

INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL SCIENCE

University of Georgia

POLS 2000
Fall, 2006
Office Hours, Tuesday and Thursday
9:30 – 11:00 a.m. or by appointment

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This course is designed to introduce students to the scientific study of politics. It is intended to help students acquire the knowledge necessary to understand, critique, and conduct social scientific research. In other words, the aim of this course is to help students appreciate and, most importantly, *do* the work of political scientists. Because this course prepares you for the reading and research demands of upper-level courses in political science, students must earn a grade of “C” or higher in POLS 2000 to be admitted to the political science major.

Since the goals of science are to describe, explain, and predict, we will focus our efforts on how political scientists attempt to meet these goals. *Description* takes many forms, from defining important concepts, to classification and measurement, to descriptive statistics. *Explanation* requires theory. So, we will learn how to construct theories (good ones) and test of them. In the end, as we will see, competing theories are judged on their abilities to *predict* (that’s right... predict... as in “predict the future”). We will learn about how predictions are derived and the nature of uncertainty surrounding those predictions.

I understand that many of you may be nervous about taking this course. Some of you may wonder why you need to take this course at all! I encourage you to be open-minded and work hard! This course can be fun and, if I may be so bold, may change the way you think about the political world.

REQUIREMENTS:

Texts: The following texts have been ordered through the UGA bookstore and are required for this course:

Johnson, Janet Buttolph, and H. T. Reynolds. 2005. *Political Science Research Methods*, 5th ed. Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press.

Shively, W. Phillips. 2005. *The Craft of Political Research*, 5th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Selected readings also will be placed on E-Reserves at the main library or may be downloaded directly from the electronic journals found at www.jstor.org or UGA’s Electronic Journal Locator at www.libs.uga.edu/ejournals.

Assignments and Grading:

- 1) Students are to read all required material *before* the class session for which the reading is assigned.
- 2) Class Participation (10% of Final Grade).
- 3) Writing Assignment (20% of Final Grade)
- 4) Quizzes (10% of Final Grade)
- 5) Examinations: Midterm (30% of Final Grade) and Final (30% of Final Grade).

Your final grade will be determined by the following scale: A = 90-100, B = 80-89, C = 70-79, D = 60-69, and F = 59 or lower.

Class Participation

Your class participation grade will be based on the quality of your class participation, not simply the quantity. Your class participation should be aimed toward raising the level of class discussion and in-class learning. Good class participation should be informed by the readings (or perhaps what you've learned in other classes). Good participation may come in the form a point of criticism (remember to be kind to others), your own interpretation of the issue at debate, or even a question (you know, the kind the makes everyone go "hmmm").

There is no official attendance policy for this class. However, you should note that the university bulletin states that "students are expected to attend classes regularly." In general, students benefit themselves by attending every class and preparing accordingly beforehand. My experience suggests that there probably is a strong, positive correlation between reading before class and a student's final grade.

In order to stimulate class discussion and learning, you will be expected to complete the assigned readings *before* class sessions (I have no problem with calling on people to participate).

Writing Assignments

Every student will be required to prepare and submit a writing assignment that will be due near the end of the semester. For this assignment, you can pursue one of two options. First, you can submit a literature review that addresses a specific research question or "puzzle" in political science. To get a sense of what a literature review entails, I encourage you to review Chapter 5 of Johnson and Reynolds as soon as possible. Alternatively, you can submit a "critical analysis" of a scholarly article in political science. After reading the text, you should think carefully about the ideas discussed in this class in preparing your critical analysis (Is the research question explicitly stated? Are the hypotheses derived from theory? Are the data and evidence adequate to support the conclusions?) and be sure to focus on both the *strengths* and *weaknesses* of the article.

A brief summary of your proposed project (or a citation to the article you intend to critically analyze) should be turned in to me by **October 3**. Your completed paper is due **November 30**. Your final paper should be approximately 6-8 pages in length in a typed, double-spaced format with one-inch margins. A standard font, such as Times New Roman (10 or 12 point font) should be used. Your paper will be evaluated on the quality and clarity of your argument, your ability to provide evidence in support of your claims, and the general grammatical quality of the paper.

Quizzes

Several quizzes will be administered during the semester, of which I will ultimately discount the lowest grade (as a result, make-up quizzes will not be offered). While I *may* announce some quizzes in advance, I reserve the right to administer quizzes on any day, at any time, with no advance notice. (Typically, quizzes will be given during the first 10 minutes of class.) Quizzes will be closed book and may cover material from the assigned readings or from previous days' lectures. Since there is no specific attendance component to your course grade, quizzes ensure that you come to every class prepared to participate in discussions.

Examinations

Examinations are closed book and may consist of some combination of objective, short answer, and essay questions. The midterm examination will cover all the material from lectures, class discussions, and readings up to the day of the exam. The final exam, which will be given during the examination period scheduled by the university, will cover all the material from lectures, class discussions, and readings from the post-midterm exam period.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS AND MISSED EXAMS

All written work is to be handed to the instructor at the beginning of the class in which they are due. I will *not* accept written assignments via email unless explicit *prior* permission has been granted by me. Late assignments will be penalized one full letter grade for each day that they are late. (Of course, this means that all assignments received after five days automatically will receive a failing grade.) Please inform the instructor as soon as possible if you find it necessary to turn in an assignment late.

