



POLS 4400- 62567
Political Psychology
Class MWF 10:20-11:10 AM
Classroom- Baldwin 101D
Instructor- Dr. Colin French
Office- Baldwin Hall 378
Office Hours- M/W 2:45-4:30, Friday 2:45-3:15 or by appointment

Course Description

Humans are, if nothing else, complicated creatures. This course will cover the complicated interplay between psychological theories & forces, and political behavior. Our topics and concepts will attempt to forge connections between human psychological impulses and political behavior. For example, are certain personality types more likely to hold certain political beliefs? At the elite level, how do psychological factors impact how leaders of countries elect to govern and make major decisions such as declarations or war? You will be exposed to a variety of psychological theories and be expected to draw parallels between psychology and political behavior.

By the end of the course you should have a grasp of the following concepts:

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 research methods to study political psychology empirically.

Books

Rather than a required textbook for this class, I will be uploading readings to ELC in weekly 'modules.' These will be available late in the preceding week. There will be a number of articles, many of which are scientific and written at a complicated level, so if you have any difficulty understanding the writing at any point, remember that coming to class is one of the best ways to help synthesize the materials.

Assignments

Participation- 15% (Semester-long)

Test #1 25% (September 26th)

Test #2 25% (November 7th)

Group Research Project- 30% (November 14th-December 2nd)

Research Presentation- 5% (In-Class Date)

Grading Scale

At the end of the semester, your grade will be assigned based on the following scale:

A (94-100), A- (90-93), B+ (87-89), B (83-86), B- (80-82), C+ (77-79), C (73-76), C- (70-72), D (60-69), and F (0-59). (Note that there are no +/- grades in the D or F range.)

Course Schedule

Week 1 (8/13-8/15)- Introduction to Course, Concepts (Quick summary of the logic of empirical political research)

Week 2 (8/18-8/22)- Political Knowledge & Heuristics, Rational Irrationality

Week 3 (8/25-8/29)- Miscellaneous New Experiments in Political Psychology

Week 4 (9/3-9/5)- Personality and Socialization 1- Personality Traits, Authoritarianism (Holiday 9/1)

Week 5 (9/8-9/12)- Personality and Socialization 2- Socialization & Genetics

Week 6 (9/15-9/19)- Rational Choice vs Political Psych in the Public and Leadership

Week 7 (9/22-9/26)- Motivated Reasoning and Skepticism, Cognition, Information Processing

Week 8 (9/29-10/3)- Intergroup Relations and Affective Polarization

Week 9 (10/6-10/10)- Prejudice, Explicit and Implicit Biases, Bigotry

Week 10 (10/13-10/17)- Emotions: Anxiety, Fear, and Anger in Politics

Week 11 (10/20-10/24)- Political Communication & Media- Social Media's Impact on Politics

Week 12 (10/27-10/29) - Ideology: Ideals and Reality (Holiday 10/31)

Week 13 (11/3-11/7)- Special Topics- COVID, Populism, Political Integration (The European Union)

Week 14- (11/10-11/14) Project Workshop Days & Early Presentations

Week 15- (11/17-11/21) Presentations

November 24th, December 1st, December 2nd- Presentation Days

Readings Note-

I will ensure that all readings for each week will be uploaded by Friday afternoon the week before they are to be read. Anything that is included in the lectures or the readings is eligible to come up on the tests- however- test questions on the readings will be more general and thematic- rather than with a focus on rote memorization.

The best way to ensure a good grade in a seminar-style course is to have at least gotten the main ideas from the readings and being ready to come to class with questions or thoughts.

Course Policies-

Make-ups for major assignments will only be offered in the case of serious need. Students should not assume an extension or make-up opportunity will be granted in all circumstances. Health and personal issues can be valid reasons. Late assignments will be penalized by ten percent for each day they are late. That said, given COVID and other major illnesses, I am flexible, just make sure to let me know if your illness is causing you to fall behind.

Rounding of grades can occur upwards, but not downwards. Upwards grading determinations will be based on participation and attendance.

Several extra credit opportunities (Attending talks, watching debates, etc) will occur over the course of the semester. Standard practice is that involvement will award one bonus point on the final calculated grade.

Scholastic Dishonesty-

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

Plagiarism:

Writing and presenting original work in college can be challenging, but this is not an excuse to plagiarize. Any directly taken information, quotations, or work that is not referenced or cited can be counted as plagiarism. Please take note and remember to provide references to any outside materials used in your work or writing.

Attendance:

The student is responsible for all assigned course work and cannot be absolved of this responsibility. When enrolled in a particular course, the student is obligated to do all of the work assigned. Punctual and regular attendance is vital to the discharge of this obligation. Absences, excused or not, do not alter this responsibility. Regulations more restrictive than College guidelines, but not in conflict with it, may be established by the instructor for any course.

Instructors are responsible for distributing their individual course attendance guidelines in their syllabi during the first class each term. Absences will be excused for:

- documented illnesses,
- official representation of the College,
- death of a close relative,
- religious holiday, and
- other circumstances beyond the control of the student.

Excuses for official representation of the College must be obtained from the official supervising that activity or event.

Students whose unexcused absences surpass **three** of the scheduled classes may receive a lowered grade or failure at the instructor's discretion.

Wellness Statement

This policy statement was added as a requirement during the Spring 2020 semester. UGA syllabi are expected to include the following statement: 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