

POLS 2000: Introduction to Political Science

Master Syllabus

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Course Description

Political Science 2000 is designed to introduce beginning students to political science. Focus will be on the study of politics, including theoretical perspectives, substantive areas, and issues in designing political research.

Course Prerequisites: POLS 1101, POLS 1101E, POLS 1101H, or POLS 1101S

Student learning Outcomes

- Students will be familiar with leading scholarship in political science, including theories and substantive areas of inquiry.
- Students will be able to describe how the scientific method is applied to the study of politics.
- Students will have been introduced to the empirical tools of social science through political science research applications.
- Students will be prepared for upper division courses in political science.
- Students will be able to analyze current political phenomena with tools used by political scientists.
- Students will be able to understand and critically evaluate existing scholarly research in the discipline.

Institutional Competencies Learning Outcomes

Analytical Thinking: The ability to reason, interpret, analyze, and solve problems from a wide array of authentic contexts.

Critical Thinking: The ability to pursue and comprehensively evaluate information before accepting or establishing a conclusion, decision, or action.

Course Objectives

Students 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. Our method for this introduction will be you conducting original survey

research on a topic related to the politics in the United States.

After completing this class, you will be able to:

1. Describe how the scientific method is applied to the study of politics
2. Classify major approaches to studying politics
3. Critique methodological approaches used to study political questions
4. Develop original survey questions to study a political topic

Course Project

Our class will work collaboratively to design, execute, and analyze an original political survey related to politics in the United States and Georgia. The design and analysis of this project will serve as your final project for this course.

Course Texts

There is no required textbook for our class. You can find all of the required readings on eLC. The schedule of readings is contained at the end of this syllabus.

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	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C+	77-79
C	74-76
C-	70-73
D	60-69
F	<60

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

Research Project (50%)

A large portion of your grade in this class will be based on you successfully completing the original survey research project. This project consists of a series 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.

Midterm Exam (20%)

We will have a midterm exam covering the first half of our class material (through week 7). This is an in-class, closed-note & closed-book exam.

Final Exam (20%)

We will have a final exam during the final exam period. The focus of the final exam will be on material covered after the midterm. This is an in-class, closed-note & closed-book exam.

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.

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.

Grade Change

Any appeals of a grade must be made at least 24-hours after I hand back the assignment or test. If you would like to appeal a grade, prior to meeting with me you must submit a written statement detailing why you think that your grade should be changed. I will then meet with you to discuss your statement.

If I have made a mistake in totaling your grade in the class (e.g., I did not add up all of the points correctly) then you do not need to write the statement. Talk to me after class or during office hours and I will fix the mistake.

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.

QuestionPro

You will use the software platform QuestionPro to field your survey. QuestionPro allows you to easily write survey questions, collect responses, and analyze your results. Best yet, it is free to use for all UGA undergraduates. Check to make sure you can login to QuestionPro here: https://eits.uga.edu/about/initiatives/survey_tool/questionpro/

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.

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

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.

The UGA Student Honor Code states: "I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others." A Culture of Honesty, the University's policy and procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonesty, can be found at <https://honesty.uga.edu/>

Accessibility Services

If you anticipate needing classroom or exam accommodations due to the impact of a disability or medical condition, you must register for services with Accessibility and Testing. Additional information can be found here: <https://accessibility.uga.edu>

Course Recordings

In the absence of written authorization from me or UGA Accessibility and Testing, students may not make a visual or audio recording of any aspect of this course. Students who have a recording accommodation agree in writing that they:

- Will use the records only for personal academic use during the specific course.
- Understand that faculty members have copyright interest in their class lectures and that they agree not to infringe on this right in any way.
- Understand that the faculty member and students in the class have privacy rights and agree not to violate those rights by using recordings for any reason other than their own personal study.
- Will not release, digitally upload, broadcast, transcribe, or otherwise share all or any part of the recordings. They also agree that they will not profit financially and will not allow others to benefit personally or financially from lecture recordings or other course materials.
- Will erase/delete all recordings at the end of the semester.
- Understand that violation of these terms may subject them to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct or subject them to liability under copyright laws.”

