

POLS 4400: Political Psychology
Fall 2022
Tuesday and Thursday, 2:20-3:35pm
Sanford Hall 313

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Office Hours: Thursday, 11:00am – noon, or by appointment.

Course Description

This class is an introduction to the interdisciplinary field of political psychology. The content of this course draws on theories and research from political science, psychology, and mass communication to understand different aspects of American politics. Our emphasis is on members of the mass public in the United States, with the expectation being that completing this course will provide you a better understanding of how everyday people approach and operate within the political process.

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this class, you will be able to:

1. Describe how mental systems interact with information to shape political opinions
2. Classify major theories of opinion formation and behavior in politics
3. Critique methodological approaches used to study the sources of political opinions and behavior
4. Develop an original randomized experiment to study an area of political psychology
5. Design an original way to explain a central concept in political psychology

Class Format

I teach this class as a hybrid discussion and lecture. In short, there will never be a class in which I talk at you the entire time. Most classes will consist of me giving a short lecture and you engaging in large and small group discussions or other activities. Because of this, you should come to class each day prepared to critically discuss and analyze the topics for that day.

Office Hours and Help

I will strive to make sure that the course is understandable and that you do not feel lost. If you have any questions about the course content, structure, or assignments please do not hesitate to contact me.

Readings

You are not required to purchase any books for this class. Readings will be available on eLC.

Graded Assignments

Below are short descriptions for each major graded component of the class. Note, many of these assignments consist of multiple smaller projects. You will find additional details and instructions in the relevant assignment guide on eLC.

1. Experimental Design Project (45%)

Each student in the course is required to work on an experimental design throughout the term. This assignment is composed of multiple smaller assignments, each of which will take you through the process of identifying the key features of an experiment, redesigning an existing experiment, and developing your own original experimental design. Note, you **will not** conduct an experiment.

2. Midterm Exam (15%)

A take-home exam will be distributed on **10/4**. The exam will cover material assigned since the beginning of class. The exam is an essay and is open-book/open-note.

3. Concept Explanation (20%)

Pick a concept you learned about this assignment. Your goal is to create something to teach someone who didn't take this class about this concept. You can use any medium you would like to teach the concept, except for a standard written essay. Be creative! The deadline is **12/13 at 3:30pm**.

4. Active Participation (20%)

You are expected to attend each class and be ready to actively contribute to whatever we are doing that day. Sometimes this will consist of discussion, small and/or large group work, or other kinds of activities. I will measure this participation by collecting assignment sheets during random classes throughout the semester. I will not grade these assignments, but rather use them to record whether or not you were present during that class.

All students in my class are given 2 "freebie" (no excuse needed) absences. You **do not** need to email me in advance to tell me you are using one of these absences. Please email me if you have **an excused** absence.

Note, if you miss more than four classes you will receive a "0" for class participation.

Final Grade Breakdown

Your letter grade in the class reflects the percentage of the total number of available points you obtain in the class. The distribution I use is:

Grade	Percent
A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C+	77-79
C	74-76
C-	70-73
D	60-69
F	<60

Grade Change

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.

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

Class Administration

eLearning

You will submit assignments and obtain additional reading assignments from eLC. Check the site periodically for any updates to the course readings.

Deadlines

All assignments are due *at the beginning of class* on the due date. If an assignment is turned in after the beginning of class on the due date 15% will be deducted from your assignment grade. An additional 10% will be deducted for each day the assignment is late. For example, if you turn in an assignment one full day after it was due, it will be deducted 25% (15% for not being turned in at the start of class on the day it was due and another 15% for being turned in one day later). Assignments turned in more than 3 days late will receive an F.

Academic Honesty

The University of Georgia has an academic honesty policy. Academic integrity is required for a positive learning environment. 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 receive an F in the course. Additionally, I will forward your name to the University. You can read the policies in their entirety here: <https://honesty.uga.edu/Academic-Honesty-Policy/>

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 can 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 Recordings

In the absence of written authorization from the UGA Disability Resource Center, students may not make a visual or audio recording of any aspect of this course. Students who have a recording accommodation agree in writing that they:

- Will use the records only for personal academic use during the specific course.
- Understand that faculty members have copyright interest in their class lectures and that they agree not to infringe on this right in any way.
- Understand that the faculty member and students in the class have privacy rights and agree not to violate those rights by using recordings for any reason other than their own personal study.
- Will not release, digitally upload, broadcast, transcribe, or otherwise share all or any part of the recordings. They also agree that they will not profit financially and will not allow others to benefit personally or financially from lecture recordings or other course materials.
- Will erase/delete all recordings at the end of the semester.
- Understand that violation of these terms may subject them to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct or subject them to liability under copyright laws."

