

PSCI 4221: POLITICAL PSYCHOLOGY

Summer Term A 2020

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Synchronous Class Meeting: M-F 11:00 AM – 12:35 PM MDT, via Zoom

Make office hours appointment at: <https://instructorpavel.youcanbook.me/>

Hello and welcome to Political Psychology! In this course, we will investigate how people think and feel about politics. We will consider the role of underlying psychological processes on shaping political behavior of both citizens and elites. We will start with a birds-eye overview of political psychology as a discipline. We will look at how scholars have answered questions in this field. Then we will dive into the psychological roots of political behavior. We will pay special attention to the role socialization, personality, and genetics play in citizens' and elites' decision-making process. From there, we will focus on the mechanisms of how people structure their political beliefs and make political decision. We will investigate topics such as emotion, cognition, bias, and persuasion. Finally, we will look at political psychology of groups. We will study reasons why people dislike others, the psychological origins of political conflicts, and the pathways to compromise and cooperation.

REQUIRED TEXT

There is no dedicated textbook for this course. Instead, the readings include a selection of journal articles and book chapters which you can access via the course Canvas website. Please complete your reading assignments before class and be ready to discuss them in class and on the online discussion board.

MODE OF INSTRUCTION

This course will be taught in a hybrid form. That means that I will hold synchronous class meetings via Zoom during our regularly scheduled time, M-F 11:00 AM – 12:35 PM MDT. I will post each week's Zoom invite links on Canvas by 8 PM on Sunday of that week. If you are unable to attend the class live, I will also record the lecture and post in on Canvas afterwards. All class discussions will have both synchronous and asynchronous aspect. That is, you can participate in course discussion during the Zoom session if you attend live, but you will also have an option to respond to discussion prompts on Canvas.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS¹

In this course, assignments are handled differently from what you might be used to. You, rather than I, will decide what work you will complete. Bear in mind the following two simple rules:

1. You must earn at least 50 percent of the points, otherwise you will get no credit for the assignment.
2. Once the due date for an assignment has passed, you may no longer complete that assignment.

Take-Home Exams

- *Exam 1* (available 6/10, 12:35 PM MDT – 6/12, 11:59 PM MDT): A multiple-choice and essay exam covering course material in Section 1 of the course (100 points possible).
- *Exam 2* (available 6/23, 12:35 PM – 6/25, 11:59 PM MDT): A multiple-choice and essay exam covering course material in Section 2 of the course (100 points possible).
- *Exam 3* (available 7/2, 12:35 PM – 7/3, 11:59 PM MDT): A multiple-choice and essay exam covering course material in Section 3 of the course (50 points possible).

¹ With deepest thanks to Weimer (2013) and Dr. Jennifer Wolak (University of Colorado Boulder) for guidance and inspiration in preparation of this syllabus.

Literature Review (250 points)

I will ask you to write an essay that assesses the current literature on a political psychology topic of your choosing (pending my approval). This essay should be six to eight double-spaced pages in length and will be due at the end of the term. The central goal of this paper will be to assess and summarize the research about a particular political science topic: to identify the central question or questions, highlight the most important literature related to the topic, and comment about the strengths and weaknesses of the current research in the area. Further details are outlined on a separate handout.

Learning Log (20 points possible per entry)

In this assignment, I encourage you to explore your personal relation to the course contents. You will write each log entry in response to a specific prompt listed below. Entries should be no more than two pages long (double-spaced). You may write as many entries as you would like. However, you may only submit one entry per prompt and after the due date passes, you may no longer submit that entry.

I will grade the entries according to these criteria: (1) completeness (i.e., are you answering all the questions in the prompt?); (2) insight and reflection (i.e., is your response thoughtful?); (3) convincing argument (i.e., do you provide sufficient support for your conclusions?); (4) course content integration (i.e., are you connecting the course material to your response).

