

political psychology

PLS 920 001
FALL 2021
MONDAY/WEDNESDAY, 3:00-4:20 P.M.
SOUTH KEDZIE S104

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OFFICE HOURS: WEDNESDAYS, 1-3 P.M.
318 SOUTH KEDZIE

In this course, we will consider how people think and feel about politics, investigating the psychological underpinnings of the political behavior of citizens. We will start with an overview of the field of political psychology and some of the ways that questions in this field are answered. Next, we will study the psychological roots of political behavior, and the contributions of influences such as socialization, personality, and genes to how citizens and political leaders make decisions. From there, we will consider the mechanisms of how people construct political beliefs and determine political choices, investigating topics such as emotion, cognition, partisan bias, and persuasion. Finally, we will study political psychology of groups, considering the power of social identity, the reasons why people dislike other groups, the psychological roots of political conflict, and the routes to cooperation and tolerance.

READING ASSIGNMENTS

Course readings will be drawn from several texts as well as journal articles. Book chapters will be accessible via the course website. Journal articles can be accessed through the library.

- DeSante, Christopher D., and Candis Watts Smith. 2020. *Racial Stasis: The Millennial Generation and the Stagnation of Racial Attitudes in American Politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Hetherington, Marc J., and Jonathan D. Weiler. 2009. *Authoritarianism and Polarization in American Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press. (available at library as ebook)
- Kahneman, Daniel. 2011. *Thinking, Fast and Slow*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.
- Kinder, Donald R., and Nathan P. Kalmoe. 2017. *Neither Liberal Nor Conservative: Ideological Innocence in the American Public*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Marcus, George E., W. Russell Neuman, and Michael B. MacKuen. 2000. *Affective Intelligence and Political Judgment*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Pérez, Efrén O. 2021. *Diversity's Child: People of Color and the Politics of Identity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ramirez, Mark D., and David A.M. Peterson. 2020. *Ignored Racism: White Animus Toward Latinos*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. New York: Cambridge University Press. (available at library as ebook)
- recommended: Huddy, Leonie, David O. Sears, and Jack S. Levy. 2013. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*. 2nd edition. New York: Oxford University Press.

DZL IS YOUR FRIEND

This syllabus, assignments, and other exciting material can be accessed on the class website on d2l.msu.edu.

REQUIREMENTS

PARTICIPATION (40% of your final grade)

One important prerequisite of participation is class attendance. Class attendance is vital and required.

It is essential to read all of the assigned readings and think carefully about what you have read in advance of the class session. Your education and our class discussion will both benefit from your careful reading of the articles as well as the time you spend in advance of class reflecting on what you have read and learned.

You will also be expected to actively participate in class discussions in a thoughtful way.

LEADERSHIP OF CLASS DISCUSSION (15% of your final grade)

For three weeks during the semester, you will be responsible for leading class discussion. Your goal is to ensure that the class engages in thoughtful reflection about what we can learn from that week's readings.

How you do this is up to you (and your fellow discussion leader). Your grade will reflect the quality of your preparation, as well as the quantity and quality of class discussion you generate. You will be asked to turn in a short memo outlining your plan for discussion leadership for each session you lead.

RESEARCH PAPER (worth 45% of your final grade)

You will also be asked to develop a research paper that tests an interesting question about political psychology. This paper should follow the format of the kinds of academic papers read in class – including development of a research question, a review of relevant literature, theory, tests of these explanations, and interpretation of what you find. Expectations for the research paper are outlined in a separate handout.

ACCOMMODATIONS

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please let me know in a timely manner so that your needs may be met. You can contact the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities for more information at www.rcpd.msu.edu.

SOME IMPORTANT COMMENTS ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Plagiarism and other academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. If you are not familiar with the rules of citing sources in written work or what constitutes plagiarism, you should refer to ombud.msu.edu/resources-self-help/academic-integrity. Academic dishonesty will result in an F in the course and possible additional non-academic sanctions.

All papers are expected to be original work, not previously or simultaneously handed in for credit in another course (unless prior approval of all instructors involved is obtained).

political psychology

1. ABOUT POLITICAL PSYCHOLOGY

Wednesday, September 1 and Wednesday, September 8

Introduction to the course and the study of political psychology

- Huddy, Leonie, David O. Sears, and Jack S. Levy. 2013. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*. 2nd edition. New York: Oxford University Press. Chapter 1.
- Rahn, Wendy M., John L. Sullivan, and Thomas J. Rudolph. 2002. "Political Psychology and Political Science." In James H. Kuklinski, ed., *Thinking about Political Psychology*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

2. POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION

Monday, September 13 and Wednesday, September 15

Parental socialization, the role of schools, how we develop our political orientations

- Sears, David O., and Christia Brown. 2013. "Childhood and Adult Political Development." In Leonie Huddy, David O. Sears, and Jack S. Levy, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*. 2nd edition. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Oxley, Zoe M., Mirya R. Holman, Jill S. Greenlee, Angela L. Bos, and J. Celeste Lay. 2020. "Children's Views of the American Presidency." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 84(1): 141–157.
- Jennings, M. Kent, Laura Stoker, and Jake Bowers. 2009. "Politics across Generations: Family Transmission Reexamined." *Journal of Politics* 71:782–799.
- Fox, Richard, and Jennifer Lawless. 2014. "Uncovering the Origins of the Gender Gap in Political Ambition." *American Political Science Review* 108:499–519.
- Campbell, David E., and Richard G. Niemi. 2016. "Testing Civics: State-Level Civic Education Requirements and Political Knowledge." *American Political Science Review* 110(3): 495–511.
- Bruch, Sarah K., and Joe Soss. 2018. "Schooling as a Formative Political Experience: Authority Relations and the Education of Citizens." *Perspectives on Politics* 16(1): 36–57.

