

**The University of Georgia**  
**School of Public and International Affairs**  
**Department of Political Science**

POLS 4400: Political Psychology  
Summer 2020  
Short Session I  
June 5<sup>th</sup> – July 1<sup>st</sup>

Instructor: Dr. Alexa Bankert

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Office Hours: By appointment. Available via Zoom.

### **Course Description and Objective**

This course examines what social and cognitive psychology can tell us about political phenomena. We will go beyond describing what happened in politics and instead identify explanations for why we observe certain political behaviors by studying individual-level psychological processes. For example, why and how do people identify with certain groups such as political parties? How do people form political attitudes and how do they make political decisions, especially in the absence of sufficient knowledge? You will be introduced to various theories as well as their empirical evidence that aim to explain these processes in the U.S. and beyond. Throughout the course, you will also be introduced to experimental methods as a tool to conduct and evaluate research in political psychology.

When this course is over, you should have a general understanding of four things:

1. Individual-level processes that affect political behavior such as cognition, emotions, and personality.
2. Intergroup relations and their impact on political behavior such as group identity, prejudice, and discrimination.
3. Different ways to study political psychology empirically.

### **Course Structure**

The course will be taught asynchronously which means that we will not have live meetings, but rather I will post materials and you will have some control over when you engage with them. There will still be regular deadlines, however you will have some

control over when you complete them. The class is divided into **seven short units**, each of which will consist of readings, some form of individual or group assignment, and/or an open-book/open-note quiz. Please refer to the course schedule below for details on assignments deadlines.

### **Fair Warning**

This class requires a substantial amount of reading and writing. Please accept this as an inevitable truth.

### **Feeling Lost?**

I will strive to make sure that the course is understandable and that assignments and exams are manageable. If you have any questions about the course content, structure, or assignments **please do not hesitate to contact me**. This is especially important because of how quickly we will cover material during the summer session and due to the online delivery of our material. If you email me before 5pm, you can expect an answer on the same day. If you email me after 5pm, I will get back to you first thing in the morning.

### **Required Books**

We will require *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology* (2nd edition) by Huddy, Sears, and Levy.

### **Course Requirements**

**Midterm:** There will be a midterm exam to make sure that you are familiar with the core concepts of political psychology research we have covered up to that point. The exam will primarily consist of multiple-choice questions with varying levels of difficulty but will also entail a few short answer questions. *As of now, the midterm exam is scheduled for June 19<sup>th</sup> and available on eLC between 12pm – 3pm.*

**Quizzes:** Most content module contains a quiz that you are required to complete. Quizzes are open-book and open-note. Quizzes are available on eLC. Please refer to the course schedule below for specific deadlines.

**Experimental Design:** You are required to write an experimental design as a final paper for this class. This experimental design needs to be methodologically sound, meant to test a novel hypothesis, and grounded in the class readings (6-8 pages). You can find details on the paper's requirements on eLC. *The paper is due by 6pm on Wednesday, July 1<sup>st</sup>.*

**Readings:** I expect everyone to finish the readings. I will draw from the readings to create quiz questions. I will provide you with a concept list to help you navigate the readings.

**Participation:** There are regular activities/writing assignments that you are required to complete for the course. The nature of the activity will depend on the module. Some of these activities are graded on a pass/fail basis. For discussion board assignments, please review the corresponding rubric on eLC.

**Grade Distribution:**

Midterm Exam: 20%

Quizzes: 30%

Experimental Design: 40%

Participation: 10%

**Grading Scale for Final Semester Grades**

100-94 A	79-77 C+	63-60 D-
93-90 A-	76-74 C	59-0 F
89-87 B+	73-70 C-	
86-84 B	69-67 D+	
83-80 B-	66-64 D	

*Please note that there is no standard rounding policy. Rounding decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis.*

**Grade Appeals, Incompletes, Late Assignments, and Make-Up Policy**

Any appeals of a grade must be made at least 24-hours after I hand back the assignment or test. If you would like to appeal a grade, prior to meeting with me you must submit a written statement detailing why you think that your grade should be changed. I will then meet with you to discuss your statement. In the case of a paper, I will re-grade your entire paper. Therefore, your grade can go up or down.

