

Political Psychology POL 339  
Prerequisites required: POL 101 or Permission from Instructor  
M/W/F 1pm, Maybank Hall Room 315  
Professor: Karyn Amira  
Office: Political Science Department Office 301, Office Hours: M/W 2-4  
Contact: [amiraka@cofc.edu](mailto:amiraka@cofc.edu)

**Course Description and Student Learning Outcomes:** This course is designed to offer you a lens through which to view human nature and why it functions the way that it does. That lens is the psychological underpinnings of political life. The course objectives and student learning outcomes are as follows: A) Be able to understand micro-level processes that affect politics such as cognition, emotions and political attitudes as well as macro-level processes such as group behavior and societal influence. B) Have a general understanding of different ways to study political psychology empirically. C) Be able to analyze the competency and rationality of the American public when it comes to political decision-making, thinking and behavior. **These learning outcomes will be assessed in Test I, Test II, Test III and the final paper (see below).**

**Attendance Policy:** Attendance and participation counts towards 10% of your grade. This is NOT an insignificant amount and could affect what grade you receive. Attendance will be taken in the beginning of the semester to make sure that students are showing up, per the school's attendance verification policy.

**Readings:** Readings can be found in OAKS as well as the book *Thinking Fast and Slow* by Daniel Kahneman. Even though this book is a best-seller and easy to digest, most of the work in political psych comes from *academic journals*. I have tried to minimize these readings but some are unavoidable. *I do not expect you to understand the statistics in these journal articles.* However, you should comprehend what the studies did and how they went about their research generally. Readings will be covered on tests so I strongly recommend reading them on time and writing a short paragraph summary to study from instead of waiting until the night before a test and cramming them.

**Exams:** There are three exams instead of two. This means there will be less material on each.

**Quizzes:** There will be 6 very straightforward pop quizzes that will assess reading comprehension of that night's reading material. They are each worth 1 point- if you have done the reading, you'll smoke these quizzes. Any student who misses a quiz will receive a zero. There are no makeup quizzes but I will drop your lowest quiz grade so only your best 5 count.

**Statement Paper:** You will have one paper assignment due on the last day of class. For this paper you will need to use class material to make a final statement about whether the American public is politically competent and capable of making informed, rational decisions about political matters. More detailed instructions will be given later in the course.

### **Grading Scale for Final Semester Grades**

100-94 A	79-77 C+	59-0 F
93-90 A-	76-74 C	
89-87 B+	73-70 C-	
86-84 B	69-67 D+	
83-80 B-	66-60 D	

### **Grading Breakdown by Percentage:**

Test I: 20%	Final Paper: 25%
Test II: 20%	5 (best) Quizzes 5%
Test III: 20%	Participation: 10%

**Late Assignments, Incompletes, Extensions and Make-Up Exams:** Late assignments will be docked 5 percent per day (half letter grade), for each day that a project is late (including weekends). There will be no make-up exams and I will not grant incompletes in the course, except in cases of emergency or where university policy applies. Doctor's notes are expected for medical excuses. If you miss an exam without a valid excuse, you will receive a zero.

**Office Hours:** Having trouble? Have questions? Come on by. I promise it will be helpful.

**Laptop Policy:** No laptops in class. Trust me, you will learn more.

**Syllabus Policy:** I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus if necessary.

**Course Evaluation Statement:** You will have the opportunity to evaluate the course towards the end of the semester through an online evaluation system. I will remind you to bring laptops that day so they can be done during the final class.

## **ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE**

### **INTRO**

Wed. Aug 24 Introduction/What is Political Psych? Micro vs. Macro level trends

Friday Aug 26: Research Methods for Political Psych

- *How to Read a Psych Article*
- *The Coddling of the American Mind (From The Atlantic):*  
<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/09/the-coddling-of-the-american-mind/399356/>

### **COGNITION**

Monday Aug 29 Rationality, Dual Process Models, Affect and Motivated Reasoning 1

Wednesday Aug 31 Affect and Motivated Reasoning 2

- *Thinking Fast and Slow Chapters 1-4 (book)*
- *The Rationalizing Voter Chapter 1*

Friday Sept. 2 Affect and Motivated Reasoning 2

- *Thinking Fast and Slow Chapters 5-9 (book)*
- *Rationalizing Voter Chapter 2 (up until page 59)*

Monday Sept 5 Heuristics I

Wednesday Sept 7 Heuristics II

- *Thinking Fast and Slow Chapters 10-16 (book)*

Friday Sept 9 Heuristics III

- “No, Good Looks Don’t Win Elections”: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2013/11/13/no-good-looks-dont-win-elections/>
- Ahler et al., “Can Your Face Win You Votes?” (read up to the middle of page 10) This article is more or less a response to the “No, Good Looks Don’t Win Elections” article.