3. BIOLOGICAL ROOTS OF BEHAVIOR

Monday, September 20 and Wednesday, September 22

Genetics and the roots of political behavior, physiological response, evolutionary origins of political behavior

- Funk, Carolyn L. 2013. "Genetic Foundations of Political Behavior." In Leonie Huddy, David O. Sears, and Jack S. Levy, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*. 2nd edition. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Alford, John R., Carolyn L. Funk, and John R. Hibbing. 2005. "Are Political Orientations Genetically Transmitted?" *American Political Science Review* 99:153–167.

- Oxley, Douglas R., Kevin B. Smith, John R. Alford, Matthew V. Hibbing, Jennifer L. Miller, Mario Scalora, Peter K. Hatemi, and John R. Hibbing. 2008. "Political Attitudes Vary with Physiological Traits." *Science* 321:1667-1670.
- Kam, Cindy D. 2019. "Infectious Disease, Disgust, and Imagining the Other." *Journal of Politics* 81(4): 1371-1387.
- Holbein, John B., Jerome P. Schafer, and David L. Dickinson. 2019. "Insufficient Sleep Reduces Voting and Other Prosocial Behaviours." *Nature Human Behaviour* 3:492-500.
- Petersen, Michael Bang. 2012. "Social Welfare as Small-Scale Help: Evolutionary Psychology and the Deservingness Heuristic." *American Journal of Political Science* 56:1-16.

4. PERSONALITY

Monday, September 27 and Wednesday, September 29

Political personality among citizens and elites, the Big Five personality traits, authoritarianism

- Gerber, Alan S., Gregory A. Huber, David Doherty, and Conor M. Dowling. 2011. "The Big Five Personality Traits in the Political Arena." *Annual Review of Political Science* 14:265-287.
- Hetherington, Marc J., and Jonathan D. Weiler. 2009. *Authoritarianism and Polarization in American Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

5. IDEOLOGY AND ORGANIZING BELIEFS

Monday, October 4 and Wednesday, October 6

Ideology and the structure of political beliefs

- Feldman, Stanley. 2013. "Political Ideology." In Leonie Huddy, David O. Sears, and Jack S. Levy, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*. 2nd edition. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Converse, Philip E. 1964. "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics." In David Apter, ed. *Ideology and Discontent*. New York: The Free Press.
- Conover, Pamela Johnston, and Stanley Feldman. 1981. "The Origins and Meaning of Liberal/Conservative Self-Identifications." *American Journal of Political Science* 25:617-645.
- Kinder, Donald R., and Nathan P. Kalmoe. 2017. *Neither Liberal Nor Conservative: Ideological Innocence in the American Public*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

6. INFORMATION PROCESSING

Monday, October 11 and Wednesday, October 13

Memory, associative networks, information processing, impression formation, the role of information in evaluation

- Steenbergen, Marco R., and Milton Lodge. 2003. "Process Matters: Cognitive Models of Candidate Evaluation." In Michael B. MacKuen and George Rabinowitz, eds., *Electoral Democracy*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1-5.
- Lodge, Milton, Marco R. Steenbergen, and Shawn Brau. 1995. "The Responsive Voter: Campaign Information and the Dynamics of Candidate Evaluation." *American Political Science Review* 89:309-326.

7. INFERENCE AND HEURISTICS

Monday, October 18 and Wednesday, October 20

Inference, heuristics, short cuts, peripheral vs. central processing

- Lupia, Arthur. 1994. "Shortcuts Versus Encyclopedias: Information and Voting Behavior in California Insurance Reform Elections." *American Political Science Review* 88(1): 63-76.
- Kahneman, Daniel. 2011. *Thinking, Fast and Slow*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.
- Sheffer, Lior, Peter John Loewen, Stuart Soroka, Stefaan Walgrave, and Tamir Sheafer. 2018. "Nonrepresentative Representatives: An Experimental Study of the Decision Making of Elected Politicians." *American Political Science Review* 112:302-321.

8. EMOTIONS

Monday, October 25 and Wednesday, October 27

Emotions and their consequences

- Brader, Ted, and George E. Marcus. 2013. "Emotion and Political Psychology." In Leonie Huddy, David O. Sears, and Jack S. Levy, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*. 2nd edition. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Marcus, George E., W. Russell Neuman, and Michael B. MacKuen. 2000. *Affective Intelligence and Political Judgment*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- MacKuen, Michael, Jennifer Wolak, Luke Keele, and George Marcus. 2010. "Civic Engagements: Resolute Partisanship or Reflective Deliberation." *American Journal of Political Science* 54:440-458.

