1 Course Description

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.

2 Guidelines

For this specific class:

- If you have a question, or want to know if a reading is available, please check the course website on Learn@UW 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 11:00am and noon, but also by appointment. Use this website to make an appointment for office hours and guarantee a spot: [https://calendar.wisc.edu/scheduling-assistant/public/profiles/jSWjsloX.html](https://calendar.wisc.edu/scheduling-assistant/public/profiles/jSWjsloX.html). 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.

• If you have a disability or circumstance that could affect your performance, please contact me early within two weeks of the beginning of the semester so that we can consider accommodations. The McBurney Center for Disability Services can provide official documentation of disabilities.

• Academic misconduct is not tolerated. Please make sure you are familiar with the policies outlined by the Dean of Students.

• 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.

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 have 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, 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 Learn @ UW course 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. One response paper (2-3 pages)

- You can do this assignment anytime, but must complete one paper by the end of the semester. They are due in the Learn @ UW Dropbox folder before class begins that day. You may select two or more readings to discuss for this assignment. To complete the assignment, you will need to (1) summarize the reading(s) in no more than 2-3 paragraphs (2) provide an argument of some kind. The argument may concern a substantive critique (do you agree with the argument(s) put forth in the readings?) or a methodological one (is there something about the way the evidence was provided that was lacking?). It may also be an application of an argument to current politics. Be as concrete as possible!

3. Election Project! (Group Presentation)

- In late September/early October, you will be assigned to one of several groups, with each group asked to evaluate a question related to political psychology and the presidential election. The end result of your work will be a group presentation of about 15 minutes to the class. Your goal will be to communicate and explain the topic or concept and apply it to understanding something about the presidential election (for example, whether and how televised debates affect who citizens vote for). November 8 and 10 are class days set aside for your presentations and we will also set aside some class time in the weeks before to help you prepare. You will also turn in a document that details the sources you used for your presentation and gives a synopsis of your presentation. More details will follow in a separate document.

4. Midterm exam

5. Final exam

4 Grading

Your final grade will be composed of:

- 30% - Class Participation (includes response paper + discussion questions)
- 20% - Group presentation
- 20% - In-class Midterm (October 18th)
- 30% - Final Exam (December 17th)

5 Readings Used in the Course

Journal articles and edited book chapters - Available through the [UW Library website](http://library.wisc.edu) Another, easier way is to use [scholar.google.com](https://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 from these 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?
   [September 6]
   - **ITPP** Chapter 1: Political Psychology: Introduction and Overview, pp. 1-12 [link]

2. How do you measure beliefs and perceptions?
   [September 8]

3. Where do Political Preferences Come from?
   [September 13]
4. Bounded Rationality
[September 15]

- ITPP (Part of) Chapter 3: Cognition, Identity, Emotions and Attitudes, pp. 39-43 [link]

5. Ideology and Belief Systems
[September 20]


6. Priming and Framing
[September 22]

- PP: Altering the Foundations of Support for the President Through Priming, John A. Krosnick & Donald R. Kinder, pp. 150-162 [link]
7. Emotions (I)  
[September 27]

- Affect and Emotion (2009), in Political Psychology: Situations, Individuals and Cases, David Patrick Houghton (Routledge), pp. 132-142 [link]
- Anxiety, Enthusiasm and the Vote: The Emotional Underpinnings of Learning and Involvement During Presidential Campaigns (1993), George E. Marcus & Michael B. MacKuen, American Political Science Review 87/3: 163-176

8. Emotions (II)  
[September 29]

- 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

9. Personality & Politics I: The Big 5  
[October 4]


10. Personality & Politics II: Moral Foundations Theory  
[October 6]


11. Personality & Politics III: The Authoritarian Personality and Social Dominance  
[October 11]  
Optional readings:  
• “Trump Appeals to the Authoritarian Within.” [link]

12. MIDTERM REVIEW  
[October 13]

13. IN CLASS MIDTERM  
[October 18]

14. CLASS CANCELLED  
[October 20]

15. Personality & Politics IV: Values and Trade-offs  
[October 24]  
• OHPP: Values, Ideology, and the Structure of Political Attitudes, Stanley Feldman, pp. 477-510 [link]  
16. Presidential Character and Personality  
[October 26]

- 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 [link]
  - Three Tragic Tales, pp. 12-47 [link]
  - The Active-Negative Presidents, ONLY pp. 48-53 [link]


17. Psychological Profiling of Leaders  
[November 1]

- Selections from *The Psychological Assessment of Political Leaders* (2005), edited by Jerrold M. Post (University of Michigan Press, MI):
  - Leader Personality Assessments in Support of Government Policy, Jerrold Post, pp. 39-61 [link]
  - Saddam Hussein of Iraq: A Political Psychology Profile, Jerrold M. Post, pp. 335-366 [link]

18. Prospect Theory  
[November 3]


19. Presentations!  
[November 8]
20. Presentations cont’d.
   [November 10]

21. Groupthink
   [November 15]
   • Selections from *Groupthink* (1982), Irving Janis (Wadsworth Publishing):
     - Why so many miscalculations?, pp. 2-13. [link]
     - A Perfect Failure: The Bay of Pigs, pp. 14-47. [link]
     - The Groupthink Syndrome, pp. 174-197. [link]

22. Decision-Making Structures
   [November 17]
   • Group Decision-Making (2009), in *Political Psychology: Situations, Individuals and Cases*, David Patrick Houghton (Routledge), pp. 69-82 [link]
   • 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]

23. CLASS CANCELLED
   [November 22]

24. Happy thanksgiving!
   [November 24]

25. The Psychology of Terrorism
   [November 29]
   • PP: The Psychology of Political Terrorism, Martha Crenshaw, pp. 411-431 [link]
   • Selections from *The Mind of the Terrorist: The Psychology of Terrorism from the IRA to al-Qaeda*, Jerrold M. Post (Palgrave-Macmillan, NY)
26. Psychology & IR I: Background and an Application to Cuban Missile Crisis
[December 1]


27. Psychology & IR II: Learning from History
[December 6]

  - Analogical Reasoning in Foreign Affairs: Two Views, pp. 3-18. [link]
  - The AE Framework, pp. 19-46. [link]
  - Dien Bien Phu, pp. 148-173. [link]

28. Psychology & IR III: Physical and Mental Illness
[December 8]

- Selections from *Presidential Leadership, Illness and Decisionmaking* (2007), Rose McDermott (Cambridge University Press):
  - Aging, Illness and Addiction, pp. 19-44. [link]
  - The Exacerbation of Personality: Woodrow Wilson, pp. 45-83. [link]

29. Psychology & IR IV: Decision-Making in Wartime
[December 13]


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30. Review & Discussion of Final Exam

[December 15]

⇒ Final Exam: Saturday, December 17, 10:05am-12:05pm