Diversity and Civility

Diversity and civility are integral components of my classroom and the real world. My classroom is open to anybody, no matter their race, class, gender, sexual orientation, or any other quality. I strive to treat all my students with respect, and I ask that you treat your fellow students the same way. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. This includes (but is not limited to) inappropriate use of classroom technology, ringing cell phones, text messaging, watching videos, checking email, surfing the internet on your computer, disruptive behavior, bullying, and disorderly conduct.

Use of Generative AI Technology for Coursework

The use of Generative AI (GAI) tools is not permitted in this course unless I provide explicit written and/or verbal permission. If you are uncertain about using a particular tool to support your work, please consult with me before using it. I conduct random AI checks of every assignment to determine whether it was created using generative AI. If I believe a violation of UGA’s “A Culture of Honesty” may have occurred, I have a responsibility to report to the Office of Academic Honesty. If I do, you will be informed of the report and you will receive an email from the Office of Academic Honesty to schedule a facilitated

discussion between us. The goal will be an agreement reached about what occurred, and if it involved dishonesty, an appropriate sanction. To protect your rights, we cannot discuss your case outside of that facilitated meeting.

UGA Well-being Resources

UGA Well-being Resources promote student success by cultivating a culture that supports a more active, healthy, and engaged student community.

Anyone needing assistance is encouraged to contact Student Care & Outreach (SCO) in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-8479 or visit sco.uga.edu. Student Care & Outreach helps students navigate difficult circumstances by connecting them with the most appropriate resources or services. They also administer the Embark@UGA program which supports students experiencing, or who have experienced, homelessness, foster care, or housing insecurity.

UGA provides both clinical and non-clinical options to support student well-being and mental health, any time, any place. Whether on campus, or studying from home or abroad, UGA Well-being Resources are here to help.

- Well-being Resources: well-being.uga.edu
- Student Care and Outreach: sco.uga.edu
- University Health Center: healthcenter.uga.edu
- Counseling and Psychiatric Services: caps.uga.edu or CAPS 24/7 crisis support at 706-542-2273
- Health Promotion/ Fontaine Center: healthpromotion.uga.edu

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

Course review & syllabus discussion

Week 2 – Political Science & Causality

What is political science?

- Malici and Smith, Ch. 1
- Smith 2002
- Sides 2005

Causality

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

Week 3 – The Research Process

Research Topics

- Putman 1995

The Literature Review

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

Week 4 – Variables & Hypotheses

Measurement Accuracy

- *Craft* – Ch. 4

Hypotheses

- Johnson and Reynolds 102-124

Week 5 – Research Designs 1

Causal Analysis

- Cunningham (Ch. 1)

Week 6 – Research Designs 2

Experiments 1

- McDermott 2002
- Druckman 2011

Experiments 2

- Butler & Broockman 2011

Week 7 – Research Designs 3

Observational Studies

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

Measurement II (Precision)

- *Craft* – Ch. 5

Week 8 – Midterm Exam & Survey Questions

Midterm Exam Review

Midterm Exam

Week 9 – Survey Methods & Peer Review

Writing Survey Questions

- Asher (Ch. 3)
- Raskinski 1989

Peer Review Survey Questions.

Week 10 – Sampling & Statistics

Survey Sampling

- Squire 1988
- **Due:** Paper Assignment 2

Descriptive Statistics (Central Tendency)

- Jaisingh (Ch. 2)

Week 11 – Statistics Cont.

Crosstabulations

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

Controlled Comparisons

- Pollock

Week 12 – Statistics II

Correlation/Regression

- *Craft* – Ch. 8 (119-135)

Survey Programming Day

Week 13 – Wrapping up

Flex/Catchup Day

- No new material

Class Wrap Up

- Noel 2010
- Leonhart 2011

Week 14 – Survey Workshops (No new readings)

Survey analysis workshops

Week 15 – Data Presentations

Data presentations

Week 16 – Exam Review

Review for Final Exam

Week 17 & Final Exam Week

Date TBD: Final Memo

Date TBD: Final Exam