

Political Psychology

(Note: this syllabus has been updated to reflect changes caused by weather related cancellations on February 10.)

This course examines what psychology (mostly social and cognitive) can tell us about political phenomenon—that is, rather than examining what happened in politics (e.g.: who won an election) or how it happened (e.g.: who voted for whom), we will look at *why* it happened by looking at the psychology of individuals. For example, what causes individuals to make decisions and form attitudes? Or, why do individuals identify with certain groups and not others? Answering these types of questions will allow us to explain phenomenon such as the role of media in politics, why people identify with parties, and who wins Presidential elections. Although this class will be heavily focused on politics in the United States, there will be examples from other countries.

In the course of learning about the substance of these topics, we will also consider how the knowledge was acquired—that is what type of research was conducted? How valid are the conclusions? How could the research be improved?

In addition to a midterm and a final, all students will be asked to undertake original political psychology research.

Professor Ryan D. Enos
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Class Meeting: TuTh 10-11:30AM, Jefferson Lab 250

1 Topics by Date

1. Introduction to class
 - **January 27:** No class due to extreme weather
 - **January 29:** Introduction to class: *Why is social science research hard?*
2. Theories of behavior
 - (a) situational
 - **February 3:** classical economics, Presidential elections, and the paradox of voting: *How do individuals make decisions?*

- **February 5:** bounded rationality, incumbency, and health care: *Are people good at making decisions?*
- (b) social
 - **February 12:** symbolic politics: political violence and integrative busing
What causes a riot?
- (c) biological and dispositional
 - **February 17:** personality and genetics: *Why are Republicans and Democrats so different?*
- (d) group behavior
 - **February 19:** evolution and political behavior: *Why do people ever cooperate? And why is most fighting done by men and not women?*
 - **February 24:** psychology of group decision-making: *How did the Bay of Pigs happen and why can groups make better decisions than individuals?*
- 3. Theories of cognition
 - (a) “cold” and “hot” cognition
 - **February 26:** information processing, heuristics, and voting: *Are beautiful politicians more likely to win?*
 - **March 3:** dissonance, biases, priming, and the media: *What is the effect of the media on public opinion?*
 - **March 5:** framing, stereotypes, and public policy *Why do Americans hate welfare?*
 - (b) emotion
 - **March 10:** emotion: *Will college football affect your vote?*
 - (c) neuroscience
 - **March 12:** brain structure and politics: *Do Republicans and Democrats have different brains?*
 - (d) cognition and elite decision-making
 - **March 24:** attribution, anchoring, and the atomic bomb (or “The Drunkard’s Search” and the politics of defense): *Why are bombs measured in megatons?*
- 4. **March 26:** midterm
- 5. Theories of identity
 - (a) **March 31:** guest lecture: empathy, gender, and judicial decision-making: *Does having daughters affect a judges vote?*
 - (b) **April 2:** ethnocentrism & bigotry *How to spot a bigot?*
 - (c) situational identity
 - **April 7:** Contact and conflict: *Can living in Boston make you racist?*
 - (d) dispositional identity
 - **April 9:** Social Identity: *Is group conflict part of Human Nature?*
 - (e) socialized identity
 - **April 14:** Social Dominance and system justification: *What can your job say about your politics?*
 - **April 16:** Symbolic Politics: *How did Obama win in 2008?*
- 6. Tying it together to try to answer some big questions
 - **April 21:** social identity and partisanship: *Why are people Democrats and Re-*

publicans?

- **April 23:** social identity, communication, and public policy *Can a 22 minute conversation permanently change your mind?*
- **April 28:** extremism, political violence, and terrorism *Why would somebody kill over politics?*
- **April 29—7:00PM:** research presentations (preliminary, subject to change)
- **April 30 (note that this lecture date has been added due to the weather related cancellation on January 27):** the psychology of evil: obedience to authority and the Stanford Prison Experiment *Why do people commit evil acts?*

2 Assignments

There will be four assignments in this class: participation in section meetings, an original piece of political psychology research, a midterm, and a final. Each of these is described in more detail below.

