

Political Psychology of Mass Behavior

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Class: MW 10:00-12:30
Carlson School 1-136
Office Hours: Monday 1:30-2:30
or by appointment

Course Description

Why do people hold such different political views? How do people change their attitudes in response to current events? In general, how do people understand, discuss, and shape politics? This class will introduce you to the interdisciplinary field of political psychology. Through political psychology, we will begin answering these and other questions about how people interact with politics.

Political psychology is the study of politics and psychology in conjunction with each other—either the application of human psychology to the study of politics, or using the study of politics to better understand human psychology. This is an interdisciplinary field which combines research from social and cognitive psychology, mass communications, and political science (among other areas of study). This class focuses specifically on the mass public. While we will cover topics that are generally applicable to many aspects of political life, we will also use the 2016 Presidential election and other current events as examples to apply the theories we learn during lecture. Students do not need to have taken classes in psychology or political science to do well in this class.

This class is organized around a set of broad themes in political psychology. First, we will discuss emerging research in "biopolitics" which seeks to understand the evolutionary, genetic, physiological, and psychological origins of political attitudes. Second, we will discuss heuristics and motivated reasoning: short-cuts in political decision-making. Third, we discuss emotion, implicit attitudes and embodiment: sub-conscious effects of our brains on our political behavior. Fourth we discuss identity and ethnocentrism as explanations for political attitudes. Finally, we will spend the last two weeks of class bringing this together to address big questions about the field of political psychology and its impact on American and global politics.

Goals of the Course

- 1) Introduce major theories and methods of political psychology.
- 2) Develop a greater understanding of political systems and the political lives of ordinary individuals.
- 3) Develop your skills in reading, writing, and public speaking.
- 4) Broaden your perspective on politics and improve your capacity to be constructive and critical as consumers of political information.
- 5) Enable you to think in an integrative way across disciplines; particularly how psychology, political science, and mass communication research informs each other.

Student Expectations

This course will be a mixture of lecture and discussion. Students are expected to arrive on time to class, read the assigned readings, and be ready to contribute to the class discussion. It is important to bring the assigned readings to class, so you can refer to them during lecture and

discussion. The last section of the syllabus contains general policies about course grades and academic dishonesty.

Late Policy: Extensions will not be given past the due date for the papers. Late papers will be penalized one half letter grade for every day they are late, e.g., one day late turns an A- into a B+, two days late turns an A- into a B, and so on. Moreover, if you cannot be present for a quiz, you must arrange a makeup *before* the regularly-scheduled quiz date. Exceptions will be made only in the case of illness (with a doctor's note) or extreme circumstances. Incompletes will only be granted under extreme circumstances (e.g., verifiable illness), and with my explicit approval. Moreover, in these cases, both the student and I will need to complete the College of Liberal Arts Agreement for the Completion of Incomplete Work.

Electronic devices: While computers and smart phones greatly increase information-gathering, they can also harm your concentration and the concentration of those around you. This class is primarily discussion-based and requires less note-taking than other classes of this type. Because of this, please refrain from using electronic devices during class. Exceptions will be made for individuals with a relevant accommodation letter from Disability Services, or during in-class exercises that would be facilitated by internet use.

Class environment: This class focuses on contentious issues in political science during a particularly contentious time in US politics overall. We won't avoid controversial discussions when they arise, and it's acceptable to share personal political opinions if they are relevant to the discussion. As we will learn in class, political objectivity seems to be a myth. Civility, on the other hand, is definitely achievable. Please be respectful of other people's beliefs, experiences, and identities. As the instructor, I reserve the right to stop or redirect a discussion if it is becoming detrimental to any student's ability to learn.

Requirements

A) Reading and Participation: 30%

This class will rely heavily on participation. It is crucial that you attend every class having completed and thought about the reading assignment. The participation grade will be made up of in-class activities and your contribution to group-related discussions and assignments. If participation and discussion is low or it is apparent that many students are not doing the reading assignments, additional in-class quizzes of the reading material will be given and will count towards the participation grade.

There are 2 formal components of this grade: participating in short surveys meant to give you first-hand experience in political psychology, and discussion questions.

(1) Short Surveys

Occasionally you will be asked to complete short surveys when they are relevant to topics discussed in class. These will be announced in class and by email. If you miss a class period, it is your responsibility to ensure that you are not missing a survey as well. Your individual answers will not be discussed in class, but you will be required to send proof of completion before the following class period.

(2) Discussion Questions

On the first day, I will organize the class into three groups: A, B, and C. On the days your group is assigned, you will each be responsible for bringing in at least 1 discussion question about that week's readings. I will be collecting these discussion questions for use during class, so please type and print them. These questions should focus on clarifying things from that day's reading that were not clear, posing critical questions about limits or assumptions of theory or empirics, or thinking about the implications of what you read for current events or other theories you have encountered in other classes.

B) Quizzes (3): 10% each

There will be three short quizzes on the sections of class. Each quiz will constitute 10% of your grade. Please note the dates for each quiz: 06/27, 07/13, 07/27. The quiz will take place at the beginning of class on these dates and will cover the readings between the last quiz and that date.

