Introduction to Political Psychology (POLI SCI 206)

Spring 2018

Professor Jonathan Renshon
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Office location: North Hall 410
Office hours: Tuesday (10:45am – 11:45am)

Course Description

This course is a 3-credit undergraduate lecture (class # 53998). It meets for two 75-minute class periods each week over the Spring semester and carries the expectation that students will work on course learning activities (reading, writing, problem sets, studying, etc) for about 3 hours out of classroom for every class period.

This course is the undergraduate introduction to Political Psychology. No background in political science or psychology is required, though those that do have experience in these areas are, of course, welcome and appreciated. The goal of the course is to introduce you to some of the major topics and questions in Political Psychology, such as:

- Where do our political beliefs come from?
- How do we decide who to vote for?
- How do emotions affect us? Should emotions affect our beliefs and actions?
- Are some types of personalities better suited to be President?
- Is it possible to “psychologically profile” dictators?
- How do our leaders decide whether to go to war?

Along the way, as we delve into these and other topics, we will discuss methodology, and learn about how different approaches can yield different (and sometimes conflicting) answers. Most classes will be based around a lecture, with some small group discussion from time to time.

Students who closely and carefully engage course readings, attend and participate in class discussion, and complete course assignments will be able to:

- Explain important concepts and arguments made by prominent scholars in political psychology
- Analyze political psychology theories, both historical and contemporary
• Assess political psychological theories on several dimensions (including evidence and theoretical rigor)

• Apply course concepts to analysis of contemporary political and psychological debates

2 Guidelines

For this specific class:

• I expect to make small changes to the reading list throughout the term. Whenever I make changes especially worth noting, I’ll send an announcement via e-mail.

• If you have a question, or want to know if a reading is available, please check the course website on Canvas for any announcements and download the latest copy of the syllabus before emailing.

• If you ever have any questions, or are confused about something, please do not hesitate to come to office hours and meet with me. Please also consider making an appointment just to introduce yourself and tell me how the course is going. Office hours are Tuesdays between 10:45am-11:45am, but also by appointment. Use this website to make an appointment for office hours and guarantee a spot: Calendly scheduler. If you are unavailable at that time due to a conflict with another class, you can email me to schedule an appointment.

• You are responsible for the readings listed under each class.

• In terms of exams, you are responsible for all of the readings and anything discussed in class.

• I agree entirely with the University’s institutional statement on inclusion and diversity, and value the contributions of each person and respect the ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich our intellectual community. https://diversity.wisc.edu.

• Accommodations will be made for those students who have documented proof of an emergency or those students who have documented evidence of learning disabilities. I am firmly committed to ensuring equal learning access for all and therefore encourage individuals with disabilities to participate in the McBurney Center’s available programs and activities. If you need an accommodation, you must contact the center at (608) 263-2741 or email them at mcburney@studentlife.wisc.edu to obtain documentation for your specific needs. I ask that you seek accommodation as soon as possible and contact me in advance to make appropriate arrangements for papers, etc.

• I strictly adhere to the UW Academic Misconduct Process and will report all incidents of academic misconduct the Dean of Students Office, as it is a prerequisite for maintaining academic integrity in our course.

• If you have any questions about anything related to the course, email me and I will do my best to get back to you within 24 hours.

• One exception: I will not respond to emails sent the night before an assignment is due or before a midterm or final exam.

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Some general guidelines that probably apply to any class you take:

- Do the readings in preparation for each class. If you miss one, don’t ignore it and move on, but make an effort to catch up.
- Come to class on time.
- It’s fine to use a computer to take notes, but please don’t bring your computer so you can write emails and read the news during class (it’s much more obvious than you realize).
- There are legitimate reasons to miss class, but if you must, please email me ahead of time to let me know. This is just something you should be in the habit of doing in life.