2.1 Political Psychology Research

You will be expected to complete an original piece of political psychology research that validates or extends the research examined in class. This assignment will be completed with a group. Your research can take different forms—for example it could be an experiment or a behavioral observation, such as a survey or participant observation.

You are responsible for choosing your own groups, within the guidelines set by your instructors. Your instructors reserve the right to alter groups in any way.

Your topic and research design must be approved by your Teaching Fellow prior to executing your research.

The assignment will have three parts:

1. **Research Design:** One for entire group. Prior to beginning your research, you must give a research design, in writing, to your Teaching Fellow for approval. If your research design is not approved, you may not begin your research.
2. **Group Presentation:** You are responsible, as a group, for making a short presentation to your section about your question, design, and findings. The best research will be presented to the entire class on April 23.
3. **Written Report:** Each individual is responsible for turning in their own, original report on their question, design, and findings.

Detailed instructions for this assignment will be covered in section during the week of February 10.

2.2 Section Participation

All students are expected to attend section, participate in discussion, and complete any assignments as directed by their Teaching Fellow. Discussion sections will meet for one hour, every week, except for the first week of class. Attendance in sections is mandatory.

Weekly quizzes are given during section. These quizzes are intended to give you a choice in how you want to earn your section grade and to maximize your learning.

At the beginning of every section, you will have a two-question (yes, only two), multiple-choice quiz on the reading from that week. It will just take a few minutes. After the answers to this quiz are revealed (so you will know how you did), you have the option of deciding if you want that quiz to count towards your section grade. If you decide “yes”, then your grade that week will be based entirely on the quiz. If you decide “no”, then the quiz will not count, and your grade will be based on participation, as usual.

This is intended to give you control—if you did not have a strong grasp of the reading that week, so you did not do well on the quiz, all you have to do is participate with your classmates.

These quizzes are not intended to be particularly difficult (or anxiety inducing for students), rather they are designed as a learning tool to reinforce the important points of the reading and to give a common point of discussion for the section. *Do not stress about this.*

2.3 Midterm

You will have one midterm test on March 26. It will be designed to test your knowledge of the course readings and lectures. Details will be provided as the time approaches.

2.4 Final

A final, in class, exam during exams period.

3 Due dates for assignments

Assignments are by these dates.

- presentations and reports:
 - **Week of April 21:** research presentations to your section
 - **April 30:** research report
- exams:
 - **March 26:** Midterm
 - **Examination Period:** Final Exam

3.1 Late Work

Late work will not be accepted or graded.

4 Grades

Grades for this class will be based on the following:

- Midterm test (22.5%)
- Final (37.5%)
- section (individual combination of quizzes and participation) (15%)

- research presentation (5%)
- research written report (20%)

Grades will be assigned on a standard scale.

5 Collaboration

Collaboration on in-class tests and quizzes is, obviously, prohibited. Your research paper is a collaborative process and collaboration is necessary to execute the project. However, your written report of your research is an individual effort that should reflect an individual writing process.

6 Students Registered with the Accessible Education Office

Students registered with the Accessible Education Office (AEO) may receive accommodations that alter some exam procedures. Students are responsible for providing Faculty Letters written by AEO to your instructor at the beginning of the term.

7 Readings by Date

Readings should be completed by the dates below. Readings marked with an (*) are books available at the COOP for purchase. All other readings are available on the course website.

- **JANUARY 29:**

none

- **FEBRUARY 3:**

Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper-Collins, pp. 37–47.

- **FEBRUARY 5:**

Kahneman, Daniel. 2003. “A perspective on judgement and choice: mapping bounded rationality. *American Psychologist* 58, (9), pp. 697–720. **read pp. 697–706 only.**

Ariely, Dan. 2009. “The truth about relativity” from *Predictably Irrational: the hidden forces that shape our decisions*. New York: Harper Perennial.

- **FEBRUARY 12:**

Sears, David O., Carl P. Hensler, and Leslie K. Speer. 1979. “White’s Opposition to ‘Busing’: Self-Interest or Symbolic Politics?”. *American Political Science Review* 73 (2), pp. 369–384.

