

PSCI 4221: POLITICAL PSYCHOLOGY

Spring 2020

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Class Meeting: T&TH 9:30-10:45 AM

Classroom: CLRE 207

Office Hours: F 2-4 PM

Office: KTCH 211

Hello and welcome to Political Psychology! In this course, we will investigate how people think and feel about politics. We will consider the role of underlying psychological processes on shaping political behavior of both citizens and elites. We will start with a birds-eye overview of political psychology as a discipline. We will look at how scholars have answered questions in this field. Then we will dive into the psychological roots of political behavior. We will pay special attention to the role socialization, personality, and genetics play in citizens' and elites' decision-making process. From there, we will focus on the mechanisms of how people structure their political beliefs and make political decision. We will investigate topics such as emotion, cognition, bias, and persuasion. Finally, we will look at political psychology of groups. We will study reasons why people dislike others, the psychological origins of political conflicts, and the pathways to compromise and cooperation.

REQUIRED TEXT

There is no dedicated textbook for this course. Instead, the readings include a selection of journal articles and book chapters which you can access via the course Canvas website. Please complete your reading assignments before class. Also, please bring you readings with you as we will regularly discuss their contents during class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS¹

In this course, assignments are handled differently from what you might be used to. You, rather than I, will decide what work you will complete. Bear in mind the following two simple rules:

1. You must earn at least 50 percent of the points allocated to each individual assignment, otherwise you will get no credit for the assignment.
2. Once the due date for an assignment has passed, you may no longer complete that assignment.

Take-Home Exams

- *Exam 1*: A multiple-choice and essay exam covering course material in Section 1 of the course (50 points possible).
- *Exam 2*: A multiple-choice and essay exam covering course material in Section 2 of the course (75 points possible).
- *Exam 3*: A multiple-choice and essay exam covering course material in Section 3 of the course (75 points possible).

Discussion Leadership

You will choose one class from the course schedule during which you want to lead the discussion. You will collaborate with me at planning the discussion questions and activities, and then you will moderate your fellow students. **Note:** If you want to include this as a component of your grade, you must do so by the end of **Week 2** of the semester. Each student can only be a discussion leader once.

¹ With deepest thanks to Weimer (2013) and Dr. Jennifer Wolak (University of Colorado Boulder) for guidance and inspiration in preparation of this syllabus.

- *Preparation:* You must meet with me at least once before the class during which you are scheduled to lead the discussion. We will brainstorm discussion question and activities for your peers (25 points).
- *Moderation:* Your time to shine! Ask questions, offer counter points, introduce alternative explanations, etc. (50 points).

Literature Review (150 points)

I will ask you to write an essay that assesses the current literature on a political psychology topic of your choosing (pending my approval). This essay should be eight to ten double-spaced pages in length and will be due at the end of the semester. The central goal of this paper will be to assess and summarize the research about a particular political science topic: to identify the central question or questions, highlight the most important literature related to the topic, and comment about the strengths and weaknesses of the current research in the area. Further details are outlined on a separate handout.

Learning Log (15 points possible per entry)

In this assignment, I encourage you to explore your personal relation to the course contents. You will write each log entry in response to a specific prompt. Entries should be two pages long (double-spaced). The due dates for entries are listed on the course calendar. You may write as many entries as you would like. However, after the due date passes, you may no longer submit that entry.

I will grade the entries according to these criteria: (1) completeness (i.e., are you answering all the questions in the prompt?); (2) insight and reflection (i.e., is your response thoughtful?); (3) convincing argument (i.e., do you provide sufficient support for your conclusions?); (4) course content integration (i.e., are you connecting the course material to your response).

Participation

As a class, you will author the participation policy for this course, as well as criteria by which I will assess your contribution to the class. **Note:** You cannot add participation as an assignment option after **Week 2** of the semester.

- *Participation Grade:* Determined by the criteria established by the class (50 points possible).
- *Analysis Paper:* You will also submit a five-page typed paper, split into three installments. See the course calendar for the specific due dates (25 points possible).
 - *Part 1 (one page):* React to and assess the class-generated policy. Generate your participation goals for the course.
 - *Part 2 (three pages):* I will randomly pair you with another student who chose participation as part of their final grade. One page of this installment will be your letter to your designated partner, in which you provide them with feedback on their participation as you observed it. The other two pages will consist of your mid-course progress report.
 - *Part 3 (one page):* You will write a final report assessing your participation in the course. I will provide you a detailed handout describing this assignment later.
 - **Note:** You must complete all three installments in order to earn the participation points.

