

## **POLS 4400H: Political Psychology (Honors)**

Spring 2024

Tuesday & Thursday, 2:20pm-3:35pm

Baldwin Hall 104

**Professor:** Dr. Geoffrey Sheagley

**Office:** Baldwin 380G

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**Office Hours:** Tuesday, 10:00am-11:30am. Please schedule appointment in advance.

### **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 politics. Our focus 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.

### **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.

### **Required Books**

1. Klar, Samara and Yanna Krupnikov. 2016. "Independent Politics: How American Disdain for Parties Leads to Political Inaction." Cambridge University Press.
2. Van Duyn, Emily. 2021. Democracy Lives in Darkness: How and Why People Keep Their Politics Secret." Oxford University Press.

Both books are available (for free) as a digital copy through the UGA library.

### **Grading**

#### **1. Experimental Design (40%)**

Each student in the course is required to work on an experimental design throughout the term. Completing this assignment will require you to identify an area of political psychology that you want to research. You will be expected to read additional work related to your research interest (this will require you to access information from outside of our class) and use this information to narrow your interests and derive a testable hypothesis or hypotheses from this literature. You will then be asked to design an experiment that will test and answer your research

questions. You **will not** be expected to conduct your research study as a part of this course.

You will have a great deal of freedom in choosing your topic. To keep you on track and to provide you timely feedback, portions of the research proposal will be due throughout the term. The dates for these assignments are listed in the course schedule and the paper assignment sheet. During the first two weeks of class I will also provide a handout with a more detailed list of my expectations for the paper and a description of each assignment.

## 2. **Midterm Exam (15%)**

A take-home exam will be distributed on **2/27**. 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! More details are available on the relevant assignment sheet. The deadline is **5/7 at 3:30pm**.

## 4. **Discussion Questions (10%)**

To facilitate your understanding of the course material as well as to help create an engaged and interesting class, **twice** in the semester you and a group of your classmates will be required to prepare discussion questions and help me to lead class discussion for the readings assigned for that day.

Your group must post questions to **eLC** by **noon** the day before assigned class.

## 5. **Participation (15%)**

The participation portion of this grade will be based on your regular attendance, successful completion of in-class activities, participation in class discussion, and posing of questions during lecture or other activities.

All students in my class are given 3 "freebie" absences. My only requirement is that you email me prior to class to inform me that you will miss class. **Note:** If you miss more than 3 class sessions without an excused absence then you will receive no credit for class participation.

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:

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Percent</b>
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 10% 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

Please do not take audio or video recordings of course lectures or discussions without my express permission. In addition, please do not take audio or video recordings of any person during this course without her or his express permission. Finally, do not take any photographs of any person during this course without his or her express permission.

### **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**

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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](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>.

### **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](https://coronavirus.uga.edu).

## **Class Schedule**

Our class typically meets 2 times per week. You should complete the assigned reading by the day it is listed on the syllabus.

### Week 1 – Introductions

This week covers the class overview and expectations.

#### *Readings:*

- 1/9: None
- 1/11: No class. Professor traveling for conference.

### Week 2 – Thinking & Reasoning about Politics

We examine the field of political psychology & 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.

#### *Readings:*

- 1/16: Huddy, Sears, and Levy (2013)
- 1/18: 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 Broockman conduct a novel field experiment, which we'll also use as a jumping off point to discuss ethics.

#### *Readings:*

- 1/23: McDermott 2002 (pgs. 31-41; 50-57); Druckman et al. 2011
- 1/25: Butler and Broockman (2011)

### Week 4 – Information Processing & Bias

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:*

- 1/30: Taber (2003; pgs. 433-446); Taber (2001)
- 2/1: Bolsen & Druckman (2016)

Week 5 – Political Knowledge & Awareness

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:*

- 2/6: Delli Carpini & Keeter (1996); 2017 Pew Report
- 2/8: Lau & Redlawsk (2001)

*Due:* Paper Assignment 1 (2/6, by 5pm)

Week 6 – Partisanship

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:*

- 2/13: Huddy and Bankert (2017)
- 2/15: Miller et al. (2016)

Week 7 – Political Independents & Engagement

This week continues our discussion of people "hiding" their partisan leanings. We examine how this tendency is shaped by one's social surroundings and what implications this behavior has on political engagement & participation.

*Readings:*

- 2/20: Klar & Krupnikov (Chs. 1 [skim], 2 & 3)
- 2/22: Klar & Krupnikov (Chs. 4, 5, & 8 [skim])

### Week 8 – Take-home exam

This week will focus the review for and completion of your midterm exam.

- 2/27: Midterm review & exam distribution
- 2/29: No class; open office hours

*Due:* 3/1: Midterm exam (by 5pm).

### Week 9 – Spring Break

- 3/5 & 3/7 – No class

### Week 10 – 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*

- 3/12: Huddy (2013; selected portion); Reading #2 TBD
- 3/14: Kinder (2013; selected portion); Green and Wong (2002); Mousa (2020)

### Week 11 – Rural Identity I

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

#### *Readings*

- 3/19: No readings. Class peer review of experiment assignment #2
- 3/21: Cramer (Chs. 1 [skim], 2-3)

*Due:* Rough draft of experimental design for peer review on 3/19



### Week 12 – Rural Identity II

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*

- 3/26: Cramer Ch. 5
- 3/28: Cramer Ch. 8

#### *Due*

- Paper Assignment 2 (3/28, by 5pm).

### Week 13 – Work week & conference travel

We will not meet Tuesday or Thursday because I am traveling for a conference. I suggest you get started on the final book of the class.

#### *Schedule:*

- 4/2 & 4/4 – No class

### Week 14 – Mass Media & Social Pressure

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:*

- 4/9: Valentino and Nadris (2013)
- 4/11: Van Duyn (Chs. 1 – 3; skim Ch. 2)

### Week 15 – Social Pressure

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

#### *Readings:*

- 4/16: Van Duyn (Ch. 4 & 5)
- 4/18: Van Duyn (Chs. 7 & 8)

*Due:* Final paper (4/19 by 5pm)

### Week 16 – Presentations

This week is devoted to presentations for your experimental design.

#### *Schedule*

- 4/23 & 4/25: Presentations

**Final Concept Project Deadline:** Tuesday, May 9 by 3:30pm (this is the scheduled time for our final exam).