 25  
                  Thursday, March 18  
                  Thursday, March 25  
                  Thursday, April 1  
                  Thursday, April 15  
                  Thursday, April 22