

political psychology

PSCI 4221.001
FALL 2015
EATON HUMANITIES 1B90
MWF 10:00 –10:50 A.M.

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OFFICE HOURS: M 1-3 P.M.
& BY APPOINTMENT

In this class, we will consider how people think and feel about politics, investigating the psychological underpinnings of the political behavior of both citizens and elites. We will start with an overview of the field of political psychology and some of the ways that questions in this field are answered. Next, we will study the psychological roots of political behavior, and the contributions of influences such as socialization, personality, and genes to how citizens and political leaders make decisions. From there, we will consider the mechanisms of how people construct political beliefs and determine political choices, investigating topics such as emotion, cognition, partisan bias, and persuasion. Finally, we will study political psychology of groups, considering the reasons why people dislike other groups, the psychological roots of political conflict, and the routes to cooperation and compromise.

D2L is your friend

I will regularly update class information on the website for the class at learn.colorado.edu. This syllabus will be posted there, as well as links to assignments and other exciting material.

reading material

There is no textbook for this course. Instead, the readings include a set of journal articles and book chapters, which can be accessed via the course website. (In some cases, you may be blocked from accessing online journals from off-campus computers. See information from the University Library for remote access from off-site: ucblibraries.colorado.edu/research/offcampusaccess.htm)

expectations

You are encouraged to be an active participant in class! Please feel free to raise questions at any point during class, including matters of clarification, theoretical points, or topics to address in class discussion. You should also keep in touch by e-mail or by visiting office hours if you have any questions about course expectations or the material covered in class.

You are also expected to maintain proper classroom etiquette. This includes respecting the opinions of others even if you disagree, not talking out of turn, putting away newspapers and crossword puzzles during lecture, turning off cell phones before class, and not disrupting the class if arriving late.

requirements

In addition to the readings, you will be responsible for the following:

PARTICIPATION, SHORT ASSIGNMENTS, AND QUIZZES *(worth 25% of your final grade)*

Because class attendance is an important prerequisite for participating in discussions and in-class activities, attendance will be taken each class session. Frequent absences will lower your participation grade. We will also have several in-class activities that contribute to this portion of your grade, and many weeks we will have short quizzes on the readings. We will have a few short homework assignments as well.

TWO PAPERS *(each worth 15% of your final grade)*

For each of the three units we cover in class, a paper topic will be provided. Over the course of the semester, you need to write papers on two of these three topics. Paper guidelines will be detailed in separate handouts.

THREE EXAMS *(each worth 15% of your final grade)*

There will be two midterm exams and a final exam.

special accommodations

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. You can contact the Disability Services office for more information at disabilityservices.colorado.edu.

some important comments on academic integrity

- Plagiarism and other academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. If you are not familiar with the rules of citing sources in written work or what constitutes plagiarism, you should contact me or refer to the University Honor Code at honorcode.colorado.edu. Additional information about avoiding plagiarism, citation style, and writing in political science is also posted on the course website. Academic dishonesty will result in an F in the course and referral to the Honor Council for additional non-academic sanctions.
- All papers are expected to be original work, not previously or simultaneously handed in for credit in another course (unless prior approval of all instructors involved is obtained).

political psychology class schedule

WHAT IS POLITICAL PSYCHOLOGY?

Monday, August 24 – Wednesday, August 26

Introduction to the class and the field of political psychology

the psychological roots of political behavior

POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION

Friday, September 4

Political learning, socialization from parents and schools

- Jennings, M. Kent, and Richard G. Niemi. 1968. "Patterns of Political Learning." *Harvard Educational Review* 35:443-467.

THE BIOLOGICAL ROOTS OF POLITICAL BEHAVIOR

Monday, August 31 – Friday, September 4

Nature versus nurture, genetic explanations

- Hibbing, John R., Kevin B. Smith, and John R. Alford. 2014. *Predisposed: Liberals, Conservatives, and the Biology of Political Differences*. New York: Routledge. Chapter 7.

CONFORMITY AND SITUATIONAL PRESSURES

Wednesday, September 9 – Friday, September 11

Social and situational pressures to conform, obedience

- Slater, Lauren. 2004. *Opening Skinner's Box: Great Psychological Experiments of the Twentieth Century*. New York: W.W. Norton. Chapter 2.

PERSONALITY

Monday, September 14 – Friday, September 18

Authoritarianism, citizen personality, presidential personality

- Carney, Dana R., John T. Jost, Samuel D. Gosling, and Jeff Potter. 2008. "The Secret Lives of Liberals and Conservatives: Personality Profiles, Interaction Styles, and the Things They Leave Behind." *Political Psychology* 29:807-840.
- Barber, James David. 1985. *The Presidential Character: Predicting Performance in the White House*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall. Chapters 1 and 2.

