1 Course Description

This is a graduate course on psychological approaches to International Relations (IR). This course does not require a background in psychology or political psychology. It is designed around substantive topic areas (e.g., reputation, personality, emotions) which we will focus on each week. Though this is not a “History of...” course, through the readings you will likely pick up on the broad patterns of scholarship in political psychology over the last 50 years. The larger methodological issues around political psychology and IR (how do you study this? what tradeoffs do the various approaches entail?) will form a backdrop to most of our discussions.

The ultimate goal of the course is to end the semester with a paper that is of publishable quality (or well on its way, at least). The paper must bear in some way on psychological approaches, but this gives you quite a bit of latitude and we can work together to pick a topic that make the most sense for you. If you are considering an experiment, but can’t actually run the experiment during the semester, you may turn in a paper minus the results section.

Responsibility for helping to guide discussions will rotate among pairs of students each class, and at the end of the semester, students will turn in their own papers, as well as a peer review of another student’s paper. The last class of the semester will consist of presentations made by students (something like a 10 minute conference presentation).

2 Guidelines and Grading

- Grading is A-F (i.e., not pass/fail), and is based on a combination of class participation, your presentation and your written work (your paper as well as your manuscript review).

- The goal for this course is to come out of it with something useful: a chapter of your dissertation, a draft of an article, etc. Feel free to meet with me as soon as you begin to have an idea of what you’d like to work on for your written project.

- If you ever have any questions, or are confused about something, please do not hesitate to come to office hours and meet with me or email me. Office hours are Tuesdays between 10:30-11:45am, and you can make an appointment at the following website: https://calendar.wisc.edu/scheduling-
If you are unavailable at that time, you can email me to schedule an appointment.

3 Assignments & Grading

• 30% – Participation (includes 2-3x discussion leader for class)
  → each week a pair of students will serve as discussion leaders; sign up first day of class

• 40% – Final paper
  → 1 page proposal due Tuesday, February 21st; final paper due Friday, May 5th

• 15% – Presentation of your research

• 15% – Manuscript Review
  → due Friday, May 12th

4 Required Books

All the books should be available in the library, though of course, you may wish to purchase some (time to start thinking about building up your library!). All of the journal articles should be available online through the UW library website. If not, I will send or post scanned copies.

5 Overview of Schedule

**Week 1:** Overview

**Week 2:** Personality/Character

**Week 3:** Worldviews/Belief Systems

**Week 4:** Information Processing

**Week 5:** Prospect Theory

**Week 6:** CANCELLED

**Week 7:** Emotions

**Week 8:** Group Decision-Making

**Week 9:** Evolutionary Approaches

**Week 10:** Biological & Neuro-scientific Approaches

**Week 11:** Reputation & Resolve

**Week 12:** Status & Hierarchy

**Week 13:** Leaders in IR I

**Week 14:** Leaders in IR II

**Week 15:** Presentations
Schedule

1. Introduction/Course Overview/Rationality
   [January 17]

2. Psychodynamic Approaches/Personality/Character
   [January 24]
Additional Readings:


3. Worldviews/Belief Systems

   [January 31]


Additional Readings:


4. Information Processing

[February 7]


Additional Readings:


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5. Prospect Theory

[February 14]


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**Additional Readings:**


6. NO CLASS
   *February 21*

7. Emotions
   *February 28*

Additional Readings:


8. Group Decision-Making

[March 7]

- Saunders, E. N. Leaders, advisers, and the political origins of elite support for war. Working Paper
- Saunders, E. N. (2017). No substitute for experience: Presidents, advisers, and information in group decision-making. *International Organization*
9. Evolutionary Approaches

[March 14]


10. Biological & Neuroscientific Approaches

[March 28]

11. Reputation & Resolve

[April 4]


Additional Readings:

- Kertzer, J. D. Experimental micro-foundations for resolve in military interventions. International Organization
12. Status & Hierarchy

[April 11]


**Additional Readings:**


13. Leaders in IR

[April 18]


14. Leaders in IR II

[April 25]


15. PRESENTATIONS

[May 2]