If I have made a mistake in totaling your grade in the class (e.g., I did not add up all of the points correctly) then you do not need to write the statement. Just email me and I will fix the mistake.

A final grade of “Incomplete” will only be given in this course under exceptional circumstances and is solely at the discretion of the instructor. If an incomplete is given, it is the student’s responsibility to complete the necessary requirements as early in the following semester as possible. Legitimate excuses for absence from an exam (e.g., religious holiday, medical emergency, or illness) must be **presented and accepted prior** to the exam when feasible.

Late assignments will be docked 5 percent per day (half letter grade), for each day that a project is late (including weekends). If you need a (reasonable) extension, talk to your teaching assistant.

### **Office Hour (via Zoom)**

Students who are having difficulty with the course materials and/or assignments are encouraged to make an appointment with me. However, please note that office hours are for clarification of material, not for recreating or asking *extremely* detailed questions about the quizzes or the exam. (My epitaph will read: “Will this be on the exam?”)

### **Syllabus Policy:**

I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus if necessary. I will give you fair notice (at least a week) if something, such as a reading assignment, is to change.

### **Culture of Honesty Policy**

The University of Georgia has an academic honesty policy. You are responsible for knowing and complying with the policy and procedures relating to academic honesty. To understand what constitutes dishonest work, as defined by the University, please carefully review the policy here: <https://ovpi.uga.edu/academichonesty/academic-honesty-policy>. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else’s work as your own can result in disciplinary action. Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will automatically receive an F in the course.

### **Disability Resource Center**

If you anticipate needing classroom or exam accommodations due to the impact of a disability or medical condition, you must register for services with the Disability Resource Center. Additional information can be found here: <http://drc.uga.edu/>

### **Withdrawal Policy**

Undergraduate students can only withdraw from four courses and receive a withdrawal-passing (WP) grade while enrolled at the University. Students can drop any class without penalty during the drop/add period at the beginning of every semester. Dropped courses during the drop/add period do not qualify as withdrawals. Instructors have the ability to withdraw a student from the class due to excessive absences. Please carefully review the policy in its entirety here: <http://www.reg.uga.edu/policies/withdrawals>

## Course Schedule

**Class Day #1 (June 5<sup>th</sup>):** We'll meet on Zoom at 2pm for an informal Q&A session where you can ask questions about the syllabus. This meeting is optional.

### Module #1: Introduction to Political Psychology

*Lecture:* Available on eLC on Monday, June 8<sup>th</sup>

*Readings:*

- 1) Chapter 1 in Huddy, Sears, and Levy 2016
- 2) Chapter 1 in Field and Hole (on eLC)

*Quiz:* Available on eLC on Wednesday, June 10<sup>th</sup> from 12pm – 3pm.

*Assignment:* Read The Atlantic article “The Coddling of the American Mind” (<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/09/the-coddling-of-the-americanmind/399356/>). Briefly summarize the article’s argument. Do you agree or disagree with it? Do you see any connections to our political discourse? How do you think this class might be able to address some of these concerns? Post your answers (2-3 paragraphs) to our discussion board on eLC by 12pm on Thursday, June 11<sup>th</sup>.

### Module #2: (Experimental) Research in Political Psychology

*Lecture:* Available on eLC on Wednesday, June 10<sup>th</sup>

*Readings:*

- 1) Chapter 2 in Field and Hole (on eLC)
- 2) Chapter 3 in Field and Hole (on eLC)
- 3) Morton and Williams 2016 (on eLC)

*Quiz:* Available on eLC on Friday, June 12<sup>th</sup> from 12pm – 3pm.

