**PSCI 4221: Political Psychology**

**UPDATED: August 25, 2023**

Fall 2023

M/W/F 1:25-2:15pm, CLUB 4

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Office Hours: 11am-12pm Mondays and Wednesdays, and by appointment

*Course Overview and Learning Objectives*

 In this class we will explore how individuals think and feel about politics, and how those beliefs and emotions influence their political behavior. We will begin with the basic processes that shape the political being, including socialization, genetics, personality, emotions, morality, and rationality. Next, we will cover how individuals structure their political beliefs, how they process information, and how they make political decisions. Finally, we will investigate the role of identities and group interactions and how the two influence attitudes and actions. Throughout this class will address important questions such as: What happens when information conflicts with identities? Why do some people vote but note others? And, why the heck is it so hard to persuade people? Across all these topics we will discuss the evolution of political psychology as a field, and students will be exposed to a variety of empirical methods that make up political psychology research.

*Learning Objectives*

After taking this course, students will:

* Become familiar with the field of political psychology, including the broad schools of thought, methods employed, and ongoing debates.
* Understand how people develop their political attitudes and identities through socialization, including the effects of parents, media, peers, and environment.
* Understand the ways individuals process information and think about politics, including the roles of rational thinking, emotions, and heuristics.
* Understand how groups and social identities influence how people think about politics, including their views on objective facts.
* Understand the conditions under which interpersonal interactions can exacerbate or attenuate political conflict.

*Required Materials*

There are no materials that you need to purchase for this class and all required readings will be available electronically through the course page on Canvas. However, you must set up an iClicker Cloud account by the second week of class. See <https://oit.colorado.edu/tutorial/cuclickers-access-your-cuclickers-account> for information. Note: iClicker Cloud is free, please DO NOT purchase an iClicker remote!

*Assignments and Grading*

Attendance and Participation (10%): Active participation in this course is critical! Coming to class well prepared and offering comments and questions in discussions will result in a superior participation grade. I count all kinds of engagement with the course as participation including coming to office hours, sending emails with questions, forwarding and commenting on a news article, etc. Attendance is mandatory. **Five “freebie” absences are allowed, and each subsequent absence will result in a 10% decrease in the participation and attendance grade.** Students with ten or more absences will either have to drop the course or receive an “F.” Note that attendance alone is not sufficient to receive full credit for this grade item. Students with perfect attendance but little or no participation should expect to receive a 70% on the participation and attendance grade.

Class Points (25%): There will be a variety of quizzes, iClicker questions, short homework assignments, and in class assignments throughout the semester. Collectively, these assignments will be worth 25% of your final grade. Quizzes will cover the readings assigned for that day and recent class material and will take place in the first 10-15 minutes of class. **I will drop the lowest three quizzes, iClicker days, or in class assignments when calculating final grades (homework assignments will not be dropped).** Important note: this grade item will be calculated as a running tally of total points, NOT as an average of the individual quizzes/assignments. In other words, some quizzes or assignments will be worth more points than others and your final score will be your total points earned out of the total possible points. For example, if you scored a 3/3 on one quiz and a 4/5 on another, your final score would be a 7/8 or 87.5%, NOT the average of 100% on the first quiz and an 80% on the second.

Final Paper (20%): There will be one 1600-2000 word paper worth 20% of the final grade. The paper is due by 11:59pm Wednesday December 13th to Canvas as a Word or PDF document (no hard copy is required). More details will be provided in a separate assignment sheet.

Exams (45%): There will be three exams, each worth 15% of your final grade. The exams will be 90-minute timed “take-home” exams administered through Canvas. All exams will be open note. The exams will be composed of “long answer” style questions in which students will answer four of several possible questions/prompts. Exam answers do not need to be written in an essay form (e.g. no introduction or conclusion), but should be written as complete paragraphs (not just bullet points or short-hand). More information on the exams will be provided in class.