C) Short Papers (2) (20% each)

You are required to write 2 short papers. Each of these papers will apply a theory that we discussed in class to a current event (either the 2016 Presidential Election or another developing political event). You have a choice of what theory and event to use, but your topic must be approved prior to writing the paper.

Paper proposal: 1-2 paragraphs.

Short paper: 5-6 pages, double spaced, Times New Roman, 1-inch margins. See handout for additional information and guidelines.

Due dates:

Paper 1 proposal: 6/29

Paper 1: 7/8, by midnight

Paper 2 proposal: 7/27

Paper 2: 8/3

Be prepared to discuss your papers or proposals in class.

Grading Scale:

93-100 A	90-92 A-
87-89 B+	83-86 B
80-82 B-	77-79 C+
73-76 C	70-72 C-
67-69 D+	60-66 D
0-59 F	

Readings: We will read the following books, available at the University bookstore or other internet book retailers.

1) John R. Hibbing, Kevin B. Smith, and John R. Alford. 2014. *Predisposed: Liberals, Conservatives, and the Biology of Political Differences*. Routledge Press.

2) Donald R. Kinder and Cindy D. Kam. 2009. *Us Against Them*. The University of Chicago Press.

All other readings are available on Moodle or through JSTOR.

Class Schedule and Reading Assignments

June 13: Introduction

Predisposed pgs. 12-19

Krosnick, Jon A. "Is political psychology sufficiently psychological? Distinguishing political psychology from psychological political science." *Thinking about political psychology* (2002): 187-216.

June 15: The Biology of Political Differences part 1

Group A

Predisposed Chapters 1-3

June 20: The Biology of Political Differences part 2

Group B

Predisposed Chapters 4-6

June 22: The Biology of Political Differences part 3

Group C

Predisposed Chapters 7-9

June 27: Heuristics, **Quiz 1**

Group A

Tversky, Amos, and Daniel Kahneman. "Causal schemas in judgments under uncertainty." *Progress in social psychology* 1 (1980): 49-72.

Huddy, Leonie, and Nayda Terkildsen. "The consequences of gender stereotypes for women candidates at different levels and types of office." *Political Research Quarterly* 46.3 (1993): 503-525.

June 29: Motivated Reasoning, **Paper 1 proposal due**

Group B

Kunda, Ziva. "The case for motivated reasoning." *Psychological bulletin* 108.3 (1990): 480-498.

Jost, John T., Erin P. Hennes, and Howard Lavine. "Hot" political cognition: Its self-, group-, and system serving purposes." *Oxford handbook of social cognition* (2013): 851-875.

July 4: **NO CLASS**

July 6: Affect and Emotion

Group C

Lodge, Milton, and Charles S. Taber. *The rationalizing voter*. Cambridge University Press, 2013. Chapters 1 and 6.

Valentino, Nicholas A., et al. "Election night's alright for fighting: The role of emotions in political participation." *The Journal of Politics* 73.01 (2011): 156-170.

July 8: **Paper 1 due** by midnight

July 11: Implicit attitudes

Group A

Banaji, Mahzarin R., and Anthony G. Greenwald. *Blindspot: Hidden biases of good people*. Delacorte Press, 2013. Chapters 3 and 4.

Lai, Calvin K., et al. "Reducing implicit racial preferences: I. A comparative investigation of 17 interventions." *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General* 143.4 (2014): 1765-1785.

July 13: Embodiment, **Quiz 2**

Group B

Helzer, Erik G., and David A. Pizarro. "Dirty liberals! Reminders of physical cleanliness influence moral and political attitudes." *Psychological science* 22.4 (2011): 517-522.

Danziger, Shai, Jonathan Levav, and Liora Avnaim-Pesso. "Extraneous factors in judicial decisions." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 108.17 (2011): 6889-6892.

July 18: Social identity part 1

Group C

Us Against Them Introduction, Chapters 1-3

July 20: Social Identity part 2

Group A

Us Against Them Chapters 4, 7-8

July 25: Social Identity part 3

Group B

Us Against Them Chapters 9-10, Conclusion

July 27: Is psychology universal? **Paper 2 proposal due**

Group C

Henrich, Joseph, Steven J. Heine, and Ara Norenzayan. "The weirdest people in the world?." *Behavioral and brain sciences* 33.2-3 (2010): 61-83.

Chapter 1 of Haidt, Jonathan. *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion*. 2012.

Dunham, Yarrow, Eva E. Chen, and Mahzarin R. Banaji. "Two signatures of implicit intergroup attitudes: developmental invariance and early enculturation." *Psychological Science* 24.6 (2013): 860-868.

August 1: The replication crisis, **Quiz 3**

Open Science Collaboration. "Estimating the reproducibility of psychological science." *Science* 349.6251 (2015): aac4716.

Feldman Barrett, Lisa. "Psychology is not in Crisis." *New York Times* (2015).

