

POLS 2101-01: Introduction to Political Science (CRN 55862)

Middle Georgia State University—Summer 2022

Online

(3 credit hours)

Dr. Annie Watson

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Office Hours: available virtually by request

Catalog Description

This course involves the study of basic political science concepts and methods.

Course Description and Objectives

This course is designed to introduce students to the field of political science and its subfields—comparative politics, international relations, political theory, political methodology, and American government. In this pursuit, we will discuss different conceptualizations of what can be termed “political,” explore the means for answering political questions, and connect political science research with current events.

Thus, by the end of this course, you will be able to...

- Identify key trends in political research over time.
- Engage critically with political science research, as well as more mainstream political writings and discussions.
- Apply the steps for answering political science research questions.
- Compare and contrast different forms of government and their outcomes for citizens.
- Identify and address systems of power and inequality.
- Brainstorm options for addressing these systems.
- Connect theories and published research to current events.

Prerequisite

POLS 1101 or POLS 1101H

Required Readings

This course does not have a required textbook. All required materials will be shared with you on D2L/Brightspace. Please do not distribute these materials to people beyond this class.

Technology Requirements

Because our entire course will take place through D2L/Brightspace, students must have internet access.

Course Requirements and Evaluation

This course consists of 5 modules. Most assignments for the modules are due by the time their module closes (typically every other Friday night at 10:00pm). As you begin to explore the course, remember that each module represents about 3 weeks of work in an in-person course. Imagine a Monday/Wednesday class. That's three hours of lecture/class time, with one or two associated hours of homework for each day of class, as well as time spent working on an ongoing term project and/or studying for exams. Multiply that by 3, and you will have the approximate amount of work required for each module. You certainly *can* start a module at 9:00pm on the night it's due. It's unlikely, however, that you will be able to successfully complete it at that point. Be sure to allocate yourself sufficient time to complete all of the module assignments.

Within each of the first 4 modules, there are 5 parts, 4 of which are graded:

1. **Module Introductory Notes, Task List, and Required Content**—Each module begins with a brief set of introductory notes (the “lecture” of the class, so to speak). Included in this file are the required pieces of content for the module (more on this below) and a task list for the module.

The required content is made up of the readings, websites, videos, podcasts, and other sources of material that are meant to illustrate key aspects of the lesson. I am committed to making my classes affordable, so all of these materials are open access. At some points in the module notes, I also provide optional content, in case you find yourself particularly interested in a topic. These resources will be clearly marked as **optional**.

2. **Content Guides (10 points each for 40 points)**—These are essentially worksheets to guide and confirm your engagement with the required content for the course. They should be the first thing you complete and submit for each module (the rest of the module will build on these).
3. **Engagement with Data (5 points each for 20 points)**—One of the key aspects of political science is engaging with data in a variety of forms. As such, there will be several opportunities in the semester to briefly apply the data interpretation skills we will be learning and to reflect on the way that researchers use research methods and data in their work. These are formal (but short) writing assignments.
4. **Quizzes (5 points each for 20 points)**—Finally, there will be a quiz for each module of the class, as well as a syllabus quiz. Each quiz will cover the material of the module for which it was assigned; this includes any videos, readings, and other content included in the module. Quizzes will primarily be 20 multiple choice questions, graded automatically by Brightspace. Occasionally, I will include open-ended questions (which are not graded

automatically); I will, in most cases, have grades for these returned to you before the next module closes.

An additional quiz (2 points) checking your comprehension of the syllabus is due on May 27th by 10:00pm. Because of this, the first module's content guide and quiz are worth 9 and 4 points each, respectively.

The **fifth module (20 points)** is a choose-your-own adventure, where you will create your own (mini) module. More details will be given about this assignment on Brightspace. This module, which will serve as your final project for the course, is due by 10:00pm on July 25.

Grading Scale

Grades are constructed to reflect university standards and are summarized below. Grades will be based on how many points you earn according to the following distribution:

A	90-100 points
B	80-89 points
C	70-79 points
D	60-69 points
F	0-59 points

Preliminary Course Schedule

Modules will (mostly) be due every other Friday by 10:00pm throughout the summer term. Exceptions are highlighted in gold in the schedule below. You may work as far in advance of the due dates as you would like (and I strongly encourage you to start each module well in advance of its deadline). I may make changes to course content to reflect new publications or current events; these changes will be shared with you over email.