Sears, David O. and John B. McConahay. 1973. *The politics of violence; the new urban Blacks and the Watts riot*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. chapters 1–3.

- **FEBRUARY 17:**

- Fowler, James H. and Darren Schreiber. 2008.** “Biology, politics, and the emerging science of Human Nature”. *Science* 322: pp. 912–914.
- Beckwith, Jon and Corey A. Morris. 2008.** “Twin Studies of Political Behavior: Untenable Assumptions?”. *Perspectives on Politics* 6 (4): pp. 785–791.
- Carney, Dana R., John T. Jost, Samuel D. Gosling, and Jeff Potter. 2009.** “The Secret Lives of Liberals and Conservatives: Personality Profiles, Interaction Styles, and the Things They Leave Behind”. *Political Psychology* 29 (6): pp. 807–840.
- Tierney, John. 2011** “Social Scientist Sees Bias Within”. *New York Times* February 7, 2011.
- Optional readings for more background or clarification of the topics:**
- Schaffner, Kenneth F. 2006** “Behavior: Its Nature and Nurture” in Parens, Erik, Audrey R. Chapman, and Nancy Perss. 2006. *Wrestling with Behavioral Genetics*. Annapolis: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Alford, John, Carolyn Funk, and John R. Hibbing. 2005.** “Are Political Orientations Genetically Transmitted?”. *American Political Science Review* 99 (2). pp. 153–167.
- Alford, John, Carolyn Funk, and John R. Hibbing. 2008.** “Twin Studies, Molecular Genetics, Politics, and Tolerance: A Response to Beckwith and Morris”. *Perspectives on Politics* 6 (4): pp. 793–797.
- McCrae, Robert R. and Oliver P. John. 1991,** “An Introduction to the Five-Factor Model and Its Applications”. *Journal of Personality* 60 (2), pp. 1775–216.
- Chabris, Christopher F., et al 2012,** “Most Reported Genetic Associations With General Intelligence Are Probably False Positives”. *Psychological Science* 23 (11), pp. 1314–23.
- Inbar, Yoel and Joris Lammers,** “Political Diversity in Social and Personality Psychology”. Working Paper: Tilburg University.
- Fowler, James H. and Christopher T. Dawes. 2008,** “Two Genes Predict Voter Turnout.” *The Journal of Politics* 70(3), pp. 579–594.
- Charney, Evan and William English. 2012.** “Candidate Genes and Political Behavior”. *American Political Science Review* 106(1): pp. 1–34.
- **FEBRUARY 19:**
 - ***Axelrod, Robert. 1984.** *The Evolution of cooperation*. New York: Penguin., chapters 1–5
 - ***Sidanius, Jim and Felecia Pratto. 1999.** *Social Dominance*. New York: Cambridge University Press., pp. 33–37 (“The Trimorphic Structure of Group-Based Social Hierarchy”) and chapter 10.
recommended: Axelrod, chapters 6–7.
 - **FEBRUARY 24:**
 - Janis, Irving. 1983.** *Victims of Group Think: a Psychological Study of Foreign-policy Decisions and Fiascos*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Chapters: 1, 2, and 5.
 - Galton, Francis. 1907.** “Vox Populi”. *Nature*. March 7: pp. 450–451.
“Letters to the Editor: The Ballot-Box”. *Nature*. March 28: pp. 509–510.
 - **FEBRUARY 26:**

- Kahneman, Daniel. 2003.** “A perspective on judgement and choice: mapping bounded rationality. *American Psychologist* 58, (9), pp. 697–720. **read pp. 706–720 only.**
- Todorov, Alexander, Anesu N. Mandisodza, Amir Goren, and Crystal C. Hall. 2005.** “Inferences of Competence from Faces Predict Election Outcomes”. *Science* 308, 1623–1626.
- Atkinson, Matthew A., Ryan D. Enos, and Seth J. Hill. 2009.** “Candidate faces and election outcomes: Is the face-vote correlation caused by candidate selection?”. *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 4. 229–249.
- **MARCH 3:**

Zaller, John. 2001. “Monica Lewinsky and the Mainsprings of American Politics” in *Mediated Politics: Communication in the Future of Democracy*. W. Lance Bennett and Robert M. Entman (eds). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Iyengar, Shanto and Kyu S. Hahn. 2009. “Red Media, Blue Media: Evidence of Ideological Selectivity in Media Use” *Journal of Communication* 59, 19–39.