(http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/01/opinion/psychology-is-not-in-crisis.html?_r=0)

Earp, Brian D. "Psychology Is Not in Crisis? Depends on What You Mean by 'Crisis.'" *Huffington Post* (2015).

(http://www.huffingtonpost.com/brian-earp/psychology-is-not-in-crisis_b_8077522.html)

August 3: Topics TBA, **Paper 2 due**

Policy Statements for Syllabi

Student Conduct Code:

The University seeks an environment that promotes academic achievement and integrity, that is protective of free inquiry, and that serves the educational mission of the University. Similarly, the University seeks a community that is free from violence, threats, and intimidation; that is respectful of the rights, opportunities, and welfare of students, faculty, staff, and guests of the University; and that does not threaten the physical or mental health or safety of members of the University community.

As a student at the University you are expected adhere to Board of Regents Policy: *Student Conduct Code*. To review the Student Conduct Code, please see:

http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/Student_Conduct_Code.pdf.

Note that the conduct code specifically addresses disruptive classroom conduct, which means "engaging in behavior that substantially or repeatedly interrupts either the instructor's ability to teach or student learning. The classroom extends to any setting where a student is engaged in work toward academic credit or satisfaction of program-based requirements or related activities."

Use of Personal Electronic Devices in the Classroom:

The University establishes the right of each faculty member to determine if and how personal electronic devices are allowed to be used in the classroom. For complete information, please reference: <http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/STUDENTRESP.html>.

Scholastic Dishonesty:

You are expected to do your own academic work and cite sources as necessary. Failing to do so is scholastic dishonesty. Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering, forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis. If it is determined that a student has cheated, he or she may be given an "F" or an "N" for the course, and may face additional sanctions from the University. For additional information, please see:

<http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/INSTRUCTORRESP.html>.

The Office for Student Conduct and Academic Integrity has compiled a useful list of Frequently Asked Questions pertaining to scholastic dishonesty:

<http://www1.umn.edu/oscai/integrity/student/index.html>. If you have additional questions, please clarify with your instructor for the course.

Makeup Work for Legitimate Absences:

Students will not be penalized for absence during the semester due to unavoidable or legitimate circumstances. <http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/MAKEUPWORK.html>.

Appropriate Student Use of Class Notes and Course Materials:

Taking notes is a means of recording information but more importantly of personally absorbing and integrating the educational experience. However, broadly disseminating class notes beyond the classroom community or accepting compensation for taking and distributing classroom notes undermines instructor interests in their intellectual work product while not substantially furthering instructor and student interests in effective learning. Such actions violate shared norms and standards of the academic community. For additional information, please see:

<http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/STUDENTRESP.html>.

Grading and Transcripts:

The University utilizes plus and minus grading on a 4.000 cumulative grade point scale. The two grading systems used are the ABCDF and S-N. Political science majors and minors must take POL courses on the ABCDF system. An S grade is the equivalent of a C- or better. Inquiries regarding grade changes should be directed to the course instructor. Extra work in an attempt to raise a grade can only be submitted with the instructor's approval. For additional information, please refer to:

<http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/GRADINGTRANSCRIPTS.html>.

Incompletes:

The instructor will specify the conditions, if any, under which an "Incomplete" will be assigned instead of a grade. No student has an automatic right to an incomplete. The instructor may set dates and conditions for makeup work.

Sexual Harassment

"Sexual harassment" means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or academic environment in any University activity or program. Such behavior is not acceptable in the University setting. For additional information, please consult Board of Regents Policy:

<http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/SexHarassment.pdf>

Equity, Diversity, Equal Opportunity, and Affirmative Action:

The University provides equal access to and opportunity in its programs and facilities, without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. For more information, please consult Board of Regents Policy:

http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/Equity_Diversity_EO_AA.pdf.

Disability Accommodations:

The University of Minnesota is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The Disability Resource Center is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations. If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical), please contact DS at 612-626-1333 to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.

If you are registered with DS and have a current letter requesting reasonable accommodations, please contact your instructor as early in the semester as possible to discuss how the accommodations will be applied in the course.

For more information, please see the DS website, <https://diversity.umn.edu/disability/>.

Mental Health and Stress Management:

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance and may reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. University of Minnesota services are available to assist you. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Student Mental Health Website: <http://www.mentalhealth.umn.edu>.

Academic Freedom and Responsibility:

Academic freedom is a cornerstone of the University. Within the scope and content of the course as defined by the instructor, it includes the freedom to discuss relevant matters in the classroom. Along with this freedom comes responsibility. Students are encouraged to develop the capacity for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for truth. Students are free to take reasoned exception to the views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled.

Reports of concerns about academic freedom are taken seriously, and there are individuals and offices available for help. Contact the instructor, the Department Chair, your adviser, the associate dean of the college, or the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs in the Office of the Provost.

Students are responsible for class attendance and all course requirements, including deadlines and examinations. The instructor will specify if class attendance is required or counted in the grade for the class.