

POLS 4400: Political Psychology
Spring 2025
Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 11:30am-12:20pm
Baldwin Hall 0301

Instructor: Tabitha Lamberth

Office: TBD

Email: tabitha.lamberth25@uga.edu

Office Hours: Monday 1-3pm, or by appointment

Course Description and Objectives

This course serves as an introduction to the intersection of psychology and political science, examining how psychological theories and methods can be applied to understand political behavior, attitudes, and events. Topics include personality, socialization, political knowledge, emotions, prejudice, identity, and political communication. Students will critically analyze the biological and cognitive bases of political decision-making, biases, ideology, and trust in democratic systems. This course emphasizes creativity, critical thinking and the application of psychological principles to contemporary political issues, preparing students for scholarly and practical endeavors in political psychology and the real world.

After completing this class, you will be able to:

1. Differentiate between the different psychological processes that impact political behavior.
2. Identify and critique cognitive biases and their influence on political knowledge and awareness.
3. Articulate complex psychological and political concepts through creative and innovate mediums beyond traditional essays.
4. Use insights from political psychology to critically evaluate current political events and develop informed perspectives.

Required Text:

There is only one required book for this class:

“The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology” (Second Edition) by Leonie Huddy, David Sears, and Jack Levy (ISBN-13: 978-0199760107, ISBN-10: 0199760101)

Assessments:

Concept Explanations

At two different points during the semester, you will choose a concept you learned in this course and create a project designed to teach it to someone who has not taken this class. Your project can use any medium (such as a video, infographic, podcast, artwork, or interactive activity), but it cannot be a standard written essay. Be as creative as possible and ensure that your project effectively explains the concept in an engaging and accessible way.

Concept explanation #1 is due by February 19th and concept explanation #2 is due by April 16th.

Exams

There will be two exams in this class: a midterm exam and a final exam. Exams will be completed in-person with pen and paper. Both exams will consist of essay questions meant to test the breadth of your knowledge on important aspects in political psychology and how well you can apply the material. You will receive 10 potential exam questions at least a week before test day and are encouraged to use your resources to craft answers for each question. Upon test day, 8 questions will appear on the exam, and you will answer 5. No notes or resources will be allowed on test day. *Your midterm exam is scheduled for February 28th and the final exam is scheduled for Monday May 5th from 12:00-3:00pm.*

Participation

Questions are encouraged! Discussions will take place, so please read! There will be random in-class activities and assignments that make up your participation grade. There will also be unannounced quizzes based on lectures and readings for that week. To be prepared for class a good rule of thumb is to have some questions/comments planned such as:

- Something you found interesting
- Something you disagreed with
- Something you did not understand (substantive or methodological)
- Did it make you reconsider a pre-existing view that you had on a particular subject?
- Any other comments or questions that you would like to discuss in class.

If it becomes obvious that people are not reading and preparing to discuss in class, I reserve the right to require 3-5 questions or comments be submitted via eLC Sunday nights by 11:59pm.

Readings: You are expected to have completed the readings before class on Mondays. Any articles or other readings not from the textbook will be provided to you on eLC.

Missed Exams, Late Assignments, & Re-Grading Requests

Make-up exams will be given only for documented reasons of illness, family emergency, religious holiday, or participation in approved University activities (such as field trips and athletic events). Exams will be closed book, and no references will be allowed. Final exams will be re-scheduled in accordance with UGA's policy for final exam conflicts. 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 an extension, please speak with me.

Extra Credit Opportunities

Throughout the semester, small extra credit opportunities may arise. When an extra credit opportunity becomes available, I will let you know in-class and on eLC.

Final Grades

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

There is no standard rounding policy. Rounding decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Assignment Percentage Breakdown

20% Participation

10% Quizzes

30% Concept Explanations

20% Midterm Exam

20% Final Exam

UGA 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 honesty.uga.edu.

Many students have questions to what constitutes too much "help" on essays or other assignments. Of course, you may ask a friend if a certain phrase or sentence is correct. You may consult an online dictionary or translator for a word or phrase. BUT, the line between legitimate help and cheating is this: **Are you able to reproduce the same information on a test or on your own?** If the answer is yes - i.e., you learned something from getting the help and won't make the same mistake again - that's okay. If the answer is no - i.e., you can't identify the parts of speech in the phrase or you can't tell me what the word(s) mean on the spot) then you shouldn't turn in the assignment as your own work. You should, at the very least, indicate those parts of the assignment that are not your own work.