3 Assignments

1. Discussion questions

   - Each class (except for the very first meeting!), you will be expected to submit one discussion question on any of the readings assigned for that day by no later than midnight the evening before class (so, each week on Monday and Wednesday) via the course’s Canvas dropbox. Remember, the submissions to the dropbox are time-stamped and late ones will not count. They can be a clarification question or a substantive question on the assigned readings, or a broader question about themes that have come up in the course.

2. You will be (randomly) assigned to one class’ “Application reading” over the course of the semester. You will:

   - Prepare a **1 page summary** of the article that you will upload to the Canvas website and circulate to your classmates (this will come in handy for everyone when it’s time to study!). Due before class begins.

   - Write a **3 page response paper** on the article (5 page maximum). Due in the Canvas Dropbox folder before class begins that day.

   - Walk the class through your 1 page summary on that day.

     ⇒ *These are individual assignments* and you must work on them by yourself. Collaboration is not allowed, even if more than one person is assigned to a specific reading.

     ⇒ If you would like to switch assignments with another student, you may work that out amongst yourselves. *Any switches require an email notifying me of the change, with the other student cc’d.*

3. Two Midterm exams and one Final exam

   - The two midterms are not cumulative, but the final exam is.

   - For the exams, you need to know the last names of all of the authors whose works are assigned in this course. If I ask about Milgram, you need to know what Milgram did.
• If you think that your exam has been graded in error, email me within seven days of the date on which exams were handed back in class. The email must contain a description of which answers you feel were graded in error and why, and request an appointment to discuss in person. Of course, if I regrade your exam, your grade may go down as easily as it might go up.

• If you are absent from an exam and do not have a good reason, your absence will not be excused. You'll get a 0 for the exam.

4 Grading

Your final grade will be composed of:

• 25% - Class Participation
  → discussion questions 5%
  → response paper + 1 page summary 10%
  → participation and misc. in-class activities/assignments 10%

• 20% - In-class Midterm # 1 (February 20th)

• 20% - In-class Midterm # 2 (March 22nd)

• 35% - Final Exam (May 8th)

5 Readings

Journal articles and edited book chapters - Available through the [UW Library website](https://uwlibrary.wisc.edu). Another, easier way to access them is to use scholar.google.com. The first time you use it, click on “Settings,” then “Library Links” and choose UW-Madison. Every time you look up an article title after that, it will provide you a direct link to download that article.

Anything not accessible through these sources will have a link next to it on the syllabus to enable you to download a scanned copy (email me if there are problems!).

Textbooks - Readings will be available online.

1. *Introduction to Political Psychology* (2nd ed.), Martha L. Cottam, Beth Dietz-Uhler, Elena Mastors & Thomas Preston (Taylor & Francis, 2010).

   ⇒ Abbreviation on list of reading(s): ITPP.


   ⇒ Abbreviation on list of reading(s): PP.

⇒ Abbreviation on list of reading(s): **OHPP**.
Schedule

1. Introduction: What is Political Psychology?
[January 23]
   • ITPP Chapter 1: Political Psychology: Introduction and Overview, pp. 1-12 [link]

2. Decision-Making I: Rationality
[January 25]
   • Rationality as Process and as Product of Thought (1978), Herbert A. Simon, American Economic Review 68/2: 1-16
   • ITPP (Part of) Chapter 3: Cognition, Identity, Emotions and Attitudes, pp. 39-43 [link]

3. Decision-Making II: Prospect Theory
[January 30]

   Application reading:

4. Decision-Making III: Groupthink
[February 1]
   • Selections from Groupthink (1982), Irving Janis (Wadsworth Publishing):
     – Why so many miscalculations?, pp. 2-13. [link]
     – The Groupthink Syndrome, pp. 174-197. [link]