9. MOTIVATION AND BIAS

Monday, November 1 and Wednesday, November 3

Motivated reasoning, bias in decision-making

- Kunda, Ziva. 1990. "The Case for Motivated Reasoning." *Psychological Bulletin* 108(3):480-498.
- Taber, Charles S., and Milton Lodge. 2006. "Motivated Skepticism in the Evaluation of Political Beliefs." *American Journal of Political Science* 50(3):755-769.
- Taber, Charles S., and Milton Lodge. 2016. "The Illusion of Choice in Democratic Politics: The Unconscious Impact of Motivated Political Reasoning." *Political Psychology* 37: 61-85.
- Iyengar, Shanto, and Sean J. Westwood. 2015. "Fear and Loathing across Party Lines: New Evidence on Group Polarization." *American Journal of Political Science* 59: 690-707.
- Peterson, Erik, and Shanto Iyengar. 2021. "Partisan Gaps in Political Information and Information-Seeking Behavior: Motivated Reasoning or Cheerleading?" *American Journal of Political Science* 65: 133-147.
- Groenendyk, Eric, and Yanna Krupnikov. 2021. "What Motivates Reasoning? A Theory of Goal-Dependent Political Evaluation." *American Journal of Political Science* 65:180-196.

10. PERSUASION AND ATTITUDE CHANGE

Monday, November 8 and Wednesday, November 10

Political persuasion, attitude change

- Sears, David O., and Richard E. Whitney. 1973. "Political Persuasion." In Ithiel de Sola Pool, Wilbur Schramm, Frederick W. Frey, Nathan Maccoby, and Edwin B. Parker, eds., *Handbook of Communication*. Chicago: Rand McNally. p. 253-263.
- Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 6-9.
- Bullock, John G. 2011. "Elite Influence on Public Opinion in an Informed Electorate." *American Political Science Review* 105:496-515.
- Basinger, Scott J., and Howard Lavine. 2005. "Ambivalence, Information, and Electoral Choice." *American Political Science Review* 99:169-184.

11. SOCIAL IDENTITY

Monday, November 15 and Wednesday, November 17

Social identities, in-group/out-group sentiments

- Huddy, Leonie. 2013. "From Group Identity to Political Cohesion and Commitment." In Leonie Huddy, David O. Sears, and Jack S. Levy, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*. 2nd edition. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Tajfel, Henri, and John C. Turner. 1986. "The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior." In Stephen Worchel and William G. Austin, eds. *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*. Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Pérez, Efrén O. 2021. *Diversity's Child: People of Color and the Politics of Identity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

12. PREJUDICE AND RACISM

Monday, November 22 and Wednesday, November 24

Understanding the roots of prejudice and group conflict, racialization and discrimination

- Kinder, Donald R. 2013. "Prejudice and Politics." In Leonie Huddy, David O. Sears, and Jack S. Levy, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*. 2nd edition. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Devine, Patricia G. 1989. "Stereotypes and Prejudice: Their Automatic and Controlled Components." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 56:5-18.
- DeSante, Christopher D., and Candis Watts Smith. 2020. *Racial Stasis: The Millennial Generation and the Stagnation of Racial Attitudes in American Politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

13. MORE ABOUT PREJUDICE

Monday, November 29 and Wednesday, December 1

Prejudice against other groups, ethnocentrism

- Ramirez, Mark D., and David A.M. Peterson. 2020. *Ignored Racism: White Animus Toward Latinos*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Beauvais, Edana. Forthcoming. "The Political Consequences of Indigenous Resentment." *Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Politics*.

- Kalkan, Kerem Ozan, Geoffrey C. Layman, and Eric M. Uslaner. 2009. "'Bands of Others'? Attitudes toward Muslims in Contemporary American Society." *Journal of Politics* 71(3): 847-862.

14. PROMOTING COOPERATION AND REDUCING PREJUDICE

Monday, December 6 and Wednesday, December 8

Origins of political tolerance, limiting prejudice, routes to cooperative outcomes

- Hibbing, John R. and John R. Alford. 2004. "Accepting Authoritative Decisions: Humans as Wary Cooperators." *American Journal of Political Science* 48: 62-76.
- Paluck, Elizabeth Levy. 2009. "Reducing Intergroup Prejudice and Conflict Using the Media: A Field Experiment in Rwanda." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 96(3):574-87.
- Simonovits, Gábor, Gábor Kézdi, and Péter Kardos. 2018. "Seeing the World Through the Other's Eye: An Online Intervention Reducing Ethnic Prejudice." *American Political Science Review* 112:186-93.
- Munger, Kevin. 2017. "Tweetment Effects on the Tweeted: Experimentally Reducing Racist Harassment." *Political Behavior* 39:629-649.
- Kalla, Joshua L., and David E. Broockman. 2020. "Reducing Exclusionary Attitudes through Interpersonal Conversation: Evidence from Three Field Experiments." *American Political Science Review* 114(2): 410-25.