- *Entry #1 Prompt* (due 06/05 at 11:59 PM MDT): Develop a game plan for the course indicating which assignments you plan to complete. Why have you selected these options? What do you think your choices show about your learning preferences? Why do you think a teacher would give students the freedom to choose assignments? How do you think this strategy will affect your performance in the class?
- *Entry #2 Prompt* (due 06/11 at 11:59 PM MDT): Take one of the following two quizzes offered by the Psychology Department at the University of Central Florida: (1) The Emotional Intelligence Test, and (2) The Emotional Reactivity Quiz. The quizzes are available here: <https://sciences.ucf.edu/psychology/myemotions-hxus/>. Discuss your results. Did you learn something new about yourself? Do you think the test results describe you correctly? Why or why not? What, if anything, do you notice about your reliance on emotion when making political decisions?
- *Entry #3 Prompt* (due 06/17 at 11:59 PM MDT): Take stock of how you are doing in this class so far. How many points do you have now? Revisit your game plan outlined in Entry 1 (if you wrote it), and discuss any changes you plan to make. Are this course structure and grading system having any impact on your learning? Include some examples to illustrate the impact you have described. Discuss what specific topics and readings “made you think” thus far.
- *Entry #4 Prompt* (due 06/24 at 11:59 PM): Take one of the following four Implicit Association Tests (IATs) offered by Project Implicit at Harvard University: (1) Race IAT, (2) Presidents IAT, (3) Gender-Science IAT, and (4) Gender-Career IAT. The tests are available here: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>. Discuss the results of your tests. What did you learn about yourself, if anything? Do you think the test results describe you correctly? Why or why not?
- *Entry #5 Prompt* (due 06/29 at 11:59 PM): As we approach the end of the term, reflect on when you signed up for this course. Did the course meet your expectations? If you were to sign up for the class again, what would you do differently? Saying that you would drop the course is fine, so long as you explain why. If you are doing well in the course, to what would you attribute your success? What important things, if any, have you learned?

Participation

As a class, you will author the participation policy for this course, as well as criteria by which I will assess your contribution to the class. **Note:** Participation is the only **mandatory** component of the grade.

- *Participation Grade:* Determined by the criteria established by the class (100 points possible).
- *Analysis Paper:* You will also submit a four-page typed paper, split into three installments (50 points possible).
 - *Part 1, one page* (due 06/03 at 11:59 PM MDT): React to and assess the class-generated policy. Generate your participation goals for the course.
 - *Part 2, two pages* (due 06/16 at 11:59 PM MDT): I will randomly pair you with another student who chose participation as part of their final grade. One page of this installment will be your letter to your designated partner, in which you provide them with feedback on their participation as you observed it. The other two pages will consist of your mid-course progress report.
 - *Part 3, one page* (due 06/30 at 11:59 PM MDT): You will write a final report assessing your participation in the course. Critically evaluate your participation in the course using the criteria you set for yourself at the start of the term. Did you meet your goals? Why, why not? How did engaging in course discussions help your learning and understanding of the concepts we covered? How did your primary mode of participation (synchronous vs. asynchronous) affect your learning and engagement in the course?
 - **Note:** You must complete all three essay installments in order to earn the participation points.

Bonus Points and Extra Credit

- I reserve the right to add further bonus points opportunities throughout the term at my discretion.

Consider the following tips as you are planning your game plan for this course:

- Circle the assignments you are considering and total the possible points.
- Be realistic and honest. The probability of you receiving perfect scores on all assignment is not very high.
- Compare your total with the scale listed below.
- Plan to do enough assignments to get the points you need for the grade that you desire.
- Keep track of your points over the course of the term, in case you need to add more assignments.

Exam 1	100 points
Exam 2	100 points
Exam 3	50 points
Literature Review	250 points
Learning Log: 5 entries @ 20 points each	100 points
Participation	
• Participation Grade	100 points
• Analysis Paper	50 points
TOTAL	750 points

Your final grade will be determined based on the following scale:

A	400+	B+	360-379	C+	300-319	D+	240-259		
A-	380-399	B	340-359	C	280-299	D	220-239	F	199-0
		B-	320-339	C-	260-279	D-	200-219		