RATIONALITY AND ALTRUISM

Monday, September 21 – Wednesday September 23

Assumptions of citizen rationality, self-interest, altruism

- Monroe, Kristen Renwick, and Kristen Hill Maher. 1995. "Psychology and Rational Actor Theory." *Political Psychology* 16:1-21.

Friday, September 25: Exam 1

the political psychology of decision-making

EMOTION

Monday, September 28 – Friday, October 2

Unconscious processing, emotions, affect

- Lodge, Milton, and Charles S. Taber. 2013. *The Rationalizing Voter*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1.
- Marcus, George E., W. Russell Neuman, and Michael B. MacKuen. 2000. *Affective Intelligence and Political Judgment*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.

POLITICAL COGNITION

Monday, October 5 – Friday, October 9

Memory, schemas, associative networks, information processing

- Steenbergen, Marco R., and Milton Lodge. 2003. "Process Matters: Cognitive Models of Candidate Evaluation." In Michael B. MacKuen and George Rabinowitz, eds., *Electoral Democracy*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

POLITICAL DECISION-MAKING AND HEURISTICS

Monday, October 12 – Friday, October 16

Inference, heuristics, short cuts, civic competence

- Thaler, Richard H., and Cass R. Sunstein. 2008. *Nudge: Improving Decisions about Health, Wealth, and Happiness*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Chapter 1 and Chapter 5.
- Jervis, Robert. 1993. "The Drunkard's Search." In Shanto Iyengar and William J. McGuire, eds., *Explorations in Political Psychology*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

MOTIVATION AND BIAS

Monday, October 19 – Friday, October 23

Motivated reasoning, bias in decision-making

- Taber, Charles S., and Milton Lodge. 2006. "Motivated Skepticism in the Evaluation of Political Beliefs." *American Journal of Political Science* 50(3):755-769.
- Nyhan, Brendan, and Jason Reifler. 2010. "When Corrections Fail: The Persistence of Political Misperceptions." *Political Behavior* 32:303-330.

PERSUASION

Monday, October 26 – Wednesday, October 28

Political persuasion, attitude change

- Sears, David O., and Richard E. Whitney. 1973. "Political Persuasion." In Ithiel de Sola Pool, Wilbur Schramm, Frederick W. Frey, Nathan Maccoby, and Edwin B. Parker, eds., *Handbook of Communication*. Chicago: Rand McNally. Pages 253-263.

Friday, October 30: Exam 2

the political psychology of groups

GROUP IDENTITY

Monday, November 2 – Friday, November 6

Social identities, in-group/out-group sentiments, nationalism, patriotism

- Tajfel, Henri. 1970. "Experiments in Intergroup Discrimination." *Scientific American* 223:96-102.
- Theiss-Morse, Elizabeth. 2009. *Who Counts as an American? The Boundaries of National Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 4.

STEREOTYPES AND PREJUDICE

Monday, November 9 – Friday, November 13

Political impressions and stereotypes

- Devine, Patricia G. 1989. "Stereotypes and Prejudice: Their Automatic and Controlled Components." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 56:5-18.
- Issenberg, Sasha. 2012. "It All Comes Down to Race." *Slate*

CONFLICT

Monday, November 16 – Friday, November 20

Understanding the roots of group conflict

- Sherif, Muzafer. 1956. "Experiments in Group Conflict." *Scientific American* 195(5):54-58.
- Green, Donald P., and Janelle S. Wong. 2008. "Tolerance and the Contact Hypothesis: A Field Experiment." In Eugene Borgida, Christopher M. Federico, and John L. Sullivan, eds. *The Political Psychology of Democratic Citizenship*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Monday, November 23 – Friday, November 27: Fall break – class does not meet.

COOPERATION

Monday, November 30 – Friday, December 4

Social, political, and evolutionary roots of cooperation

- Hibbing, John R., and John R. Alford. 2004. "Accepting Authoritative Decisions: Humans as Wary Cooperators." *American Journal of Political Science* 48: 62–76.
- Sunstein, Cass R. 2008. *Why Groups Go to Extremes*. Washington, DC: AEI Press. Pages 1-25.

GROUP DECISION-MAKING

Monday, December 7 – Friday, December 11

Groupthink, quality of group decision-making

- Janis, Irving L. 1982. *Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. Chapters 1-2.

Wednesday, December 16: Final exam (4:30 p.m. - 7 p.m.)