*Grading Scale*

Grades will be assigned as follows:

| A | A- | B+ | B | B- | C+ | C | C- | D+ | D | D- | F |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 94-100 | 90-93 | 87-89 | 83-86 | 80-82 | 77-79 | 73-76 | 70-72 | 67-69 | 63-66 | 60-62 | <60 |

*Class Policies*

I will use email as the primary means of communication. Be sure to check your “@colorado.edu” mailbox regularly. If you send me an email please allow 24 hours for me to respond. If I fail to respond, please resend your message. Open communication is critical! If you have a legitimate excuse and need an accommodation for class assignments or exams, you must inform me in advance. Unless an alternative arrangement has been made in advance **late assignments will result in a penalty of 10 percentage points per day.**

Finally, I reserve the right to make changes to this document. Any changes will be reflected on Canvas.

*University Policies*

Classroom Behavior: Students and faculty are responsible for maintaining an appropriate learning environment in all instructional settings, whether in person, remote, or online. Failure to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation, or political philosophy.

For more information, see the [classroom behavior policy](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/student-classroom-and-course-related-behavior), the [Student Code of Conduct](https://www.colorado.edu/sccr/student-conduct), and the [Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance](https://www.colorado.edu/oiec/).

Requirements for infectious Diseases: Members of the CU Boulder community and visitors to campus must follow university, department, and building health and safety requirements and all public health orders to reduce the risk of spreading infectious diseases.

The CU Boulder campus is currently mask optional. However, if masks are again required in classrooms, students who fail to adhere to masking requirements will be asked to leave class. Students who do not leave class when asked or who refuse to comply with these requirements will be referred to Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution. Students who require accommodation because a disability prevents them from fulfilling safety measures related to infectious disease will be asked to follow the steps in the “Accommodation for Disabilities” statement on this syllabus.

For those who feel ill and think you might have COVID-19 or if you have tested positive for COVID-19, please stay home and follow the [further guidance of the Public Health Office](https://www.colorado.edu/healthcenter/coronavirus-updates/symptoms-and-what-do-if-you-feel-sick). For those who have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 but do not have any symptoms and have not tested positive for COVID-19, you do not need to stay home.

## Accommodation for Disabilities, Temporary Medical Conditions, and Medical Isolation

[Disability Services](https://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/) determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so your needs can be addressed. Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance.

If you have a temporary medical condition or required medical isolation for which you require accommodation, please send me an email. Whenever possible I will allow students to make up assignments missed in class. Also see [Temporary Medical Conditions](http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/students/temporary-medical-conditions) on the Disability Services website.

Preferred Student Names and Pronouns: CU Boulder recognizes that students' legal information doesn't always align with how they identify. Students may update their preferred names and pronouns via the student portal; those preferred names and pronouns are listed on instructors' class rosters. In the absence of such updates, the name that appears on the class roster is the student's legal name.

Honor Code: All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the [Honor Code](https://www.colorado.edu/sccr/honor-code). Violations of the Honor Code may include but are not limited to: plagiarism (including use of paper writing services or technology [such as essay bots]), cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution: honor@colorado.edu, 303-492-5550. Students found responsible for violating the [Honor Code](https://www.colorado.edu/sccr/honor-code) will be assigned resolution outcomes from the Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution as well as be subject to academic sanctions from the faculty member. Visit [Honor Code](https://www.colorado.edu/sccr/honor-code) for more information on the academic integrity policy.

Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation: CU Boulder is committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. University policy prohibits [protected-class](https://www.colorado.edu/oiec/policies/discrimination-harassment-policy/protected-class-definitions) discrimination and harassment, sexual misconduct (harassment, exploitation, and assault), intimate partner violence (dating or domestic violence), stalking, and related retaliation by or against members of our community on- and off-campus. These behaviors harm individuals and our community. The Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) addresses these concerns, and individuals who believe they have been subjected to misconduct can contact OIEC at 303-492-2127 or email cureport@colorado.edu. Information about university policies, [reporting options](https://www.colorado.edu/oiec/reporting-resolutions/making-report), and support resources can be found on the [OIEC website](http://www.colorado.edu/institutionalequity/).