Missed exams will receive a grade of zero except in cases of demonstrated, appropriate, and verifiable emergencies or tragedies or where the student has *prior* approval from the instructor. In cases of missed exams excused by the instructor, a makeup exam will be rescheduled at the convenience of the instructor.

POLICY ON ACADEMIC HONESTY

All students are responsible for maintaining the highest standards of honesty and integrity in every phase of their academic careers. The penalties for academic dishonesty are severe and ignorance is not an acceptable defense. All academic work must meet the standards contained in "A Culture of Honesty." Students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing academic work.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the UGA Disabilities Services office will be accommodated according to university policy. For more information contact Disabilities Services at 542-8719.

OFFICE HOURS AND AVAILABILITY

Undoubtedly, some of you will find the material covered in this class difficult to grasp. The readings, lectures, discussions, and assignments have been compiled to make understanding the scientific study of politics an easier (and interesting) task. However, if at any time you feel confused by the material, please feel free to seek my help during office hours or by appointment.

Please note: My time on campus will be very limited this semester. So, please make every effort to speak with me during office hours. If you have a question that can be answered relatively quickly, I encourage you to send me an email (gomezbt@uga.edu). I will make every effort to respond quickly to your email query.

WEBPAGE

A web page has been created for this course. It contains a copy of the syllabus, as well as information that might be useful for the completion of your writing assignment. It can be accessed using the “classes” link found on my home page, <http://www.arches.uga.edu/~gomezbt>.

REQUIRED READINGS

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

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| 17 Aug | About the Course: What is Political Science? |
| 22 | The Scientific Study of Politics <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Johnson and Reynolds, Ch. 1-2▪ Shively, Ch. 1 |
| 24 | Of Puzzles and Mechanisms: Constructing Causal Theory <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ King, Keohane, and Verba, Ch. 1 and 3 (E-Reserve)▪ Shively, Ch. 2 and 10 |
| 29 | Of Puzzles and Mechanisms: Constructing Causal Theory, cont <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ King, Keohane, and Verba, Ch. 1 and 3 (E-Reserve)▪ Shively, Ch. 2 and 10 |
| 31 | NO CLASS – AMERICAN POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION MEETING |
| 05 Sep | Hypothesis Construction <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Johnson and Reynolds, Ch. 4 |
| 07 | Hypothesis Construction, cont. <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Johnson and Reynolds, Ch. 4 |
| 12 | Using the Literature to Make Your Argument and Support Your Case <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Johnson and Reynolds, Ch. 5 |
| 14 | Concept Formation and Operationalization <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Johnson and Reynolds, Ch. 6-7▪ Shively, Ch. 4-5 |
| 19 | Concept Formation and Operationalization, cont <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Johnson and Reynolds, Ch. 6-7▪ Shively, Ch. 4-5 |

- 21 Formal Models of Politics
- Fiorina, Morris. 1975. "Formal Models in Political Science." *American Journal of Political Science* 19: 133-159 (JSTOR)
 - Downs, Ch. 3 (E-Reserve)
- 26 NO CLASS – PROFESSOR OUT OF TOWN
- 28 Formal Models of Politics, cont.
- Fiorina, Morris. 1975. "Formal Models in Political Science." *American Journal of Political Science* 19: 133-159 (JSTOR)
 - Downs, Ch. 3 (E-Reserve)
- 03 Oct Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Design
- Johnson and Reynolds, Ch. 3
 - Shively, Ch. 6
- WRITING PROPOSAL DUE**
- 05 Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Design, cont.
- Johnson and Reynolds, Ch. 3
 - Shively, Ch. 6
- 10 **MIDTERM EXAMINATION**
- 12 Introduction to Probability
- Lecture
- 17 Sampling: Theory and Practice
- Johnson and Reynolds, Ch. 9
- 19 Sampling: Theory and Practice, cont
- Johnson and Reynolds, Ch. 9
- 24 Survey Research
- Johnson and Reynolds, Ch. 10
- 26 NO CLASS – *Fall Break!!!*
- 31 Survey Research, cont
- Johnson and Reynolds, Ch. 10
- 02 Nov Univariate and Descriptive Statistics
- Johnson and Reynolds, Ch. 11 (pp. 305-329)
- 07 Univariate and Descriptive Statistics, cont
- Johnson and Reynolds, Ch. 11 (pp. 305-329)

- 09 Fun with Z-scores!!!
▪ Johnson and Reynolds, Ch. 11 (pp. 329-336)
- 14 Hypothesis Testing: Bivariate Data Analysis
▪ Johnson and Reynolds, Ch. 12
▪ Shively, Ch. 7 and 9
- 16 Hypothesis Testing: Bivariate Data Analysis, cont
▪ Johnson and Reynolds, Ch. 12
▪ Shively, Ch. 7 and 9
- 21 Hypothesis Testing: Bivariate Data Analysis, cont
▪ Johnson and Reynolds, Ch. 12
▪ Shively, Ch. 7 and 9
- 23 NO CLASS – *Happy Thanksgiving!!!*
- 28 Hypothesis Testing: Multivariate Data Analysis
▪ Johnson and Reynolds, Ch. 13
▪ Shively, Ch. 8
- 30 Hypothesis Testing: Multivariate Data Analysis, cont
▪ Johnson and Reynolds, Ch. 13
▪ Shively, Ch. 8
- 05 Dec Catch-Up and/or Review

FINAL EXAMINATION: Tuesday, December 12, 3:30-6:30p.m.