*Assignment:* Practice what you learned in this module about research by completing the worksheet available on eLC. Submit your worksheet to eLC by 5pm on June 14<sup>th</sup>.

### **Module #3: Personality and Socialization**

*Lecture:* Available on eLC on Monday, June 15<sup>th</sup>

*Paper SOS Session via Zoom on at 2pm on Monday, June 15<sup>th</sup>. Optional.*

*Readings:*

- 1) Chapter 2 in Huddy, Sears, and Levy 2016
- 2) Chapter 3 in Huddy, Sears, and Levy 2016

*Quiz:* Available on eLC on Wednesday, June 17<sup>th</sup> from 12pm – 3pm.

### **Module #4: Cognition**

*Lecture:* Available on eLC on Wednesday, June 17<sup>th</sup>

*Readings:*

- 1) Chapter 4 in Huddy, Sears, and Levy 2016
- 2) Chapter 5 in Huddy, Sears, and Levy 2016

*Quiz:* No Quiz! **Midterm on eLC on Friday, June 19<sup>th</sup>, 12pm – 3pm.**

*Assignment:* Read the Washington Post article “No, good looks don’t win elections” available here: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2013/11/13/no-good-looks-dont-win-elections/>. Summarize the main challenge that makes studying the relationship between candidate appearance and electoral chances so difficult. Within your assigned discussion group, develop a way to address this challenge (hint: experiment). How would you study the impact of candidate appearance on electoral chances? Please record your discussion via Zoom (5-10 minutes) and submit it to eLC by 5pm on Sunday, June 21<sup>st</sup>.

### **Module #5: Emotions**

*Lecture:* Available on eLC on Monday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>

*Paper SOS Session via Zoom on at 2pm on Monday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>. Optional.*

*Readings:*

- 1) Chapter 6 in Huddy, Sears, and Levy 2016
- 2) Chapter 12 in Huddy, Sears, and Levy 2016

*Quiz:* No Quiz!

*Assignment:* Find two examples (video or audio) of rhetoric by political elites that is aimed to provoke fear or anger among their audience. Examples can come from the U.S. or abroad. Post your examples to your group's discussion board on eLC along with a brief prediction of the effect of these emotions on people's political attitudes (1-2 sentences). Do you – as a group – find the use of emotional appeals problematic? Post your video or audio clip as well as your discussion by 5pm on Thursday, June 25<sup>th</sup>.

**(BONUS POINTS if you create a podcast!)**

## **Module #6: Prejudice**

*Lecture:* Available on eLC on Wednesday, June 24<sup>th</sup>

*Readings:*

- 1) Chapter 25 in Huddy, Sears, and Levy 2016
- 2) Chapter 26 in Huddy, Sears, and Levy 2016

*Quiz:* Available on eLC on Friday, June 26<sup>th</sup> from 12pm – 3pm.

*Assignment:* Go online and take the “Race IAT” and 1 other IAT of your choice at the following website <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/research/>. Why do you think you got these results? Were you surprised by them? Submit your results (i.e. screenshot) and reaction (one paragraph per test) to eLC by 5pm on Sunday, June 28<sup>th</sup>.

## **Module #7: Social and Political Identities**

*Lecture:* Available on eLC on Monday, June 29<sup>th</sup>

*Paper SOS Session via Zoom on at 2pm on Monday, June 29<sup>th</sup>. Optional.*

*Readings:*

- 1) Chapter 23 in Huddy, Sears, and Levy 2016

*Quiz:* No Quiz!

*Assignment:* Watch this lecture by Dr. Lilliana Mason on affective polarization [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fJZntk\\_RPJA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fJZntk_RPJA). How, if at all, have the results presented in the lecture changed or confirmed your perspective on political polarization among Americans? Do these results motivate you to re-think your own partisan behavior? Post your answer (2-3 paragraphs) to our general discussion board by 6pm on Wednesday, July 1<sup>st</sup>. **(Same deadline as your experimental design paper!)**