

## **POL 339: Special Topics: Political Psychology**

Prerequisites required: POL 101 or Permission from Instructor

M/W/F 1pm, Maybank Hall Room 316

Professor: Karyn Amira

Office: Political Science Department Office 301, Office Hours: M/W 2-4

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**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 including chapters from 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. They will be at the very beginning of class meaning you must show up on time in order to take the quiz, which should last about 2 minutes. 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.

### Schedule

#### **INTRO**

#### **Wednesday Aug 23: Introduction/What is Political Psych?**

- *No reading*

#### **Friday Aug 25: Research Methods for Political Psych I**

- *The Coddling of the American Mind:*  
<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/09/the-coddling-of-the-american-mind/399356/>
- *Campus Inquisitions Must Stop:*  
[https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/03/opinion/sunday/bruni-campus-inquisitions-evergreen-state.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/03/opinion/sunday/bruni-campus-inquisitions-evergreen-state.html?_r=0)

#### **Monday Aug 28 Research Methods for Political Psych II**

- *How to Read a Psych Article*

## COGNITION

### **Wednesday Aug 30 Rationality, Dual Process Models**

- *No reading*

### **Friday Sept 1 Affect and Motivated Reasoning 1**

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

### **Monday Sept 4 Affect and Motivated Reasoning II**

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

### **Wednesday Sept 6 Heuristics I**

- *Thinking Fast and Slow Chapters 10-16*

### **Friday Sept 8 Heuristics II**

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

## PARTISANSHIP

### **Monday Sept 11 Origins of Partisanship**

- *No reading*

### **Wednesday Sept 13 Partisanship as a Social Identity**

- *In US, New Record 43% are Political Independents:*  
<http://www.gallup.com/poll/180440/new-record-political-independents.aspx>
- *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 15 NO CLASS**

### **Monday Sept 18 The Power of Party ID and Partisan Cues**

- *Reading TBD*

## IDEOLOGY

### **Wednesday Sept 20 What is Ideology and How Do We Measure It?**

- *No reading*

### **Friday Sept 22 Moral Foundations Theory**

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

**Monday Sept 25 Motivated Social Cognition**

- *Reading TBD*

**Wednesday Sept 27 TEST 1**

**AUTHORITARIANISM**

**Friday Sept 29 Authoritarianism I**

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

**Monday Oct 2 Authoritarianism II**

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

**Wednesday Oct 4 Contemporary Studies of Authoritarianism**

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

**Friday Oct 6 Authoritarianism III: The 2016 Election**

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

**EMOTIONS**

**Monday Oct 9 NO CLASS. PROFESSOR OUT OF TOWN.**

**Wednesday Oct 11 Affective Intelligence I**

- *Affective Intelligence- Disposition vs. Surveillance (read from pg 44-64)*

**Friday Oct 13 Affective Intelligence II**

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

**Monday Oct 16 FALL BREAK**

**Wednesday Oct 18 Irrelevant Events**

- *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**

**Friday Oct 20 Candidate Issue Perception I**

- *No reading*

**Monday Oct 23 Monday Oct. 17 Candidate Issue Perception II**

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

**Wednesday Oct 25 Candidate Trait Perception**

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

**Friday Oct 27 TEST II**

**GROUPTHINK AND SOCIAL CONFORMITY**

**Monday Oct 30 Groupthink**

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

**Wednesday Nov 1 Pluralistic Ignorance**

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

**SOCIAL NORMS**

**Friday Nov 3 Norms I**

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

**Monday Nov 6 Norms II**

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

**Wednesday Nov 8 Norms III: Voter Turnout**

- *No Reading*

**PRIMING AND ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCE WEEK**

**Friday Nov 10 Priming Introduction**

**Monday Nov 13 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>

**Wednesday Nov 15 Visceral Fit**

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

**PREJUDICE AND RACISM**

**Friday Nov 17 Racism Introduction**

**Monday Nov 20 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/>*

**Wednesday Nov 22 THANKSGIVING. NO CLASS**

**Friday Nov 24 THANKSGIVING. NO CLASS**

**Monday Nov 27 Implicit Racism in Elections**

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

**Wednesday Nov 29 Racism at the Elite Level**

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

**GROUP CONFLICT**

**Friday Dec 1 Group Conflict I**

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

**Monday Dec 4 Group Conflict II & Class Wrap Up**

- *Bartels, "The Irrational Electorate"*
- *Final papers are due in class today*