

**POLS 250: Genetics, Brains, and Politics**  
University of Nebraska – Lincoln  
Fall Semester 2017 | Sections 151, 152, 153, & 154

TA: Clarisse Warren  
Email: clarisse.warren@huskers.unl.edu  
Office: (location redacted)  
Office Hours: Tuesday 10:30-12:00 (or by appointment)

---

### Participation

Recitations are discussion-based meetings, designed to give you an opportunity to discuss, analyze, and obtain a deeper understanding of the material presented in the lectures. As a discussion-based class, participation is essential in order to receive full credit. Most of the recitation time will be spent in discussion and debate, although some time may be allotted in each session for questions and answers related to that week's lectures.

As noted in the main lecture syllabus, 150 of your 350 grade points in this semester will be earned in the recitation. Those 150 points will be assigned as follows:

Reaction papers	-	-	-	<b>30 points</b>
Class Discussion	-	-	-	<b>30 points</b>
Classroom Activities	-	-	-	<b>15 points</b>
Research paper	-	-	-	<b>60 points</b>
Attendance	-	-	-	<b>15 points</b>

### Attendance

The recitations will involve a great deal of active participation on the part of students, so you are expected to attend all of the recitations. If you have to miss a recitation, your best option will be to attend one of the other recitations for that week. If you cannot attend a recitation, you should speak the teaching assistant for that recitation before missing class.

### Class Expectations

Each week you will have separate recitation readings (see below) which are designed to provide you with real-world application of the things you will be learning about in lecture. These readings are what we will discuss in class, and they will also be what you write reaction papers about. You are expected to be prepared for each class period. Being prepared means being on time, having the material read, and having something to contribute to the discussion.

Class Discussions are a time where you will be expected to discuss the weekly readings. I do not expect you to have a complete mastery of the material; however, it should be evident that you are reading. We will often tie in what you read for lecture, so please make sure you are

equally prepared to discuss those readings as well. You will receive daily participation points based on your contributions. This accounts for 30 points of your final grade.

The reaction papers are individual efforts. They are to be two full pages (Times New Roman, 12-point font, 1-inch margins, double spaced). You are to briefly summarize the week's readings in one paragraph. You are to then analyze the arguments presented – which ones do you find particularly strong and why? Which ones do you feel are weak and why? Simply saying “it makes sense” is not a reason. These papers are intended to help you think critically about the implications of each topic. There will be a total of **3 required** reaction papers. You may choose to write them on substantive weeks, and which ones you choose is up to you. It is highly suggested that you do them early and not wait until the last 3 substantive reading weeks. You cannot turn in reaction papers on weeks where we do not have a discussion scheduled. All reaction papers must be submitted on your recitation's Canvas page the **Thursday before lecture (9:30 am)**. Late submissions will result in a 50% grade deduction. Papers submitted more than 24 hours late will not be accepted, and a grade of 0 will be recorded.

The research note will be 6-7 full pages (Times New Roman, 12-point font, 1-inch margins). For this assignment you will be asked to formulate and test three hypotheses. You will be reporting the results of your own analysis of original data that will be provided to you. These data should be used to test your hypotheses. More information on this important project will be provided as the semester progresses. The paper is due by **Friday, December 1<sup>st</sup> at 5:00 PM**. You will submit your paper via SafeAssign on the Canvas recitation page.

### **Respect and Conduct**

As this is a political science class, we will discuss politics. We understand that some students may possess deeply held beliefs. The course is not meant to change beliefs, but to create an open dialogue about differing opinions and viewpoints. Students are asked to keep an open mind, attempt to understand other perspectives, and maintain a professional level of courtesy to everyone who enters the classroom. **Personal attacks will not be tolerated**. Our objective is to understand why we may have political disagreements, not promote them.

Furthermore, cell phones are not permitted to be out in class - out of respect to the instructor.

### **Disability Accommodations**

Individual accommodations are available to students with disabilities. To receive accommodation services, students must register with the Services for Students with Disabilities office at 132 Cranfield Administration building. Please discuss your individual needs with your instructor so accommodations can be provided.

## Class Schedule

	Week	Topic	Discussion Topic
1	Aug 24-25	None	Intro to Recitation
2	Aug 31-Sep 1	Genetic Privacy	Should the government should collect everyone's DNA at birth?
3	Sept 7-8	Genetics and the Human Condition	If our behavior is linked to genetics, do we have control over how we react to certain situations and people?
4	Sept 14-15	Identifying Genetic Influences	Should biology be considered when deciding how to punish individuals convicted of a crime?
5	Sept 21-22	None	Review for Exam 1
6	Sept 28-29	DNA	Does using a biological definition of race provide health benefits that outweigh possible discrimination?
7	Oct 5-6	None	Go over Exam 1
8	Oct 12-13	Twin Studies	
9	Oct 19-20	Candidate Gene Association	
10	Oct 26-27	None	Review for Exam 2
11	Nov 2-3	Cognitive Performance	Should cognitive performance enhancing drugs be freely available to create fair competition?
12	Nov 9-10	None	Go over Exam 2, Statistics, & Research Note Expectations
13	Nov 16-17	Politics & Physiology	How do genes impact our ideology?
14	Nov 23-24	None	Thanksgiving Break
15	Nov 30-Dec 1	Free Will	Is a belief in free will necessary for the existence of society?
16	Dec 7-8	None	Final Exam Review

### Recitation readings

- **August 24-25: None**
- **August 31 – September 1: Genetic Privacy**
  - The Government Wants Your DNA – Murphy
  - Return DNA Testing – Couzin-Frankel
  - DNA Testing – Williamson & Duncan
  - Supreme Court: Police Can... - Bravin

- **September 7-8: Genetics and the Human Condition**
  - The Gregarious Brain - Dobbs
  - A Question of Resilience – Bazelon
- **September 14-15: Identifying Genetic Influences**
  - Crime, Culpability, & the Adolescent Brain - Beckman
  - Genetic Basis for Crime – Cohen
  - Brain Scans and Reoffending - Haederle
- **September 21-22: None**
- **September 28-29: Health, Race & Genetics**
  - Probing the Roots of Race and Cancer - Couzin
  - The Importance of Race – Cooper et al.
  - In the NCAA, Question of Bias Over Test of a Genetic Trait - Thomas
- **October 5-6: None**
- **October 12-13: Twin Studies**
  - Beyond Liberals and Conservatives – Alford, Funk, & Hibbing
  - Genes and Ideologies - Charney
- **October 19-20: Candidate Gene Association**
  - Two Genes Predict Voter Turnout – Fowler & Dawes
  - Candidate Genes & Political Behavior – Charney & English
- **October 26-27: None**
- **November 2-3: Cognitive Performance Enhancers**
  - Gene Doping and Sport – Friedmann et al.
  - Smart Drugs for Straight A's – *The Times*
  - Professor's Little Helper – Sahakian
  - Dutee Chand, Female Sprinter... - Branch
- **November 9-10: None**
- **November 16-17: Politics & Physiology**
  - Assortative Mating on Ideology... - McDermott et al.
  - Political Attitudes Vary with Physiological Traits – Oxley, Smith, et al.
  - Attributions to Genetics – Schneider, Smith & Hibbing
- **November 23-24: None (Thanksgiving Break)**
- **November 30-December 1: Free Will**
  - The Mind's Best Trick – Wegner
  - Free Will: Now You Have It, Now You Don't – Overbye
  - Experimental Philosophy and Free Will – Nichols
- **December 7-8: None**