

PSCI 100: Introduction to Political Science

Fall 2018
Drexel University

Thursday through Tuesday
Online

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1 Overview & goals

This course will introduce you to the topics that political scientists study, as well as how they study those topics. Many research projects ask about *cause-and-effect*: Why do countries go to war? Why are some people rich and others poor? Do election campaigns matter? How can we get government to make police wear body cameras? Do body cameras even matter? Political scientists also study *how to think about the social world* – because what we see is what we act on. Is it made of racial, ethnic, or religious groups? Nations? Economic classes? Or should we use more fine-grained categories? Finally, political scientists use a *range of research methods*: big data, laboratory experiments, comparison of histories, interviews, and so on. We will cover topics and methods at the same time, by studying examples. By the end of this course, you will know:

1. Whether you want to take more “poli sci” and, if so, what kinds of courses.
2. How to read the research without poring over every word.
3. How to read statistical results, whether in political science or some other field.

Finally, we will look at *what it takes to become a political scientist*. These are interesting times to study politics: climate change, automation, new political movements, and so on. But breaking into the field today is not an easy task.

2 Things to buy

There are no required purchases for this course.

3 Requirements

Your grade will be based on the following components. See below for an explanation of each.

1. Quizzes (50%).

2. Midterm exam – multiple choice (25%)
3. Final exam – short and long answers (25%).

3.1 Course format

There will be two modules per week. I will make the first of these available on Wednesday. The second will become available on Friday. You have until Tuesday 11:59 PM the following week to complete both of the previous week's modules. Each module will include a short, recorded lecture. Please complete the readings for a given module *before* viewing the lecture or quizzes for that module.

3.2 Quizzes

Each module will include some number of quiz questions. Sometimes, these will come before *and* after my lecture. Other times, you will need to complete them *only* before *or* after my recorded lecture. The instructions will be clear from each module.

Quiz questions given before a recorded lecture test your reading comprehension. Questions given after a lecture test your understanding of the combined material: both my lecture and the reading.

All quizzes will be timed. The number of quiz questions per module will vary according to (a) how difficult the reading material is and (b) how much is needed to reinforce the day's main lessons. Unless you are entitled to extra time, the duration of each quiz will equal: (number of quiz questions) x (1 minute).

Your final quiz grade will equal the number of quiz questions you get right over the course of the term, divided by the number of questions there were during the term.

3.3 Midterm exam

This multiple-choice test will focus on the most important ideas we have covered to date.

3.4 Final exam

The final exam is time-limited. It will combine short- and long-answer questions.

4 Other policies

You agree to:

1. Check Drexel email daily through the final-exam date.
2. Attend class and meet course deadlines *except in documented cases of bereavement, severe illness, or medical emergency*. You must provide a doctor's note or funeral announcement if you cannot meet a deadline and/or attend a class meeting.

3. Use Internet search or a dictionary to look up words you do not understand.
4. Abide by all other Drexel policies, found at the following websites. Note: I reserve the right to use plagiarism-detection software.
 - Academic integrity: <https://drexel.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/>
 - Disability accommodation: <https://drexel.edu/oed/disabilityResources/students/Accommodations/>
 - Course withdrawal: <https://drexel.edu/provost/policies/course-withdrawal/>

I agree to:

1. Abide by any grading guidelines in this syllabus and related instructions for assignments. Grading is on the 0-100 scale: 93 and up (A), 90-92 (A-), 87-89 (B+), 83-87 (B), 80-82 (B-), and so on, down to 50 (F).
2. Answer student e-mail within 48 business hours. Business hours are 9 AM to 5:30 PM, Monday through Friday, non-holiday.
3. Post links to readings on Blackboard, if not the readings themselves.
4. Grade written work within 10 business days of its submission.
5. Notify you of changes to this syllabus at least one week in advance of affected due dates.
6. Give office hours on a by-appointment basis. My commuting schedule makes it hard to be present in my office. (I teach four classes, one of them in DC.) At my “appointments” link, however, I have blocked off time for Skype calls and in-person meetings.

5 Schedule of readings & classes

Class 1

- This syllabus.

5.1 What is political science?

Class 2

- Cameron, Charles. “What is Political Science?” In *A Quantitative Tour of the Social Sciences*, Andrew Gelman and Jeronimo Cortina (eds.), pp. 207-222, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Class 3

- Almond, Gabriel A. “Political Science: The History of the Discipline.” In *The New Handbook of Political Science*, Robert Goodin and Hans-Dieter Klingemann (eds.), pp. 50-96, Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 1996. **Read pages 64-78 and 81-83.**

5.2 How to read political science

Class 4

- “How to Read Political Science.” Political Science Department, Gonzaga University. Online: <https://www.gonzaga.edu/college-of-arts-sciences/departments/political-science/resources/how-to-read-political-science>

Class 5

- Sykes, Alan O. “An Introduction to Regression Analysis.” Working Paper No. 20, Coase-Sandor Institute for Law & Economics, 1993. **Read pages 1-10.**

5.3 American politics

Class 6

- Seltzer, Mark and Alixandra B. Yanus. “Why Did Women Vote for Donald Trump?” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 51, no. 3 (2018): 523-527.

Class 7

- Hochschild, Arlie Russell. “I Spent 5 Years With Some of Trump’s Biggest Fans. Here’s What They Won’t Tell You.” *Mother Jones* (September/October 2016). Online: <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2016/08/trump-white-blue-collar-supporters/>

Class 8

- Heaney, Michael T. “Making Protest Great Again.” *Contexts* 17, no. 1 (2018): 42-47.

5.4 Midterm exam

Class 9

- Exam in class.

5.5 Comparative politics

Class 10

- Linz, Juan J. “The Perils of Presidentialism.” *Journal of Democracy* 1, no. 1 (1990): 51-69.

Class 11

- Rydgren, Jens and Sara van der Meiden. “The Radical Right and the End of Swedish Exceptionalism.” *European Political Science*, early online version (2018): 1-17.

Class 12

- Auyero, Javier. “The Logic of Clientelism in Argentina: An Ethnographic Account.” *Latin American Research Review* 35, no. 3 (2000): 55-81.

5.6 International relations

Class 13

- Ackerman, John, Barak Carlson and Young Han. “International Relations Paradigms.” Air Command and Staff College (ACSC) Distance Learning Program, Maxwell Air Force Base, AL, 2010.

5.7 Formal theory and rational choice

Class 14

- Schwartz, Thomas. “Why Parties?” Typescript, UCLA, 1989. **Read pages 1-3 and 12-17.**

Class 15

- Maltzman, Forrest, Melissa Schwartzberg, and Lee Sigelman. “Vox Populi, Vox Dei, Vox Sagittae.” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 39, no. 2 (2006): 297-301.

5.8 Public policy and public administration

Class 16

- Downs, Anthony. “Up and Down with Ecology: The ‘Issue-attention Cycle.’” *Public Interest* 28 (1972): 38-50.

Class 17

- Stewart, Charles III and Stephen Ansolabehere. “Waiting to Vote.” *Election Law Journal* 14, no. 1 (2015): 47-53.

5.9 Becoming a political scientist

Class 18

- Mitchell, Kristina M. W. and Jonathan Martin. “Gender Bias in Student Evaluations” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 51, no. 3 (2018): 648-652.

Class 19

- *2017-2018 APSA eJobs Report*. White paper, American Political Science Association, 2018.
- *2016-2017 APSA Graduate Placement Survey: Placement Report*. White paper, American Political Science Association, 2018.

5.10 Recap

Class 20

- Lecture covering key concepts and examples. Bring questions. This is review for the final exam.