Dates	Module	Assignments	Deadline
May 23 – June 3	Module 1: Political Science (What We Study and How We Study It)	Sample Assignment	May 27 (by 10:00pm)
		Syllabus Quiz	
		Module 1 Content Guide	June 3 (by 10:00pm)
		Module 1 Engagement with Data	
Module 1 Quiz			
June 6 – June 17	Module 2: How can we explain the invasion of Ukraine?	Module 2 Content Guide	June 17 (by 10:00pm)
		Module 2 Engagement with Data	
		Module 2 Quiz	
June 20 – July 1	Module 3: Can we predict the results of the 2024 US national election?	Module 3 Content Guide	July 1 (by 10:00pm)
		Module 3 Engagement with Data	
		Module 3 Quiz	
July 4 – July 15	Module 4: What is the outlook for human rights in Afghanistan?	Module 4 Content Guide	July 15 (by 10:00pm)
		Module 4 Engagement with Data	
		Module 4 Quiz	
July 18 – July 25	Module 5: Choose Your Own Adventure	DIY Module	July 25 (by 10:00pm)

Campus Policies

Covid-19

The University System of Georgia recognizes COVID-19 vaccines offer safe, effective protection and urges all students, faculty, staff and visitors to get vaccinated; however, it is an individual decision to receive the vaccine and will not be required to be a part of our campuses. Everyone is encouraged to wear a mask or face covering while inside campus facilities. Unvaccinated individuals are strongly encouraged to get a vaccine, to continue wearing a face covering, and to continue socially distancing from others when possible. Updated protocols for isolation and quarantine will be in effect this semester in order to mitigate further spread of the coronavirus on our campuses. USG guidance is subject to change based on recommendations from GA DPH. MGA will remain flexible in their planning and be prepared to change course as necessary. MGA will continue to provide updated information at this website: <https://www.mga.edu/coronavirus/>.

Class Behavior Expectations

Middle Georgia State University students are responsible for reading, understanding, and abiding by the MGA Student Code of Conduct. The Student Code of Conduct, Responsibilities, Procedures, and Rights are found at https://www.mga.edu/student-affairs/docs/MGA_Student_Handbook.pdf#page=45.

Plagiarism

A plagiarism prevention service is used in evaluation of written work submitted for this course. As directed by the instructor, students are expected to submit or have their assignments submitted through the service in order to meet requirements for this course. The papers will be retained by the service for the sole purpose of checking for plagiarized content in future student submissions.

Accessibility Accommodations

Students seeking ADA accommodations must contact Middle Georgia State University Office of Accessibility Services in Macon at (478) 471-2985 or in Cochran at (478) 934-3023. <https://www.mga.edu/accessibility-services/>.

Withdrawal Policy

Students are encouraged to read the withdrawal policy found at <https://www.mga.edu/registrar/registration/drop-add.php> before dropping/withdrawing from class.

Delayed Opening or Closing of the University

In the event that the university is closed for unforeseen circumstances, we will coordinate making up the material over D2L/email.

Knight's Alert: <https://www.mga.edu/police/alert/index.php>

End of Course Evaluations

Student evaluations of faculty are administered online at the end of each term/session for all courses with five or more students. Students will receive an email containing a link to a survey for each course in which they are enrolled. All responses are anonymous.

Campus Carry Legislation

For students who prefer to bring concealed firearms to class, HB 280 provides you with the *possible* ability to do so. Please refer to the following URL to explore your possible right to bring a gun to the university: <http://www.mga.edu/police/campus-carry.aspx>

University Policy

Students are responsible for reading, understanding, and adhering to all Middle Georgia State University student policies, including those linked on the Syllabus Policy page: <https://www.mga.edu/faculty-affairs/syllabus-policy.php>.

Course Policies

An Inclusive Classroom

Political debates and discussions can become quite heated. This passion is part of what makes the study of politics fun! However, the fun ends where personal attacks and disrespect begin. Creating an inclusive, respectful, and safe classroom environment is integral to the success of this course. To this end, all class members are expected to treat each other at all times with respect, courtesy, tolerance, fairness, and justice.

Communicating with the Instructor

My primary methods of communicating with you will be through campus email and Brightspace. You will be held responsible for regularly checking these accounts. Assignment changes, important dates, and other valuable information may be sent to these accounts over the course of the term. Please check them daily. I do my best to answer e-mails within 24 hours (but rarely answer e-mails at night or on weekends). I am also happy to answer questions over Microsoft Teams by appointment.