Bonus Points

- *Attendance:* I will take attendance on several unannounced days, randomly distributed during the semester. Those present will receive 5 bonus points (up to a maximum of 25 points).
- I reserve the right to add further bonus points opportunities throughout the semester at my discretion.

Consider the following tips as you are planning your game plan for this course:

- Circle the assignments you are considering and total the possible points.
- Be realistic and honest. The probability of you receiving perfect scores on all assignment is not very high.
- Compare your total with the scale listed below.
- Plan to do enough assignments to get the points you need for the grade that you desire.
- Keep track of your points over the course of the semester, in case you need to add more assignments.

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| Exam 1 | 50 points |
| Exam 2 | 75 points |
| Exam 3 | 75 points |
| Discussion Leadership | |
| • Discussion Preparation | 25 points |
| • Discussion Moderation | 50 points |
| Literature Review | 150 points |
| Learning Log: 5 entries @ 15 points each | 75 points |
| Participation | |
| • Participation Grade | 50 points |
| • Analysis Paper | 25 points |
| Bonus Points: Attendance | 25 points |
| TOTAL | 600 points |

Your final grade will be determined based on the following scale:

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|---------|-----------|---------|-----------|---------|-----------|---------|----------|-------|
| A+ | 380+ | B+ | 320-339 | C+ | 260-279 | D+ | 200-219 | | |
| A | 360-379 | B | 300-319 | C | 240-259 | D | 180-199 | F | 159-0 |
| A- | 340-359 | B- | 280-299 | C- | 220-239 | D- | 160-179 | | |

COURSE SCHEDULE²

| Date | Topic | Readings and Assignments |
|--|--|--|
| Section 1: Psychological Roots of Political Behavior | | |
| Week 1 Jan. 14 & 16 | <u>Political Socialization:</u> Introduction to the course and political psychology, socialization from parents and schools | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easton, D., & Dennis, J. (1965). The child's image of government. <i>The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science</i>, 361(1), 40-57. • Abendschön, S. (2017). Children and Politics. <i>American Behavioral Scientist</i>, 61(2), 163–166. |
| Week 2 Jan. 21 & 23 | <u>The Biological Roots of Political Behavior:</u> Nature vs. nurture, genetic explanations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alford, J. R., Funk, C. L., & Hibbing, J. R. (2005). Are political orientations genetically transmitted?. <i>American Political Science Review</i>, 99(2), 153-167. • Oxley, D. R., et al. (2008). Political attitudes vary with physiological traits. <i>Science</i>, 321(5896), 1667-1670. • Hatemi, P. K., Alford, J. R., Hibbing, J. R., Martin, N. G., & Eaves, L. J. (2009). Is there a “party” in your genes?. <i>Political Research Quarterly</i>, 62(3), 584-600. • Participation Analysis Paper, Part 1 due Jan. 24 at 11:59 PM on Canvas. |
| Week 3 Jan. 28 & 30 | <u>Conformity and Situational Pressures:</u> Social and situational pressures to conform, dispositions vs. situations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slater, L. (2005). <i>Opening Skinner's box: Great psychological experiments of the twentieth century</i>. WW Norton & Company. Chapter 2. • Gerber, A. S., Green, D. P., & Larimer, C. W. (2008). Social Pressure and Voter Turnout: Evidence from a Large-Scale Field Experiment. <i>American Political Science Review</i>, 102(1), 33-48. • Learning Log #1 due Jan. 31 at 11:59 PM on Canvas. |
| Week 4 Feb. 4 & 6 | <u>Personality:</u> Authoritarianism, citizen personality, presidential personality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carney, D. R., Jost, J. T., Gosling, S. D., & Potter, J. (2008). The secret lives of liberals and conservatives: Personality profiles, interaction styles, and the things they leave behind. <i>Political Psychology</i>, 29(6), 807-840. • Barber, J. D. (2009). <i>The Presidential Character: Predicting performance in the White House</i>. New York, NY: Routledge. Chapters 1 and 2. |
| Week 5 Feb. 11 & 13 | <u>Rationality and Altruism:</u> Assumptions of citizen rationality, self-interest, altruism | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monroe, K. R., & Maher, K. H. (1995). Psychology and Rational Actor Theory. <i>Political Psychology</i>, 16(1), 1-21. • Exam 1 available Feb. 13, 11:00 AM – Feb. 16, 11:59 PM on Canvas. • Literature review memo due Feb. 14, 11:59 PM on Canvas. |

² The schedule is always subject to change.