   Application reading:
   • Selection from Groupthink (1982), Irving Janis (Wadsworth Publishing):
5. Decision-Making IV: Designing Decision Structures
   [February 6]
   - Selections from *Presidential Decisionmaking in Foreign Policy: The Effective Use of Information and Advice*, Alexander George (Westview Press, CO)
     - The President and His Advisers: Structure, Internal Processes, and Management of Small Groups, pp. 81-108. [link]
     - Multiple Advocacy, pp. 191-208. [link]
     - The Devil’s Advocate: Uses and Limitations, pp. 169-174. [link]

   *Application reading:*

6. Interlude: Measurement and causal inference
   [February 8]

   *Application reading:*

7. Interlude: When can you trust the social sciences?
   [February 13]
   - Cargo Cult Science (1974), Richard P. Feynman. Excerpts from a Caltech commencement address. [link]

   *Application reading:*
• Was There Really a Hawthorne Effect at the Hawthorne Plant? An Analysis of the Original Illumination Experiments (2009), Steven D. Levitt and John A. List, NBER Working Paper. [link]

8. MIDTERM REVIEW (In-class)
   [February 15]

9. IN CLASS MIDTERM # 1
   [February 20]

10. CLASS CANCELLED
    [February 22]

11. Where do Political Preferences Come from?
    [February 27]

   Application reading:

12. Ideology and Belief Systems
    [March 1]
    • PP: The Nature of Beliefs Systems in Mass Publics, Philip E. Converse, pp. 181-199 [link]
13. Priming and Framing

[March 6]


**Application reading:**

- **PP:** Altering the Foundations of Support for the President Through Priming, John A. Krosnick & Donald R. Kinder, pp. 150-162 [link]

14. Emotions (I)

[March 8]

- Affect and Emotion (2009), in *Political Psychology: Situations, Individuals and Cases*, David Patrick Houghton (Routledge), pp. 132-142 [link]


**Application reading:**


15. Emotions (II)

[March 13]

**Application readings:**

• It’s My Campaign and I’ll Cry if I Want To: How and When Campaigns Use Emotional Appeals (2011), Travis N. Ridout & Kathleen Searles, *Political Psychology* 32/3: 439-458

16. Personality & Politics I: The Big 5  
**[March 15]**


*Application reading:*


17. MIDTERM REVIEW (In-class)  
**[March 20]**

18. IN CLASS MIDTERM # 2  
**[March 22]**

19. Personality & Politics II: Moral Foundations Theory  
**[April 3]**


*Application reading:*


20. CLASS CANCELLED  
**[April 5]**
21. Personality & Politics III: The Authoritarian Personality and Social Dominance
[April 10]


Application reading:


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22. Personality & Politics IV: Values and Trade-offs
[April 12]

- **OHPP**: Values, Ideology, and the Structure of Political Attitudes, Stanley Feldman, pp. 477-510

Application reading:


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23. Presidential Character and Personality
[April 17]

- Selections from *Presidential Character: Predicting Performance in the White House* (1992), James Barber (Prentice-Hall Press):
  - Presidential Character and How to Forsee It, pp. 1-11
  - Three Tragic Tales, pp. 12-47
  - The Active-Negative Presidents, ONLY pp. 48-53

Application reading:


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24. The Psychology of Terrorism
[April 19]
25. Psychology & IR I: Background and an Application to Cuban Missile Crisis
   [April 24]
   - The Cuban Missile Crisis (2012) in Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases; Graham Allison; edited by Steve Smith, Amelia Hadfield and Tim Dunne (Oxford University Press), pp. 256-283. [link]

   Application reading:

26. Psychology & IR II: Learning from History
   [April 26]
     - Analogical Reasoning in Foreign Affairs: Two Views, pp. 3-18. [link]
     - The AE Framework, pp. 19-46. [link]

   Application reading:
   - Selection from Analogies at War:
     - Dien Bien Phu, pp. 148-173. [link]

27. Psychology & IR IV: Decision-Making in Wartime
   [May 1]

*Application reading:*


28. Review & Discussion of Final Exam
   [May 3]

⇒ **Final Exam**: Tuesday, May 8, 5:05pm-7:05pm, Location TBD