In line with this, I am obligated to uphold the university's policy on academic honesty, and I take this responsibility very seriously. If you are unsure about your particular situation, please ask me for clarification **BEFORE** you turn in an assignment as your own work. I am more than happy to help you out.

Accommodation for disabilities

If you plan to request accommodations for a disability, please register with the Disability Resource Center. They can be reached by visiting Clark Howell Hall, calling 706-542-8719 (voice) or 706-542-8778 (TTY), or by visiting <http://drc.uga.edu>.

Attendance & Participation Policy

Class presence and participation points are given to encourage your active participation and discussion. The **QUALITY** of your contributions and insights weighs more heavily than the quantity. Quality comments possess one or more of the following properties:

- Offers a different and unique, but relevant, perspective;
- Contributes to moving the discussion and analysis forward;
- Builds on other comments;
- Transcends the "I feel" syndrome. That is, it includes some evidence, argumentation, or recognition of inherent tradeoffs. In other words, the comment demonstrates some reflective thinking.

Use of AI in this Course

In this course, thoughtful and creative engagement with AI is encouraged. Therefore, you will not be penalized for using Generative AI tools (GAI) in this course.

However, remember that AI tools are best used to augment, not replace, our skills. It is important to be aware of the limitations of GAI tools. For example,

- GAI may exhibit bias and inaccuracies. You are responsible for assessing the validity and applicability of any GAI output incorporated into your work.
- If you provide minimum effort prompts, you will receive low quality results. Practice careful prompt engineering.
- Be cautious with data privacy. Refrain from entering information of a highly personal or confidential nature into a GAI tool.

To gain a deeper understanding of GAI tools and enhance your interaction with GAI output, you can explore the following resources:

- [Introduction to Generative AI](#)
- [UGA LibGuide on Generative AI](#)

Note also that any work not created by yourself should include a proper source citation. For Generative AI, that may include prompts, specific AI used, and date. For full details on how to properly cite AI-generated work, please see the APA Style article, [How to Cite ChatGPT](#). Keep in mind that this AI-permissive policy applies only to this course. Using AI tools in courses without permission is a violation of UGA's Academic Honesty policies and is considered unauthorized assistance. Be sure to consult the specific guidelines for each course.

Well-being Resources

UGA Well-being Resources promote student success by cultivating a culture that supports a more active, healthy, and engaged student community.

Anyone needing assistance is encouraged to contact Student Care & Outreach (SCO) in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-8479 or visit sco.uga.edu. Student Care & Outreach helps students navigate difficult circumstances by connecting them with the most appropriate resources or services. They also administer the Embark@UGA program which supports students experiencing, or who have experienced, homelessness, foster care, or housing insecurity.

UGA provides both clinical and non-clinical options to support student well-being and mental health, any time, any place. Whether on campus, or studying from home or abroad, UGA Well-being Resources are here to help.

Well-being Resources: well-being.uga.edu

Student Care and Outreach: sco.uga.edu

University Health Center: healthcenter.uga.edu

Counseling and Psychiatric Services: caps.uga.edu or CAPS 24/7 crisis support at 706-542-2273

Health Promotion/ Fontaine Center: healthpromotion.uga.edu

Disability Resource Center and Testing Services: drc.uga.edu

Additional information, including free digital well-being resources, can be accessed through the UGA app or by visiting <https://well-being.uga.edu>.

Disclaimer

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

Course Schedule:

First Week (starting January 6th) *SPSA Conference – No Class on the 8th & 12th*

Topic: Course Introduction - What is Political Psychology?

Readings: Chapter 1 in Huddy, Sears, and Levy

Morton and Williams 2006. Experimentation in Political Science (on eLC)

Second Week (starting January 13th)

Topic: Research Methods continued; Personality

Readings: Chapter 2 in Huddy, Sears, and Levy

Mondak, J. J., and K.D. Halperin 2008. A Framework for the Study of Personality and Political Behaviour (on eLC)

Third Week (starting January 22nd) 20th is MLK day

Topic: Childhood and Adult Political Development & Genetic Foundations of Political Behavior

Readings: Chapter 3 in Huddy, Sears, and Levy

Chapter 8 in Huddy, Sears, and Levy

Alford, J.R., C.L. Funk, and J.R. Hibbing 2005. Are Political Orientations Genetically Transmitted? (on eLC)