| Date | Topic | Readings and Assignments |
|--|---|--|
| Section 2: Political Psychology of Decision-Making | | |
| Week 6 Feb. 18 & 20 | <u>Emotion:</u> Feeling versus thinking, emotions, affect | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marcus, G. E., Neuman, W. R., & MacKuen, M. (2000). <i>Affective Intelligence and Political Judgment</i>. University of Chicago Press. Chapters 4 and 5. • Learning Log #2 due Feb. 21 at 11:59 PM on Canvas. |
| Week 7 Feb. 25 & 28 | <u>Political Cognition:</u> Memory, schemas, associative networks, information processing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graber, D. A. (2001). <i>Processing politics: Learning from television in the Internet age</i>. University of Chicago Press. Chapter 2. • Steenbergen, M. R., & Lodge, M. (2003). Process Matters: Cognitive Models of Candidate Evaluation. In M. B. MacKuen & G. Rabinowitz (Eds.), <i>Electoral democracy</i> (pp. 125–171). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press. |
| Week 8 Mar. 3 & 5 | <u>Political Decision-Making & Heuristics:</u> Inference, Heuristics, short cuts, civic competence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lodge, M., & Taber, C. S. (2013). <i>The Rationalizing Voter</i>. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1. • Thaler, R. H., & Sunstein, C. R. (2009). <i>Nudge: Improving decisions about health, wealth, and happiness</i>. Penguin. Chapter 1 and 5. • Participation Analysis Paper, Part 2 due Mar. 6 at 11:59 PM on Canvas. |
| Week 9 Mar. 10 & 12 | <u>Motivation and Bias:</u> Motivated reasoning, bias in decision-making | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taber, C. S., & Lodge, M. (2006). Motivated skepticism in the evaluation of political beliefs. <i>American Journal of Political Science</i>, 50(3), 755-769. • Nyhan, B., & Reifler, J. (2010). When corrections fail: The persistence of political misperceptions. <i>Political Behavior</i>, 32(2), 303-330. • Learning Log #3 due Mar. 13 at 11:59 PM on Canvas. |
| Week 10 Mar. 17 & 19 | <u>Persuasion:</u> Political persuasion, attitude change | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sears, D. O., & Whitney, R. E. (1973). Political Persuasion. In I. de Sola Pool, W. Schramm, F. W. Frey, N. Maccoby, & E. B. Parker (Eds.), <i>Handbook of Communication</i> (pp. 253–289). Chicago, IL: Rand McNally. • Exam 2 available Mar. 19, 11:00 AM – Mar. 22, 11:59 PM on Canvas. • Literature review bibliography due Mar. 20 at 11:59 PM on Canvas. |
| Week 11 Mar. 24 & 26 | <u>Spring Break:</u> No Class | |

| Date | Topic | Readings and Assignments |
|---|--|--|
| Section 3: Political Psychology of Groups | | |
| Week 12 Mar. 31 & Apr. 2 | <u>Group Identity:</u> Social identities, in-group/ out-group sentiments, nationalism, patriotism | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mlodinow, L. (2013). <i>Subliminal: How your unconscious mind rules your behavior</i>. Vintage. Chapter 8. • Iyengar, S., Sood, G., & Lelkes, Y. (2012). Affect, Not Ideology: A Social Identity Perspective on Polarization. <i>Public Opinion Quarterly</i>, 76(3), 405-431. • Learning Log #4 due Apr. 3 at 11:59 PM on Canvas. |
| Week 13 Apr. 7 & 9 | <u>Stereotypes & Prejudice:</u> Political Impressions and stereotypes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mlodinow, L. (2013). <i>Subliminal: How your unconscious mind rules your behavior</i>. Vintage. Chapter 7. • Devine, P. G. (1989). Stereotypes and prejudice: Their automatic and controlled components. <i>Journal of personality and social psychology</i>, 56(1), 5-18. • Issenberg, S. (2012, June 1). It All Comes Down to Race. <i>Slate</i>. Retrieved from https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2012/06/racialization-michael-teslers-theory-that-all-political-positions-come-down-to-racial-bias.html |
| Week 14 Apr. 14 & 16 | <u>Conflict:</u> Understanding the roots of group conflict | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green, D. P., & Wong, J. S. (2009). Tolerance and the Contact Hypothesis: A Field Experiment. In E. Borgida, C. M. Federico, & J. L. Sullivan (Eds.), <i>Political Psychology of Democratic Citizenship</i> (pp. 228–246). New York, NY: Oxford University Press. |
| Week 15 Apr. 21 & 23 | <u>Cooperation and Deliberation:</u> Social, political, and evolutionary roots of cooperation, deliberative decision-making | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Petersen, M. B. (2012). Social welfare as small-scale help: evolutionary psychology and the deservingness heuristic. <i>American Journal of Political Science</i>, 56(1), 1-16. • Sunstein, C. R. (2008). <i>Why Groups go to Extremes</i>. Washington, DC: AEI Press. Pages 1-25. • Learning Log #5 due Apr. 24 at 11:59 PM on Canvas. |
| Week 16 Apr. 28 & 30 | <u>Group Decision-Making:</u> Groupthink, quality of group decision-making | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Janis, I. L. (1982). <i>Groupthink: Psychological studies of policy decisions and fiascoes</i>. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Chapters 1 and 2. • Participation Analysis Paper, Part 3 due Apr. 30 at 11:59 PM on Canvas. |
| Week 17 | <u>Finals Week:</u> Get all of your remaining assignments in! | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exam 3 available May 2, 8:00 AM – May 5, 11:59 PM on Canvas. • Literature Review Papers due May 5 at 7:00 PM on Canvas. |