## **PARTISANSHIP**

Monday Sept 12 Origins of Partisanship **\*\*\*READING DUE TODAY\*\*\***

- *The American Voter Revisited Chapter 7*

Wednesday Sept 14 Partisanship as a Social Identity

- *In US, New Record 43% are Political Independents:* <http://www.gallup.com/poll/180440/new-record-political-independents.aspx>
- *Washington Post: Why Do People Call Themselves Independent Even When They’re Not?* <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2014/01/10/why-people-call-themselves-independent-even-when-they-arent/>

Friday Sept 16: **NO CLASS. PROFESSOR OUT OF TOWN**

Monday Sept 19 The Power of Party ID and Partisan Cues

## **IDEOLOGY**

Wed. Sept 21 What is Ideology and How Do We Measure It?

- *Reading TBD*

Friday Sept 23 Moral Foundations Theory

- *Go Online and Take the Moral Foundations Questionnaire:* <http://www.yourmorals.org>
- *Graham et al., “Liberals and Conservatives Rely on Different Sets of Moral Values”*

Monday Sept 26 Motivated Social Cognition

**\*\*\*Wednesday Sept 28 TEST 1 \*\*\***

## AUTHORITARIANISM

Friday Sept 30 Early Studies of Authoritarianism

- *Altemeyer, Enemies of Freedom Chapters 1 and 3*

Monday Oct 3 Contemporary Studies of Authoritarianism **\*\*\*READING DUE TODAY\*\*\***

- *Stenner, The Authoritarian Dynamic pages 13-25*

Wednesday Oct 5 Contemporary Studies of Authoritarianism

- *Hetherington and Suhay, Authoritarianism, Threat and Americans' Support for the War on Terror*

Friday Oct 7 Authoritarianism in the 2016 Election

- *The Rise of American Authoritarianism* <http://www.vox.com/2016/3/1/11127424/trump-authoritarianism>

## EMOTIONS

Monday Oct 10 Affective Intelligence I

Wednesday Oct 12 Affective Intelligence II

- *Brader, Striking a Responsive Chord: How Political Ads Motivate and Persuade Voters by Appealing to Emotions*

Friday Oct 14 Irrelevant Events

- *MacKuen and Marcus, The Affect Effect*
- *Watch: Ted Talk: [https://www.ted.com/talks/paul\\_piff\\_does\\_money\\_make\\_you\\_mean](https://www.ted.com/talks/paul_piff_does_money_make_you_mean)*

## PERCEPTIONS

Monday Oct. 17 Candidate Issue Perception I

Wednesday Oct 19 Candidate Issue Perception II

- *Abramowitz, The Impact of a Presidential Debate on Voter Rationality*

Friday Oct 21 Candidate Trait Perception

- *The American Voter Revisited Chapter 3: Perceptions of the Parties and Candidates*

## GROUPTHINK AND SOCIAL CONFORMITY WEEK

**\*\*\*Monday Oct 24 TEST 2\*\*\***

Wednesday October 26 Groupthink I

- *Janis, The Groupthink Syndrome*
- *Janis, The Perfect Failure: The Bay of Pigs*

Friday Oct 28 Pluralistic Ignorance

- *Prentice and Miller, “Pluralistic Ignorance and Alcohol Use on Campus: Some Consequences of Misperceiving the Social Norm”*

## **PRIMING AND ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCE WEEK**

Monday Oct 31 Priming Introduction

Wednesday Nov 2 Priming in the Voting Environment

- *Listen to (or read) this story on NPR:*  
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=91822707>  
*Then, read the actual research behind the study:*  
<http://www.pnas.org/content/105/26/8846.full.pdf>

Friday Nov 4 Visceral Fit

- *Risen, J. L., & Critcher, C. R. Visceral Fit: While in a Visceral State, Associated States of the World Seem More Likely*