Diversity and Civility

Diversity and civility are integral components of my classroom and the real world. My classroom is open to anybody, no matter their race, class, gender, sexual orientation, or any other quality. I strive to treat all my students with respect and I ask that you treat your fellow students the same way. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. This includes (but is not limited to) inappropriate use of classroom technology, ringing cell phones, text messaging, watching videos, checking email, surfing the internet on your computer, disruptive behavior, bullying, and disorderly conduct.

Covid-19 Information

UGA adheres to guidance from the University System of Georgia and the recommendations from Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) related to quarantine and isolation. Since this may be updated periodically, you are to review the latest guidance [here](#). **Note**, this information is taken from the USG and UGA and this guidance may change at any point in time.

Face coverings

Following guidance from the University System of Georgia, face coverings are recommended for campus members based on their personal preferences.

COVID-19 Vaccine

The University System of Georgia (USG) continues to recognize COVID-19 vaccines and boosters offer safe, effective protection and urges all students, faculty, staff and visitors to get vaccinated and/or boosted either on campus or with a local provider.

University Health Center is scheduling appointments for students through the UHC Patient Portal (https://patientportal.uhs.uga.edu/login_dualauthentication.aspx).

What do I do if I have COVID-19 symptoms?

Students showing COVID-19 symptoms should self-isolate and get tested. You can schedule an appointment with the University Health Center by calling 706-542-1162 (Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5p.m.). Please DO NOT walk-in. For emergencies and after-hours care, see <https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies>.

What do I do if I test positive for COVID-19?

You should self-isolate for five days. If you have no symptoms after 5 days you can leave isolation. You should wear a mask around others for 5 days after leaving isolation.

Well-being, mental health, and student support

If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care & 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 to support your well-being and mental health: <https://well-being.uga.edu/>

Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS) is your go-to, on-campus resource for emotional, social and behavioral-health support: <https://caps.uga.edu/>, TAO Online Support (<https://caps.uga.edu/tao/>), 24/7 support at 706-542-2273. For crisis support: <https://healthcenter.uga.edu/emergencies/>.

The University Health Center offers FREE workshops, classes, mentoring and health coaching led by licensed clinicians or health educators:

<https://healthcenter.uga.edu/bewelluga/>

Monitoring conditions:

Note that the guidance referenced in this syllabus is subject to change based on recommendations from the Georgia Department of Public Health, the University System of Georgia, or the Governor's Office. For the latest on UGA policy, you can visit coronavirus.uga.edu.

Class Schedule

Overview: Our class typically meets two times per week. You should complete the assigned reading by the day it is listed on the syllabus. This syllabus is a set of guidelines and I may change deadlines or assigned readings/topics during the semester. If there is a change to the syllabus I will work hard to give you advanced warning and I will post an updated schedule to eLC.

Week 1 – Introductions

The intent of this session is to give you an overview of our class and political psychology as a field of study.

Readings

- 8/18 - Huddy, Sears, and Levy 2013 – *optional*

Week 2 – Thinking & Reasoning about Politics

Overview: We examine how people approach judgment & decision-making, including their levels of motivation and engagement. We will also discuss the formation and structure of attitudes in memory. The Chong piece covers “rational choice theory” and ideal approaches to decision-making. The Kahneman chapters provide an overview of the balance between passive & active judgement.

Readings

- 8/23 – Chong 2013
- 8/25 - Kahneman 2011 (Chs. 1,2, & 7)

Week 3 – The Experimental Method

This week focuses on *the experimental method*, which is the common scientific approach used in political psychology. McDermott and Druckman et al. discuss the specifics of experiments, including key terms. Butler and Brookman conduct a novel field experiment, which we’ll use as a jumping off point to discuss ethics.

Readings

- 8/30 - McDermott 2002 (pgs. 31-41; 50-57); Druckman et al. 2011
- 9/1 - Butler and Broockman 2011

Week 4 – Information Processing & Bias

Overview: The readings this week discuss the psychological motivations that shape how people approach, process, and integrate political information. The first Taber reading describes information processing while the second outlines the theory behind “motivated reasoning.” The Bolsen and Druckman piece applies the theory of “motivated reasoning” to understand how people form opinions about new & complicated technologies.