Fourth Week (starting January 27th)

Topic: Behavioral Decision-Making

Readings: Chapter 5 in Huddy, Sears, and Levy

Tversky, A. and D. Kahneman 1974. Judgment Under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases (on eLC)

Lau, R.R., and D. P. Redlawsk 2001. Advantages and Disadvantages in Cognitive Heuristics in Political Decision Making (on eLC)

Fifth Week (starting February 3rd)

Topic: Motivated Reasoning

Readings: Chapter 4 in Huddy, Sears, and Levy

Taber, C.S., and M. Lodge 2006. Motivated Skepticism in the Evaluation of Political Beliefs (on eLC)

Redlawsk, D. P., A. J.W. Civettini, and K.M. Emmerson 2010. Do Motivated Reasoners Ever “Get It”? (on eLC)

Sixth Week (starting February 10th)

Topic: Information Processing and Bias

Readings: Chapter 17 in Huddy, Sears, and Levy

Lodge, Steenbergen, and Brau 1995. The Responsive Voter: Campaign Information and the Dynamics of Candidate Evaluation (on eLC)

Seventh Week (starting February 17th)

Topic: Emotions

Readings: Chapter 6 in Huddy, Sears, and Levy

Healy, Malhotra, and Mo. 2010. Irrelevant Events Affect Voters' Evaluation of Government Performance (on eLC)

Brader 2005. Striking a Responsive Chord: How Political Ads Motivate and Persuade Voters by Appealing to Emotions (on eLC)

Eighth Week (starting February 24th) * Midterm on February 28th (Tentatively)

Topic: Political Communication

Readings: Chapter 18 in Huddy, Sears, and Levy

Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley 1997. Media Framing of Civil Liberties Conflict (on eLC)

Levendusky 2013. Why do Partisan Media Polarize Viewers? (on eLC)

Ninth Week (starting March 3) – SPRING BREAK

Tenth Week (starting March 10th)

Topic: Prejudice and Bias

Readings: Chapter 25 in Huddy, Sears, and Levy

Hainmueller and Hiscox 2010. Attitudes toward Highly Skilled and Low-Skilled Immigration: Evidence from a Survey Experiment (on eLC)

Hangartner and Hainmueller 2013. Who gets a Swiss passport? A Natural Experiment in Immigrant Discrimination (on eLC)

Eleventh Week (starting March 17th)

Topic: Ideology and Values

Readings: Chapter 19 in Huddy, Sears, and Levy

Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, and Sulloway 2003. Political Conservatism as Motivated Social Cognition (on eLC)

Janoff-Bulman 2009. To Provide or Protect: Motivational Bases of Political Liberalism and Conservatism (on eLC)

Twelfth Week (starting March 24th)

Topic: Ideology and Partisanship

Readings: Goren, P. 2005. Party Identification and Core Political Values (on eLC)

Goren, P. 2001. Core Principles and Policy Reasoning in Mass Publics: A Test of Two Theories (on eLC)

Thirteenth Week (starting March 31)

Topic: Identity

Readings: Chapter 23 in Huddy, Sears, and Levy

Barreto, M.A. 2007. Si Se Puede! Latino Candidates and the Mobilization of Latino Voters (on eLC)

Achen and Bartels.2016. Partisan Hearts and Spleens -Social Identities and Political Change (on eLC)

Fourteenth Week (starting April 7th)

Topic: Political Distrust and Conspiracy Theories

Readings: Miller, J. M., Saunders, K. L., & Farhart, C.E. (2016). Conspiracy endorsement as motivated reasoning: The moderating roles of political knowledge and trust. (on eLC)

Enders, A. M., Smallpage, S.M., & Lupton, R. N. (2020). Are all “birthers” conspiracy theorists? On the relationship between conspiratorial thinking and political orientations. (on eLC)

Fifteenth Week (starting April 14th)

Topic: Can We Democracy?

Readings: Achen and Bartels 2016. Pitfalls of Popular Control (on eLC)

Achen and Bartels 2016. Groups and Power: Toward a Realist Theory of Democracy (on eLC)

Sixteenth Week (starting April 21st)

Topic: TBD – Class choice

- Authoritarianism
- Political Violence
- Extremism
- Populism
- Deeper dive into a previous topic

Seventeenth Week (April 28) - Last Day of Class

Topic: Exam Review

May 5th - Final Exam from 12:00 to 3:00.