Levendusky, Matthew S. 2013. “Why do Partisan Media Polarize Viewers?” *American Journal of Political Science* 57(3):611623.

Optional for more clarification or interest:

Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 3.

Iyengar, Shanto and Donald R. Kinder. 1987. *News that matters: television and American opinion*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Chapters 2, 3, and 7.
 - **MARCH 5:**

***Gilens, Martin. 2000.** *Why Americans Hate Welfare*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 1–7.
 - **MARCH 10:**

Healy, Andrew J., Neil Malhotra, and Cecilia Hyunjung Mo. 2010. “Irrelevant Events Affect Voters’ Evaluation of Government Performance.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 107 (29): pp. 12804–12809

MacKuen, Michael, Jennifer Wolak, Luke Keele, and George E. Marcus. 2010. “Civic Engagements: Resolute Partisanship or Reflective Deliberation”. *American Journal of Political Science* 54 (2): pp. 440–458.

Optional for more background:

Marcus, George E., W. Russell Neuman, and Michael MacKuen. 2000. “Dual affective subsystems: disposition and surveillance” in *Affective Intelligence and Political Judgment*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Haidt, Jonathan. 2001. “The emotional dog and its rational tail: A social intuitionist approach to moral judgment.” *Psychological Review* 108(4): pp. 814–834.
 - **MARCH 12:**

Schreiber, Darren, Greg Fonzo, Alan N. Simmons, Christopher T. Dawes, Taru Flagan, James H. Fowler, and Martin P. Paulus. 2013. “Red Brain, Blue Brain: Evaluative Processes Differ in Democrats and Republicans”. *PLoS One* 8(2): pp. e52970.

Kanai, Ryota, Tom Feilden, Colin Firth, and Geraint Rees. 2011. “Political

Orientations Are Correlated with Brain Structure in Young Adults”. *Current Biology* 21: pp. 677-680

Iacoboni, Marco, Joshua Freedman, Jonas Kaplan, Kathleen Hall Jamieson, Tom Freedman, Bill Knapp and Kathryn Fitzgerald. 2007. “This is your brain on politics”. *The New York Times*. November 11, 2007.

Aron, Adam, et al. 2007. “Politics and the brain”. *New York Times*. November 14, 2007.

Oxley, Douglas R, Kevin B. Smith, John R. Alford, Matthew V. Hibbing, Jennifer L. Miller, Mario Scalora, Peter K. Hatemi, John R. Hibbing. 2008. “Political attitudes vary with physiological traits”. *Science* 321(5896): pp. 1667–1670.

Optional readings if you really like this topic:

Amodio, David M., John T. Jost, Sarah L. Master and Cindy M Yee. 2007. “Neurocognitive correlates of liberalism and conservatism”. *Nature Neuroscience* 10 (10): pp. 1246–1247 and supplemental material.

• **MARCH 24:**

Jervis, Robert. 1993: “The Drunkard’s Search” in *Explorations in Political Psychology*, Shanto Iyengar and William J. McGuire (eds.). Durham: Duke University Press.

• **MARCH 26:**

none

• **MARCH 31:**

Glynn, Adam N and Maya Sen. 2015. “Identifying Judicial Empathy: Does Having Daughters Cause Judges to Rule for Womens Issues?” *American Journal of Political Science* 59(1). pp. 37–54.

Friedman, Barry. 2006. “Taking Law Seriously”. *Perspectives on Politics* 4(2): pp. 261–276.

• **APRIL 2:**

Posner, Daniel N. 2004. “The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi.” *American Political Science Review* 98 (4): pp. 529–545.

