

The study of political science is far greater than politics or government. Rather, studying political science is a means to better understand the world around me, navigate social phenomena, and adapt to a rapidly changing world. Through my time in Appalachian State University's graduate program, I have learned to utilize methodological and analytical skills, utilize content relevant to political science, communicate effectively, and display professional behaviors in academic and applied settings. This portfolio aims to exemplify these acquired skills.

As Artifacts 1 and 2 show, I am comfortable identifying and applying methodical approaches, formulating analytical questions, and utilizing the statistical skills necessary. Artifact 1 includes a research study conducted by a peer and me, analyzing the effect of a national legislature's gender composition on the frequency of interstate conflict. While this study was conducted for a course in a concentration different from my own (Pro-Seminar in International Relations), much of the theory results from a hybrid discussion of gender relations and dovish/hawkish behaviors. Transnational datasets were used to conduct regression analyses, finding a modest, statistically significant relationship between an increase in the percentage of women in legislatures and a reduction in the occurrence of interstate conflict. Artifact 2 also exemplifies my understanding of methodological and analytical skills utilized in political science, though in a more abstract sense. In Artifact 2, I critically review the American Association of Public Opinion Research's 2020 Pre-Election Polling Task Force report. I focus much of my critique on the analytical structure of pre-election polling and the various methodological approaches used. While not conducting statistical analysis myself, this review demonstrates an understanding of methodological and analytical skills.

Artifacts 1, 2, and 3 embody the ability to acquire and utilize content relevant to the political science discipline. Artifact 1, discussed above, combines various seminal theories and concepts in political science to analyze different political phenomena. Artifact 2 offers a literature review and a short theory section to describe the effect of social media on voter turnout. In this, I utilize the Information Model (Baekgaard et al. 2014) and theories posited by Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) to explain how and why social media might impact voter turnout. Finally, in Artifact 3, I examine the phenomena of Astroturfing and consider the ethical issues related to it. Artifact 3 especially required me to set aside my personal political opinions to provide an objective analysis of the practice and its consequences.

My ability to communicate effectively in written and verbal contexts with diverse populations is illuminated by Artifacts 4 and 6. Artifact 4, mentioned above, requires effective written communication as I offer a critique of a widely respected association's report. This critical review is well-documented, cited, properly formatted, and employed clear and appropriate communication to my peers and professionals. Artifact 6, my internship poster, exemplifies my ability to adequately communicate with professional audiences and provide effective and compelling analyses of political science phenomena. While my internship with Public Policy Polling resulted in proprietary information that I cannot share, my internship poster offers tangible evidence of its occurrence. During my internship, I worked to bolster the company's relationship with various political strategists and consultants. I effectively grew the client roster through discussions with professionals regarding various phenomena relevant to polling during a midterm election year and polling given a near-even split in Congress.

Finally, professional behavior in academic and applied settings are represented by Artifact 3, 5, 6, and 7. Artifact 3, also mentioned above, is the result of a study away course with Dr. Phillip Ardoin in the Summer of 2022. Washington at Work allowed accepted students to

travel to Washington, D.C., following an intensive classroom course, to meet and discuss with various political actors in Washington, D.C. We met with multiple lobbyists, trade association representatives, diplomats, think tanks, and hill workers, among others. This course required the cultivation of skills and experiences to professionally network, participation in experiential learning opportunities, and effective interaction with people of diverse backgrounds. Artifacts 5 and 6 result from my internship with Public Policy Polling, discussed above. As a result of my work as an Intern, I was offered a position with Public Policy Polling, further exemplifying my professional skills in applied settings. Artifact 7 provides a revision memo depicting my ability to interact effectively and work collaboratively. Artifact 1 can also be considered to illustrate my ability to work collaboratively with people of diverse backgrounds in a different context. Further, my resume includes work experience as a result of professional skill development.

My program at Appalachian State University has effectively prepared me for a career exploring social and political phenomena. I am endlessly grateful to the faculty that aided in my understanding of political science. The abilities to analyze, utilize relevant content, communicate effectively, and display professional behaviors are invaluable to me, and I am excited to employ them as my life continues.