UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

SYLLABUS

POLS 2000 - 70325
Spring 2025
Baldwin 101D

Introduction to Political Science
TR 2:20-3:35 PM

Course Description and Prerequisites

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.

Students will be able to:

- Read and summarize academic political science research
- Understand the scientific method and the challenges of applying it to human behavior
- Critically evaluate causal claims about political phenomena

Prerequisites: POLS 1101.

Instructor Information

Garrett N. Vande Kamp
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Baldwin 409
Office Hours: Mondays 3:00-5:00 PM

Textbook and/or Resource Material

Textbook*: The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*, 3rd Edition. Kellstedt, Paul M. and Guy D. Whitten.

Journal Articles:

Aschwanden, Christie. 2015. “Science Isn't Broken” *Five Thirty Eight*. http://fivethirtyeight.com/features/science-isnt-broken/ (This isn’t really a scientific article, but it’s a lot easier to read than similar scientific articles).

Dunning, Thad. 2008. “Improving Causal Inference: Strengths and Limitations of Natural Experiments.” *Political Research Quarterly* 61(2): 282-293.

Hill, Kim Q. 2004. “Myths about the Physical Sciences and Their Implications for Teaching Political Science.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 37(3): 467-471.

Gerring, John. 2017. "Qualitative methods." *Annual review of political science* 20(1): 15-36.

Rehfeld, Andrew. 2010. "Offensive political theory." *Perspectives on Politics* 8(2): 465-486.

Reiter, Dan. 2015. "Should we leave behind the subfield of international relations?." *Annual Review of Political Science* 18: 481-499.

Whitfield, Gregory. 2019. "TRENDS: Toward a separate ethics of political field experiments." *Political Research Quarterly* 72(3): 527-538.

All other necessary materials will be provided by the professor or through access to the university’s resources available freely to students.

Attendance Policy

The class will be taught in an in-person format, with exceptions occasionally made if the professor is travelling. Attendance will be taken in class for the instructor's records. Though attendance to any given class is generally discretionary, attendance to exams is mandatory.

Make-up opportunities will only be provided for students with unforeseen, unavoidable absences. Foreseen and avoidable absences can schedule earlier testing, if necessary. Unforeseen and unavoidable absences will require documentation for verification. COVID-19 does not merit any special exceptions to this policy.

Final Grade Components

Midterm Exam	25%
Final Exam	30%
Literature Review	30%
Participation	15%

Grading Scale

A	93-100	C+	77-80
A-	90-93	C	73-77
B+	87-90	C-	70-73
B	83-87	D	60-70
B-	80-83	F	<60

Assignments will receive due dates. Unless otherwise specified in writing, all assignments that are due on scheduled class day will be due before class. These due dates are mandatory. Written assignments turned in after class but on the due date will be subject to a 10% grade reduction. Late written assignments after the due date will be accepted with a 15% grade reduction for each day it is late.

Assignments that are found to be academically dishonest will receive a 0%. This includes plagiarism, lying, tampering, and giving or receiving unauthorized assistance. For more information, see https://honesty.uga.edu/

The use of Generative Artificial Intelligence tools is strictly forbidden on all assignments. Assignments that are found to use such tools will be viewed as academically dishonest.

UGA Student Honor Code: "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 www.uga.edu/ovpi

Literature Review: Students will be complete a literature review for a research question in political science. This literature review should have at least 7 academic sources and should be written in a professional manner. Over the course of the semester, students will complete incremental assignments that build towards this end product. Students will also be broken up into groups to do peer reviews of assignments prior to submission to the professor.

Participation: Students will be assigned homework as necessary. They will be graded for participation only. In addition, students may occasionally be given assignments that are outside the scope of the above required assignments. These assignments will also fall under a student's participation grade.

Students who display persistent behavior issues associated with class will be docked on their participation grade.

Major Class Dates

Monday-Friday, January 6-10: Add/Drop Period
Monday-Friday, March 3-7: Spring Break (No classes)
Thursday, April 3: Withdrawal Deadline
Thursday, April 24: Last Day of Class
Thursday, May 1st (Noon): Final Exam

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.*

Syllabus as a Contract

This syllabus is a contract between the professor and the individual student. Every student in this class receives an identical syllabus; therefore, every student in this class will be taught and evaluated in the same manner. This syllabus is unique to this class; therefore, the students in this class may not be taught and evaluated as students in other sections of this class, past or present, even if taught by the same professor.

A Word of Thanks

Teaching is a difficult task, and even the creation of a course syllabus is difficult. I appreciate the help of all the faculty members who have helped me along the way: Paul Kellstedt, Guy Whitten, Kim Hill, Carlisle Rainey, Rotem Divir, Valerie Hudson, Ren Mu, Jessica Gottlieb, Joanna Lahey, Geoff Sheagley, and Brittany Bramlett.

That being said, this syllabus and the course materials referenced in it is the intellectual property of the instructor and subject to copyright law. Do not reproduce any course materials without explicit written permission. This includes lecture material; all recordings are prohibited.

Expected Course Calendar

The syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be required.

Basics of Social Science

Week 1: What is politics?
Readings: Posted on eLC; Reiter 2015

Week 2: What is science?
Readings: K&W Chap 1; Hill 2004

Week 3: Research Questions and Literature Reviews
Readings: Posted on eLC

Week 4: Theory and Hypotheses
Readings: K&W Chap 2

Basics of Research Design

Week 5: Causality
Readings: K&W Chap 3
Annotated Bibliography 1 Due

Week 6: Research Design I
Readings: K&W Chap 4

Week 7: Research Design II
Readings: Dunning 2008

Week 8: Research Design III and Midterm
Readings: Gerring 2017

Basics of Data Analysis

Week 9: Concepts and Measurement
Readings: K&W Chap 5

Week 10: Exploratory Data Analysis
Readings: K&W Chap 6
Annotated Bibliography 2 Due

Week 11: Descriptive Inference
Readings: K&W Chap 7

Week 12: Bivariate Hypothesis Testing
Readings: K&W Chap 8

Other Topics

Week 13: Communicating Research
Readings: Posted on eLC

Week 14: What is political theory?
Readings: Rehfeld 2010
Annotated Bibliography 3 Due

Week 15: Research Ethics
Readings: Whitfield 2019; Aschwanden 2015