**Course Description**

The seminar is intended to provide students with an understanding of political cognition, a topic that approaches the study of political attitudes and behavior from the perspective of psychology and cognitive science. Central to political cognition is information processing, the mental operations that explain how people think, reason, and feel about the political world. Over the course of the semester, we will engage a variety of cognitive approaches, focusing on deliberative, automatic, and affective mental processes. Although many concepts have been imported from psychology and cognitive science, many of which we will consider, there is still much to be learned from these disciplines so we will also cover some theories and concepts that have yet to be given much attention by political scientists. Given that the foundational work on cognition is primarily from disciplines outside political science, the class will have a strong interdisciplinary flavor. Accordingly, many foundational readings from political science will not be covered in this seminar. The seminar is meant to compliment a traditional political behavior seminar, not serve as a substitute. No prerequisites other than graduate standing are required, however.

**Requirements and Expectations**

Students will be assessed according to their knowledge of the course materials and their ability to analyze, explain, and apply their knowledge to new and different contexts. Students are expected to attend the seminar and do all the readings. The assigned materials should be read in advance of that week’s topic. Discussions will be based on the assumption that you have completed the reading for that day. Since the class is a seminar, what you get out of the class will depend on what you put into it.

The class requirements include a weekly presentation of an assigned reading, participation, written questions about each reading, weekly papers (one page) that propose an original hypothesis, and a research paper. The paper may be a research design if it requires original (new) data collection. If your project makes use of previously collected data, either your own or from another source (e.g., the American National Election Study), the paper should include statistical analysis.

Student grades will be assigned on following:
- Class participation/presentations: 35%
- Weekly papers: 25%
- Research paper: 40%

**Academic Honesty**

You are expected to adhere to the UGA Student Honor Code: "I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others." A Culture of Honesty, the University’s policy and procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonesty, can
be found at www.uga.edu/ovpi. If you are unclear what constitutes plagiarism please consult the instructor.

**Mental Health and Wellness Resources**

- If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit https://sco.uga.edu/. They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services.

- UGA has several resources for a student seeking mental health services (https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga) or crisis support (https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies).

- If you need help managing stress anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit BeWellUGA (https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga) for a list of FREE workshops, classes, mentoring, and health coaching led by licensed clinicians and health educators in the University Health Center.

- Additional resources can be accessed through the UGA App.

**Course Outline**

**Jan. 14 Introduction and overview**


**Jan. 21 Some Perspectives on Information Processing**


Supplemental:


**Jan. 28 Automatic and Implicit Processes**


Supplemental:


**Feb. 4 Affect & Emotion**


Supplemental:


Feb. 11 Memory

Supplemental:

Feb. 18 Predispositions and Personality

Supplemental:


Feb. 25 Identity


Supplemental:


March. 4 Perception: Social Categorization & Stereotyping


Supplemental:


March 11 Values and Worldview


Supplemental:


March. 18 Heuristics and Cues


Supplemental:

March 25 Priming

Supplementary

April 1 Instructional Break
April 8 Frames, Metaphors, and Rhetoric

Supplemental:

April 15 Motivated Reasoning

Supplemental:
Kaplan, Jonas T. and Sarah I Gimbel and Sam Harris. “Neural correlates of maintaining one’s political beliefs in the face of counterevidence.” Scientific Reports 6, 39589

April 22 Workshop

April 28: Presentation of Research Papers

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.