

POIS 385: POLITICAL PSYCHOLOGY

Spring 2017

Instructor: Florian Justwan, Ph.D.

Class: Tuesday, Thursday; 11:00 am - 12:15 pm (TLC 051)

Office Hours: Thursday 12:30 pm - 01:30 pm

Thursday 03:30 pm - 04:30 pm (Administration 323)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Most political phenomena are shaped by the beliefs and actions of individual leaders. As a result, the study of politics requires us to examine the psychological factors that affect the decision-making processes of government representatives. The main goal of this course is to provide students with a general understanding of the cognitive biases that influence the choices that individuals make in the realm of global politics. After a short introduction in which we discuss rational choice theory (the “paradigmatic core” of most existing research in Comparative Politics and International Relations), we investigate the role of a wide range of psychological variables in the domestic and international decision-making process. Furthermore, we will study the impact of various biases on general public opinion. Throughout the course, we will draw from numerous substantive examples in International Relations and Comparative Politics. As such, we will examine theories relating to international conflict, civil war, voting behavior, and public opinion. At the end of the term, students should be able to: (1) identify the relative strengths and weaknesses of the approaches covered in class and (2) discuss the role of psychological biases in the policy formulation process.

COURSE MATERIALS

You will need to buy one book for this class:

- Houghton, David Patrick (2015). Political Psychology. Situations, Individuals, and Cases. New York and London: Routledge.

All other readings will be provided to you online. It is absolutely essential that you carefully read all of the required material prior to each class session. I expect that you take your responsibilities seriously. Failing to do so will both significantly impact your grade and the quality of our in-class debate.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADES

- 15% Attendance & Participation
- 15% Six unannounced Reading Quizzes
- 50% Two Midterm Exams (February 21, April 11)
- 20% Final Paper (Due Date: May 8)

Attendance

Each unexcused absence will lower your final participation grade (calculated on a scale from 0 – 100) by 5 percent. I will take attendance every day. Therefore, it is essential that you show up on time. If you do come in late, it is your responsibility to approach me *directly after class* (as long as I am still in the classroom) and make sure that I checked your name on the class roll.

Participation (15 percent)

Your participation grade will be based on the quality and quantity of your oral contributions during class. As stated above, I expect you to read and think about the assigned material prior to our meetings. In class, you should be able to discuss the main arguments and demonstrate that you are able to connect the readings with the larger context. Please note that your participation grade is only affected by *active* participation. If you don't talk, your final participation grade will be a 60 (minus 5 x *number of unexcused absences*). If you have any concerns about your participation grade, contact me as soon as possible.

Reading Quizzes (15 percent)

There will be 6 unannounced readings quizzes over the course of the term. The quizzes will be composed of multiple choice and/or short answers that cover the assigned readings for each day. Reading quizzes will NOT be made-up if you are absent. However, only five of those six quizzes will be used to calculate your grade. In other words, I will drop your lowest score at the end of the semester.

Exams (50 percent)

There are 2 midterm exams in this class. Both will count towards 25 percent of your final grade. Exam material will be drawn from the following: lecture notes, assigned required readings, class discussion, movies shown in class, and any other supplementary materials. One piece of advice: Do the required readings, attend class, and participate and you will be very well prepared for both exams.

Paper (20 percent)

Every student is required to write a 2,000 word essay. In this assignment, you will have to identify one specific political decision made by a leader in the United States or another country. You will then analyze this decision with one of the approaches/theories discussed in class. The goal is for you to apply the concepts learned during the semester to one specific case. More information about this assignment will be provided in February.

GRADE SCALE

Note: final grades will NOT be rounded

- A = 90.00-100.00
- B = 80.00-89.99
- C = 70.00-79.99
- D = 60.00-69.99
- F = 00.00-59.99

COURSE POLICIES

Absences & Make-Up Exams

As stated above, attendance is absolutely essential if you want to succeed in this class. You are permitted TWO unexcused absences. Every other absence will lower your participation grade by 5 percent, unless you have a valid excuse (medical, academic, etc.) AND proper documentation. Make-up exams are ONLY offered for documented absences. If you know in advance that you have a conflict preventing you from taking one of the exams at the scheduled date, please contact me as soon as possible.