Arkes, Hal R. and Philip E. Tetlock. 2004. “Attributions of Implicit Prejudice, or ‘Would Jesse Jackson ‘Fail’ the Implicit Association Test””. *Psychological Inquiry* 15 (4): pp. 257–278.

• **APRIL 7:**

Key, V.O. 1949. *Southern politics in State and Nation*. New York: Knopf. pp. 509–517.

Enos, Ryan D. 2013. “How the demographic shift could hurt Democrats, too” *The Washington Post*. 8 March 2013.

Enos, Ryan D. 2015. “What the Demolition of Public Housing Teaches Us About the Impact of Racial Threat on Political Behavior,” *American Journal of Political Science*

Enos, Ryan D. 2014 “The Causal Effect of Intergroup Contact on Exclusionary Attitudes,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 111(10):3699-3704.

- **APRIL 9:**
 - Tajfel, Henri. 1970.** “Experiments in Intergroup Discrimination”. *Scientific American*, 223: pp. 96–102.
 - Tajfel, Henri. 1969.** “Cognitive aspects of prejudice”. *Journal of Social Issues*, 25: pp. 79–97
- **APRIL 14:**
 - Sidanius and Pratto, everyone read chapters 2 and 9 (review chapter 10, read earlier) also choose and read two chapters from 5, 6, 7, and 8 that most interest you (perhaps coordinate with a friend to read them all and exchange notes ...)** .
- **APRIL 16:**
 - *Tesler, Michael and Sears, David O. 2010.** *Obama’s Race: the 2008 Election and the Dream of a Post-racial America*. Chicago: U of Chicago Press. chapters 1–6.
 - recommended:** Tesler and Sears, chapters 7–8.
- **APRIL 21:**
 - Cohen, Geoffrey. 2003.** “Party over policy: The dominating impact of group influence on political beliefs,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 85 (5), 808–822.
 - Converse, Philip. 1963.** “The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics” in *Ideology and Discontent*, David E. Apter (ed), New York: Free Press of Glencoe.
 - Sidanius, Jim, Shana Levin, Colette van Laar, and David O. Sears. 2008.** “The overall effects of college on students’ sociopolitical attitudes” in *The Diversity Challenge: Social Identity and intergroup relations on the college campus*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
 - Iyengar, Shanto and Sean J. Westwood. 2015.** “Fear and Loathing Across Party Lines: New Evidence on Group Polarization.” *American Journal of Political Science*.
- **APRIL 23:**
 - LaCour, Michael J. and Donald P. Green. 2014.** “When contact changes minds: An experiment on transmission of support for gay equality,” *Science* 346(6215), 1366–1369.
- **APRIL 28:**
 - Pape, Robert A. 2005.** *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*. New York: Random House. Chapters 9–11.
 - Sunstein, Cass R. 2002.** “The Law of Group Polarization”. *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 10 (2). 175–195.
 - Optional:**
 - Ashworth, Scott and Clinton, Joshua D and Meirowitz, Adam and Ramsay, Kristopher W. 2008.** “Design, inference, and the strategic logic of suicide terrorism.” *American Political Science Review* 102(2): pp. 269–273.
- **APRIL 30:**
 - *Zimbardo, Philip. 2007.** *The Lucifer Effect: Understanding how good people turn evil*. New York: Random House. chapters 1, 10, 12–15

- read **Zimbardo** chapters 2–9 OR watch **Musen, Ken and Philip Zimbardo. 1991.** *Quiet Rage: the Stanford Prison Experiment*. New York: Insight Video. (video: available on the course website)
- Milgram, Stanley. 1977** “Subject reaction: the neglected factor in the ethics of experimentation” in *Stanley Milgram: The Individual in a Social World*, Thomas Blass, ed. London: Printer and Martin.
- Milgram, Stanley.** *Obedience* (video: available on the course website)
- Paluck, Elizabeth Levy 2009.** “Reducing intergroup prejudice and conflict using the media: A field experiment in Rwanda”. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 96. pp: 574–587.
- Darley, John M. and Bibb Latané. 1968.** “Bystander intervention in emergencies: diffusion of responsibility”. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 8 (4): pp. 377-383.