COURSE SCHEDULE²

Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments
Day 1 June 1	<u>Introduction to the Course:</u> Review of the course details, discussion of the participation policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllabus • Literature Review Handout
Section 1: Psychological Roots of Political Behavior		
Day 2 June 2	<u>Political Socialization:</u> Socialization from parents and schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easton, D., & Dennis, J. (1965). The child's image of government. <i>The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science</i>, 361(1), 40-57. • Recommended: Abendschön, S. (2017). Children and Politics. <i>American Behavioral Scientist</i>, 61(2), 163-166.
Day 3 June 3	<u>The Biological Roots of Political Behavior:</u> Nature vs. nurture, genetic explanations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oxley, D. R., et al. (2008). Political attitudes vary with physiological traits. <i>Science</i>, 321(5896), 1667-1670. • Hatemi, P. K., Alford, J. R., Hibbing, J. R., Martin, N. G., & Eaves, L. J. (2009). Is there a “party” in your genes?. <i>Political Research Quarterly</i>, 62(3), 584-600. • Recommended: Alford, J. R., Funk, C. L., & Hibbing, J. R. (2005). Are political orientations genetically transmitted?. <i>American Political Science Review</i>, 99(2), 153-167. • Participation Analysis Paper, Part 1 due today at 11:59 PM on Canvas.
Days 4 & 5 June 4 & 5	<u>Conformity and Situational Pressures:</u> Social and situational pressures to conform, dispositions vs. situations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slater, L. (2005). <i>Opening Skinner's box: Great psychological experiments of the twentieth century</i>. WW Norton & Company. Chapter 2. • Gerber, A. S., Green, D. P., & Larimer, C. W. (2008). Social Pressure and Voter Turnout: Evidence from a Large-Scale Field Experiment. <i>American Political Science Review</i>, 102(1), 33-48. • Learning Log #1 due June 5 at 11:59 PM on Canvas.
Days 6 & 7 June 8 & 9	<u>Personality:</u> Authoritarianism, citizen personality, presidential personality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carney, D. R., Jost, J. T., Gosling, S. D., & Potter, J. (2008). The secret lives of liberals and conservatives: Personality profiles, interaction styles, and the things they leave behind. <i>Political Psychology</i>, 29(6), 807-840. • Barber, J. D. (2009). <i>The Presidential Character: Predicting performance in the White House</i>. New York, NY: Routledge. Chapters 1 and 2. • Literature review memo June 9 at 11:59 PM on Canvas.
Day 8 June 10	<u>Rationality and Altruism:</u> Assumptions of citizen rationality, self-interest, altruism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monroe, K. R., & Maher, K. H. (1995). Psychology and Rational Actor Theory. <i>Political Psychology</i>, 16(1), 1-21. • Exam 1 available June 10, 12:35 PM – June 12, 11:59 PM on Canvas.

² The schedule is always subject to change.

Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments
Section 2: Political Psychology of Decision-Making		
Days 9 & 10 June 11 & 12	<u>Emotion:</u> Feeling versus thinking, emotions, affect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marcus, G. E., Neuman, W. R., & MacKuen, M. (2000). <i>Affective Intelligence and Political Judgment</i>. University of Chicago Press. Chapters 4 and 5. • Learning Log #2 due June 11 at 11:59 PM on Canvas.
Days 11 & 12 June 15 & 16	<u>Political Cognition:</u> Memory, schemas, associative networks, information processing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graber, D. A. (2001). <i>Processing politics: Learning from television in the Internet age</i>. University of Chicago Press. Chapter 2. • Steenbergen, M. R., & Lodge, M. (2003). Process Matters: Cognitive Models of Candidate Evaluation. In M. B. MacKuen & G. Rabinowitz (Eds.), <i>Electoral democracy</i> (pp. 125–171). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press. • Participation Analysis Paper, Part 2 due June 16 at 11:59 PM on Canvas.
Days 13 & 14 June 17 & 18	<u>Political Decision-Making & Heuristics:</u> Inference, Heuristics, short cuts, civic competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thaler, R. H., & Sunstein, C. R. (2009). <i>Nudge: Improving decisions about health, wealth, and happiness</i>. Penguin. Chapter 1 and 5. • <u>Recommended:</u> Lodge, M., & Taber, C. S. (2013). <i>The Rationalizing Voter</i>. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1. • Learning Log #3 due June 17 at 11:59 PM on Canvas.
Day 15 June 19	<u>Motivation and Bias:</u> Motivated reasoning, bias in decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taber, C. S., & Lodge, M. (2006). Motivated skepticism in the evaluation of political beliefs. <i>American Journal of Political Science</i>, 50(3), 755-769. • Nyhan, B., & Reifler, J. (2010). When corrections fail: The persistence of political misperceptions. <i>Political Behavior</i>, 32(2), 303-330. • Literature review bibliography due June 19 at 11:59 PM on Canvas.
Days 16 & 17 June 22 & 23	<u>Persuasion:</u> Political persuasion, attitude change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valentino N. A., & Nardis, Y. (2013). Political Communication: Form and Consequence of the Information Environment. In L. Huddy, D. O. Sears, & J. S. Levy (Eds.), <i>The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology</i> (pp. 559-590). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. • <u>Optional:</u> Sears, D. O., & Whitney, R. E. (1973). Political Persuasion. In I. de Sola Pool, W. Schramm, F. W. Frey, N. Maccoby, & E. B. Parker (Eds.), <i>Handbook of Communication</i> (pp. 253–289). Chicago, IL: Rand McNally. • Exam 2 available June 23, 12:35 PM – June 25, 11:59 PM on Canvas.

Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments
Section 3: Political Psychology of Groups		
Days 18 & 19 June 24 & 25	<u>Group Identity:</u> Social identities, in-group/ out-group sentiments, nationalism, patriotism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mlodinow, L. (2013). <i>Subliminal: How your unconscious mind rules your behavior</i>. Vintage. Chapter 8. • Iyengar, S., Sood, G., & Lelkes, Y. (2012). Affect, Not Ideology: A Social Identity Perspective on Polarization. <i>Public Opinion Quarterly</i>, 76(3), 405-431. • Learning Log #4 due June. 24 at 11:59 PM on Canvas.
Days 20 & 21 June 26 & 29	<u>Stereotypes & Prejudice:</u> Political Impressions and stereotypes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mlodinow, L. (2013). <i>Subliminal: How your unconscious mind rules your behavior</i>. Vintage. Chapter 7. • Devine, P. G. (1989). Stereotypes and prejudice: Their automatic and controlled components. <i>Journal of personality and social psychology</i>, 56(1), 5-18. • <u>Recommended:</u> Issenberg, S. (2012, June 1). It All Comes Down to Race. <i>Slate</i>. Retrieved from https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2012/06/racialization-michael-teslers-theory-that-all-political-positions-come-down-to-racial-bias.html • Learning Log #5 due June 29 at 11:59 PM on Canvas.
Day 22 June 30	<u>Conflict:</u> Understanding the roots of group conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green, D. P., & Wong, J. S. (2009). Tolerance and the Contact Hypothesis: A Field Experiment. In E. Borgida, C. M. Federico, & J. L. Sullivan (Eds.), <i>Political Psychology of Democratic Citizenship</i> (pp. 228–246). New York, NY: Oxford University Press. • Participation Analysis Paper, Part 3 due June. 30 at 11:59 PM on Canvas.
Day 23 July 1	<u>Cooperation and Deliberation:</u> Social, political, and evolutionary roots of cooperation, deliberative decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Petersen, M. B. (2012). Social welfare as small-scale help: evolutionary psychology and the deservingness heuristic. <i>American Journal of Political Science</i>, 56(1), 1-16. • Sunstein, C. R. (2008). <i>Why Groups go to Extremes</i>. Washington, DC: AEI Press. Pages 1-25. • Literature Review Paper due July 1 at 11:59 PM on Canvas.
Day 24 July 2	<u>Group Decision-Making:</u> Groupthink, quality of group decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Janis, I. L. (1982). <i>Groupthink: Psychological studies of policy decisions and fiascoes</i>. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Chapters 1 and 2. • Exam 3 available July 2, 12:35 PM – July 3, 11:59 PM on Canvas.

GENERAL COURSE AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES

In this class, we may occasionally discuss contentious topics about which you or others may have strong feelings. As such, for this section to be successful, there must always be a civil and open discourse on the topics at hand. This requires that each student shares their opinion, but does so in a respectful and informed way. Everyone should feel that their opinion is welcome in this class. Any personal attack against a fellow student or the instructor will not be tolerated.

Accommodation for Disabilities

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](#). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) under the Students tab on the Disability Services website.

Classroom Behavior

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail 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. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. For more information, see the policies on [classroom behavior](#) and the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Honor Code

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code. Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, 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 the Honor Code (honor@colorado.edu; 303-492-5550). Students who are found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the Honor Code academic integrity policy can be found at the [Honor Code Office website](#).

Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to fostering a positive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct, intimate partner abuse (including dating or domestic violence), stalking, or protected-class discrimination or harassment by members of our community. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct or retaliatory actions for reporting a concern should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127 or cureport@colorado.edu. Information about the OIEC, university policies, [anonymous reporting](#), and the campus resources can be found on the [OIEC website](#).

Please know that faculty and instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when made aware of incidents of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment and/or related retaliation, to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about options for reporting and support resources.

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, please inform me at least two (2) full weeks in advance of your absence so we can devise a mutually agreeable accommodation.

See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.

NORMS TO ADOPT TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN THIS COURSE (AND IN COLLEGE)

- 1) **Read the syllabus closely; it is required reading after all.** Almost everything you need to know about every class is in the syllabus. If you have a question about assignments and deadlines, consult the syllabus and do not email me until you have checked to see if the answer is in there. You are responsible for keeping track of the syllabus.
- 2) **Check your email and Canvas regularly.** This is a hybrid course, and I will regularly convey important information about coursework over email or via Canvas. It is important that you check both Canvas and your email every day. A great thing to do is to have Canvas send automatic updates to you via email. Not having seen a message about an assignment or an important deadline is not an acceptable excuse for missing that assignment or deadline.
- 3) **Emails constitute professional correspondence.** They should be formatted as a letter, with a greeting and a sign-off. You should tell me in the subject line the reason for the email. I will not respond to emails that read like text messages or are missing principle grammar components such as punctuation marks.
- 4) **Ask classmates about work missed if you are absent from class.** Do not ask me first. It is a common pet peeve among instructors when students ask them about missed work.
- 5) With the few exceptions outlined in the syllabus – i.e., documented illness, university activities cleared by me in advance, and religious holidays – **I do not allow make-ups for missed assignments.**