Readings

- 9/6 - Taber 2003 (433-446); Taber 2001
- 9/8 - Bolsen & Druckman 2016

Week 5 – Political Knowledge & Awareness

Overview: The readings this week look at what the public knows (and more often doesn't know) about the political world. We also explore the efficiency of “heuristics” – tools that voters can use to overcome lack of knowledge about the political world.

Readings

- 9/13 - Delli Carpini & Keeter (1996); 2017 Pew Report
- 9/15 - Lau & Redlawsk (2001)

On 9/15, a member of the UGA Center for Teaching and Learning will be observing our class. I will leave class for the final 20 minutes of our scheduled time so they can facilitate a discussion with you about the class. This session is a part of a larger redevelopment process for this class in conjunction with the University of Georgia's recent expansion of active learning techniques (see [here](#) for more information).

Week 6 – Partisanship

Overview: Our focus this week is on party identification – the tendency for people to socially identify with one of the two major parties in the United States. The first reading covers the psychology of party ID. The second reading focuses on conspiracy theories.

Readings

- 9/20 - Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002
- 9/22 - Miller et al. 2016

Due: Experimental Design Assignment 1 (9/20)

Week 7 – Political Independents & Engagement

Overview: This focuses on the psychology of identifying as an “independent” and how this tendency is shaped by one’s social surroundings.

Readings

- 9/27 – Klar & Krupnikov (Ch. 2 & 3)
- 9/29 – Klar and Krupnikov (Ch. 4 & 5)
 - Note – you will only read *either* chapter 4 or 5. We will have an activity for this entire class session. Details provided prior to class.

Week 8 – Take-home exam week

Overview: This week will focus on catch up, review, and your take-home midterm exam.

Schedule

- 10/4 - Midterm review. Exam distributed.
- 10/6 - No class; open office hours

Due: Midterm exam on **10/7 by 5pm.**

Week 9 – Identity & Intergroup Relations

This week begins our focus on the second theme of our class: political identity. We begin with the core theory developed in psychology to understand these processes: social identity theory (SIT). We then discuss prejudice and political tolerance.

Readings

- 10/11 – Huddy 2013
- 10/13 – Green & Wong 2002; Mousa 2020

Week 10 – Rural Identity

Overview: This week applies theories of social identity and prejudice to understanding rural identity in the United States. The Cramer readings approach this study using interview techniques around the state of Wisconsin over a 6-year period. We focus on her concept *rural consciousness*.

Readings

- 10/18 – No readings. Class peer review of experiment assignment #2
- 10/20 - Cramer (Chs. 1[skim] & 2)

Week 11 – Rural Identity II

Overview: We continue our study of Cramer’s work. These weeks apply the concept to rural consciousness to understand the political process that unfolded around the election of Scott Walker, Barack Obama, etc. We end by looking at accessible pieces focused on recent elections.

Readings

- 10/25 - Cramer (Ch. 5)
- 10/27 - Cramer (Ch. 8)

Due: Experiment Assignment 2 (10/27)

Week 12 – Work week

Overview: No class this week. Rather, you will have structured time to work on your final papers and/or projects. I will be holding open office hours during our regular class times.

Schedule

- 11/1 – No class (open office hours)
- 11/3 – No class (open office hours)

Week 13 – Mass Media & Social Pressure

Overview: The first two session focus on the mass media and media effects. The final reading is the beginning of our last book, which looks at the tendency for people to hide their political leanings from others.

Readings

- 11/8 - Valentino and Nadris 2013
- 11/10 - Van Duyn (Chs. 1 – 3; skim Ch. 2)

Week 14 – Social Pressure

Overview: This week continues our reading of the Van Duyn book on hidden political opinions.

Readings

- 11/15 - Van Duyn (Ch. 4 & 5)
- 11/17 - Van Duyn (Ch. 8)

Due

- Final experimental design (11/18 by 5pm)

Week 15 – Thanksgiving Week

Overview: No class; Thanksgiving break

Schedule

- 11/22 – No class (available for office hours)
- 11/24 – No class

Week 16 – Wrap up

- 11/29 – wrap up topic & discussion
- 12/1 – topic TBD

Final Projects Deadline: Tuesday, December 13 by 3:30pm