GENERAL COURSE AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES

In this class, we may occasionally discuss contentious topics about which you or others may have strong feelings. As such, for this section to be successful, there must always be a civil and open discourse on the topics at hand. This requires that each student shares their opinion, but does so in a respectful and informed way. Everyone should feel that their opinion is welcome in this class. Any personal attack against a fellow student or the instructor will not be tolerated.

A Note on Technology...

I strongly discourage the use of non-essential electronic devices in the classroom. This includes but is not limited to cell phones, MP3 players, gaming consoles, etc. All non-essential devices should be turned off or switched to silent and stowed away before the start of class. If you require access to your cell phone because of an ongoing emergency, please speak to me at the start of class to let me know. Failure to adhere to this policy may result in being asked to leave class and counted as absent. The use of non-essential electronic devices in class distracts both the user of the technology and those around the users.

You may use tablets or laptops to take notes in class, as long as you do not use them for other purposes. However, you may want to try taking your notes by hand, as research points to clear benefits for doing so (*see* Mueller and Oppenheimer (2014)'s article on why the "Pen is Mightier than the Keyboard").

Accommodation for Disabilities

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](#). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) under the Students tab on the Disability Services website.

Classroom Behavior

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. For more information, see the policies on [classroom behavior](#) and the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Honor Code

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code. Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code (honor@colorado.edu); 303-492-5550). Students who are found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the Honor Code academic integrity policy can be found at the [Honor Code Office website](#).

Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to fostering a positive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct, intimate partner abuse (including dating or domestic violence), stalking, or protected-class discrimination or harassment by members of our community. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct or retaliatory actions for reporting a concern should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127 or cureport@colorado.edu. Information about the OIEC, university policies, [anonymous reporting](#), and the campus resources can be found on the [OIEC website](#).

Please know that faculty and instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when made aware of incidents of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment and/or related retaliation, to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about options for reporting and support resources.

Religious Holidays

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, please inform me at least two (2) full weeks in advance of your absence so we can devise a mutually agreeable accommodation.

See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.

NORMS TO ADOPT TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN THIS COURSE (AND IN COLLEGE)

- 1) **Read the syllabus closely; it is required reading after all.** Almost everything you need to know about every class is in the syllabus. If you have a question about assignments and deadlines, consult the syllabus and do not email me until you have checked to see if the answer is in there. You are responsible for keeping track of the syllabus.
- 2) Related to #1, **do not ask me when I hold office hours.** My office hours are listed on the first page of the syllabus. For this class, if you cannot make my office hours, feel free to set up an individual appointment by emailing me three times you can meet. I will pick one of those three.
- 3) **Check your email and Canvas regularly.** I will often convey important information about coursework over email or via Canvas. It is important that you check your email every day, and Canvas at least once every two days. Not having seen a message about an assignment or an important deadline is not an acceptable excuse for missing that assignment or deadline.
- 4) **Emails constitute professional correspondence.** They should be formatted as a letter, with a greeting and a sign-off. You should tell me in the subject line the reason for the email. I will not respond to emails that read like text messages or are missing principle grammar components such as punctuation marks.
- 5) **Ask classmates about work missed if you are absent from class.** Do not ask me first. It is a common pet peeve among instructors when students ask them about missed work.
- 6) With the few exceptions outlined in the syllabus – i.e., documented illness, university activities cleared by me in advance, and religious holidays – **I do not allow make-ups for missed assignments.**
- 7) **MOST IMPORTANTLY:** Always come to class with assigned reading materials and a notebook for taking notes. It's a good habit to get into, and it shows that you are taking the material seriously.