## **SOCIAL NORMS WEEK**

Monday Nov 7 **NO CLASS. FALL BREAK. THE ELECTION IS TOMORROW!**

Wednesday Nov 9 How to Study Social Norms with Field Experiments

- *Cialdini and Trost, “Social Influence: Norms, Conformity and Compliance” (pages 151 until the “Summary” section of page 162)*

Friday Nov 11 Using Field Experiments in Psychology Work

- *Cialdini, “A Focus Theory of Normative Conduct: Recycling the Concept of Norms to Reduce Littering in Public Places*

Monday Nov 14 Norms and Voter Turnout

## **PREJUDICE AND RACISM**

Wednesday Nov 16 Racism Introduction

Friday Nov 18 Implicit vs. Explicit Measures of Racism

- *Sears, “Symbolic Racism”*
- *Go online and take the “Race IAT” and 1 other IAT of your choice at the following website <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/research/>*

## **PREJUDICE AND RACISM CONTINUED**

Monday Nov 21 Implicit Racism in Elections **\*\*\*READING DUE TODAY\*\*\***

- *Mendelberg, *The Race Card* Chapters 5 and 6*

Wednesday Nov 23 & Friday Nov 25: **NO CLASS. THANKSGIVING BREAK**

Monday Nov 28 Racism at the Elite Level **\*\*\*READING DUE TODAY\*\*\***

- Butler and Broockman, *Do Politicians Discriminate Against their Constituents?*

## **GROUP CONFLICT**

Wednesday Nov 30 Group Conflict I

Friday Dec. 2 Group Conflict II

- *Sherif, M. Super Ordinate Goals in the Reduction of Intergroup Conflict.*

Monday Dec 5: Group Conflict III: Resolution Strategies and End of Class Wrap Up

**\*\*\*READING DUE TODAY\*\*\***

- *Bartels, "The Irrational Electorate"*

## **COURSE POLICIES**

### *Disabilities Accommodation Statement:*

1. Any student eligible for and needing accommodations because of a disability is requested to speak with me during the first two weeks of class or as soon as the student has been approved for services so that reasonable accommodations can be arranged.
2. The College will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students should apply for services at the Center for Disability Services/SNAP located on the first floor of the Lightsey Center, Suite 104. Students approved for accommodations are responsible for notifying me as soon as possible and for contacting me one week before accommodation is needed.
3. This College abides by section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you have a documented disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see an administrator at the Center of Disability Services/SNAP, (843) 953-1431 or me so that such accommodation may be arranged.

### *Academic Honesty Statement:*

Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when identified, are investigated. Each incident will be examined to determine the degree of deception involved.

Incidents where the instructor determines the student's actions are related more to a misunderstanding will be handled by the instructor. A written intervention designed to help prevent the student from repeating the error will be given to the student. The intervention, submitted by form and signed both by the instructor and the student, will be forwarded to the Dean of Students and placed in the student's file.

Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported directly by the instructor and/or others having knowledge of the incident to the Dean of Students. A student found responsible by the

Honor Board for academic dishonesty will receive a XF in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty. This grade will appear on the student's transcript for two years after which the student may petition for the X to be expunged. The F is permanent. The student may also be placed on disciplinary probation, suspended (temporary removal) or expelled (permanent removal) from the College by the Honor Board.

Students should be aware that unauthorized collaboration--working together without permission-- is a form of cheating. Unless the instructor specifies that students can work together on an assignment, quiz and/or test, no collaboration during the completion of the assignment is permitted. Other forms of cheating include possessing or using an unauthorized study aid (which could include accessing information via a cell phone or computer), copying from others' exams, fabricating data, and giving unauthorized assistance.

Research conducted and/or papers written for other classes cannot be used in whole or in part for any assignment in this class without obtaining prior permission from the instructor.

Students can find the complete Honor Code and all related processes in the *Student Handbook* at: <http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/honorsystem/studenthandbook/index.php>

#### *Center for Student Learning*

I encourage you to utilize the Center for Student Learning's (CSL) academic support services for assistance in study strategies, speaking & writing skills, and course content. They offer tutoring, Supplemental Instruction, study skills appointments, and workshops. Students of all abilities have become more successful using these programs throughout their academic career and the services are available to you at no additional cost. For more information regarding these services please visit the CSL website at <http://csl.cofc.edu> or call (843)953-5635.