Late Work

The late submission of assignments will result in a 10 percent reduction in points per day they are late, unless alternative arrangements are made with me. *If you are worried about meeting*

deadlines or if something comes up, please come talk to me as soon as possible. I can't help if I don't know what's going on.

Changes to the Syllabus

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations by the instructor may be necessary. As such, I reiterate the absolute necessity that you regularly check your e-mail.

Academic Resources

There are many academic resources available to you on campus throughout the semester. These include:

- The **D2L Help Center** provides 24/7 help for those having problems using the system. They can be contacted at 1-855-772-0423 or through a live chat (<https://d2lhelp.view.usg.edu/s/>).
- The **Technology Assistant Center (TAC)** provides help with passwords, email, SWORDS, and more general tech support. They can be contacted during business hours at 478-471-2023 (Macon), 478-934-3319 (Cochran), or helpdesk@mga.edu.
- The **Writing Center** is a free service that provides one-on-one consultations to assist students with all types of writing. They are open on the Macon, Cochran, Dublin, and Warner Robins campuses and offer both face-to-face and video-conferencing sessions. Check out their website here to sign up for a consultation: <https://www.mga.edu/student-success-center/writing-centers.php>.
- The **Student Success Center** offers tutoring free of charge on all MGA campuses for currently enrolled students. To view center contact information, subjects tutored, and tutor availability, go to the SSC website at <http://www.mga.edu/student-success-center/>. SSC tutoring sessions may be scheduled online and face-to-face through the "Book an Appointment" link on the Student Success Center website. Other services at the SSC include online academic workshops and a robust website with resources for academic assistance. The centers also have computer workstations, printing, and Internet access.

Hardship Resources

Being a student can be hard. Your lives are changing, and college can be a stressful environment. *There is no shame in struggling with this.* If you are feeling depressed or otherwise concerned about your mental health, please reach out to BeWell@MGA. The 24/7 support line for in-the-moment support and connections to next steps is 833-910-3362. Additional services are available through the MGA Counseling Center at 478-471-2985 (Macon), 478-934-3080 (Cochran), and counseling@mga.edu. More details can be found on their website: <https://www.mga.edu/counseling-services/index.php>.

Other important numbers/websites:

- **For a life-threatening emergency, always call 911 (or campus police at 478-471-2414).** For non-emergencies, MGA recommends this guide: <https://selfcareguide.readsh101.com/>.
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**
1-800-273-TALK (8255)
<https://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>
- **Veterans' Crisis Line**
1-800-273-8255 (Press 1)
- **Georgia Crisis and Access Line**
1-800-715-4225
- **The Trevor Project (LGBTQ+)**
1-800-4TREVOR
<https://www.thetrevorproject.org>
- **National Sexual Assault Hotline**
1-800-656-HOPE
<https://online.rainn.org>
- **National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism**
<https://www.niaaa.nih.gov>
- **National Institute of Mental Health**
<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/>
- **Alcoholics Anonymous**
<https://www.aa.org/>
- **Narcotics Anonymous**
<https://www.na.org/>
- **MGA Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Resources**
<https://policies.mga.edu/policy-manual/section-6-campus-affairs/6-5-nondiscrimination/index.php>

If you are experiencing other kinds of hardship, MGA has some services that may help. These include, but are not limited to, the provision of food and professional clothing, described in greater detail below.

- **The SHARE Pantry** is stocked with staple food items such as canned tuna, peanut butter and spaghetti sauce. Students, faculty and staff who show their MGA Knight ID cards

can visit once per month during spring, summer and fall semesters to pick up five items each time. For hours of availability, contact:

- Sha Parnell: gernisha.parnell@mga.edu (Cochran)
 - Ashleigh Jennings: ashley.jennings@mga.edu (Dublin)
 - Christy Faulk: christy.faulk@mga.edu (Eastman)
 - Devereaux Lindsey: devereaux.lindsey@mga.edu (Macon)
 - Ashley Thompson: ashley.thompson5@mga.edu (Warner Robins)
- The **Professional Closet** offers new and gently used suitable-for-work clothing and accessories, including ties and shoes, for purchase to MGA students, alumni, faculty and staff through Career Services offices on the Macon Campus (Student Life Center, Suite 254) and Cochran Campus (Sanford Hall, Suite 112). The cost of any single item does not exceed \$5, and all proceeds are reinvested into The Professional Closet. The Professional Closet is open during the University's normal business hours, 8:00-5:30 Mon.-Thurs. and 8:00-noon on Fridays.

My office door is also always open to you. Please keep in mind that I am a Title IX mandatory reporter.