Please know that faculty and graduate instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when they are made aware of incidents related to these policies regardless of when or where something occurred. This is to ensure that individuals impacted receive an outreach from OIEC about their options for addressing a concern and the support resources available. To learn more about reporting and support resources for a variety of issues, visit [Don’t Ignore It](https://www.colorado.edu/dontignoreit/).

Religious Holidays: Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, **let me know by the end of the third week** of the semester if you expect to miss any class for religious observance.See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/observance-religious-holidays-and-absences-classes-andor-exams) for full details.

Mental Health and Wellness: The University of Colorado Boulder is committed to the well-being of all students. If you are struggling with personal stressors, mental health or substance use concerns that are impacting academic or daily life, please contact [Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS)](https://www.colorado.edu/counseling/) located in C4C or call (303) 492-2277, 24/7.

Free and unlimited telehealth is also available through [Academic Live Care](https://www.colorado.edu/health/academiclivecare). The [Academic Live Care](https://www.colorado.edu/health/academiclivecare) site also provides information about additional wellness services on campus that are available to students.

PSCI 4221 Class Schedule

**Updated: August 25, 2023**

**Assignments are to be completed before class. Please complete the first assigned reading (article or first chapter) by Monday of the assigned week. Remaining readings should be completed by Wednesday.**

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| **Week/Date(s)** | **Topic** | **Assignments** |
| **Week 1**Aug 28-Sep 1 | Course Intro and Basics of Political Psychology | * Read Syllabus
* Wed: Vox “7 psychological concepts…”
* Fri: Take “Race” Implicit Associations Test, Link: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>
 |
| **Week 2**Sep 6+Sep 8(NO CLASS Sep 4) | Socialization and Biology | * Easton and Dennis 1965
* Oxley et. al. 2008
* Alford et. al. 2005
 |
| **Week 3**Sep 11-Sep 15 | Personality and Emotion | * Carney et. al. 2008
* Mackuen et. al. 2007
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| **Week 4**Sep 18-Sep 22 | Decision-making and Heuristics | * Lodge and Taber, ch. 1
* Thaler and Sunstein, ch. 1+5
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| **Week 5**Sep 25-Sep 29(NO CLASS Sep 29) | Motivated Reasoning and **Exam 1** | * Lodge and Taber, ch. 7
* **Exam 1: 12am Sep 28th-11:59pm Oct 1st, on Canvas**
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| **Week 6**Oct 2-Oct 6 | Morality and Politics | * Haidt, ch. 6, 7, 8
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| **Week 7**Oct 9-Oct 13 | Rational Choice Theory and Voting | * Monroe et. al. 1995
* Blais, Introduction and ch.1
 |
| **Week 8**Oct 16-Oct 20 | Party ID and Partisanship | * Green, ch. 1+2
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| **Week 9**Oct 23-Oct 27 | Identities, Attitudes, and Information | * Lodge and Taber, ch.4
* Achen and Bartels, ch.10
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| **Week 10**Oct 30-Nov 3(NO CLASS Nov 3) | Persuasion and **Exam 2** | * Valentino and Nardis 2013
* **Exam 2: 12am Nov 2nd-11:59pm Nov 5th, on Canvas**
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| **Week 11**Nov 6-Nov 10 | Group Interaction and Attitudes | * Sunstein, ch. 1+2
* Huckfeld and Mendez 2008
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| **Week 12**Nov 13-Nov 17 | Cooperation and Conflict | * Green and Wong 2008
* Tyler 2008
* Petersen 2012
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| **Week 13**Nov 20-Nov 24 | Thanksgiving Break! | * Relax (mandatory!)
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| **Week 14**Nov 27-Dec 1 | Conspiracy Theories | * Sunstein and Vermeule 2009 (skim)
* Del Real “An American Tradition…”
* Cox and Halpin “Conspiracy Theories, Misinformation, COVID-19, and the 2020 Election”
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| **Week 15**Dec 4-Dec 8 | TBD | TBD |
| **Week 16**Dec 11+Dec 13 | Misinformation + Course Closing | * Van Wagtendonk “Can fact-checking solve the misinformation pandemic?”
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**Final Exam: 12am Dec 16th – 11:59pm Dec 20th**