Academic Honesty

All students are responsible for maintaining the highest standards of honesty and integrity in every phase of their academic careers. The penalties for academic dishonesty are severe, and ignorance of the academic honesty policy is not an acceptable defense. Each student must meet the standards laid down in the University of Idaho's "Student Code of Conduct" (<http://www.uidaho.edu/DOS/judicialaffairs/studentcodeofconduct>). I will report all instances of academic dishonesty.

Disabilities

Reasonable accommodations are available for students who have documented temporary or permanent disabilities. All accommodations must be approved through Disability Support Services, located in the Idaho Commons Building, Room 306, in order to notify your instructor(s) as soon as possible regarding accommodation(s) needed for the course. Contact DSS at 208-885-6307, email dss@uidaho.edu or go to www.uidaho.edu/dss.

Classroom Etiquette

The use of cell phones, iPods, iPads, or any other electronic device will not be permitted during class meetings. I will permit you a laptop ONLY to take notes and review online readings. Please note that I reserve the right to reverse this policy at any time

Grade Appeals

If you believe your exams or assignments have been graded unfairly, you can appeal your grade in written form. You have to hand in your appeal on the day after the assignment or exam was returned. Comparisons to other students' graded assignments will not be accepted for a complaint. Hand in the original copy of the graded assignment/exam together with the written appeal. I will reevaluate your grade in light of the argument that you made. However, the new grade may be the same, higher, or lower than the original grade and it will be final.

COURSE SCHEDULE (This is only a tentative schedule for this course. Content may change)

| Part I: Course Intro and RCT | | |
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| Week 1 | | Course Introduction |
| | Jan. 10 (T) | Winter Break. No class. |
| | Jan. 12 (R) | This syllabus. |
| Week 2 | | Rational Choice I: Foundations |
| | Jan. 17 (T) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D. Green and I. Shapiro (1994). Chapter 2: The Nature of Rational Choice Theory. In: D. Green and I. Shapiro: Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory. New Haven: Yale University Press, pp. 13.-17. • Economist (2012). Is It Irrational to Vote? In: The Economist (October 23, 2012). |
| | Jan. 19 (R) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G. Allison (1969). "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis." In: American Political Science Review 63 (3), pp. 689-698 only. • Reader on the Logic of Political Survival (available on bblearn). |
| Week 3 | | Rational Choice II: Modifications and Criticisms |
| | Jan. 24 (T) | B. Mor (1991). Nasser's Decision-Making in the 1967 Middle East Crisis: A Rational-Choice Explanation. In: Journal of Peace Research 28 (4), pp. 359-375. |
| | Jan. 26 (R) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thaler, Richard (2015). Misbehaving. The Making of Behavioral Economics. New York: W.W. Norton. Chapter 1. • Houghton Chapter 1. • Houghton Chapter 3. |
| Part II: The Situation | | |
| Week 4 | | Prospect Theory |
| | Jan. 31 (T) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thaler, Richard (2015). Misbehaving. The Making of Behavioral Economics. New York: W.W. Norton. Chapter 4. • Kahneman, Daniel (2009). Interview with Daniel Kahneman. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZUyIXXJbhE. |
| | Feb. 2 (R) | A. Levi and G. Whyte (1997). "A Cross-Cultural Exploration of the Reference Dependence of Crucial Group Decisions under Risk: Japan's 1941 Decision for War." In: Journal of Conflict Resolution 41 (6), pp. 792-813. |

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| Week 5 | | Group Dynamics |
| | Feb. 7 (T) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Houghton Chapter 6. • D. Badie (2010). "Groupthink, Iraq, and the War on Terror: Explaining US Policy Shift toward Iraq." In: Foreign Policy Analysis 6 (4), pp. 277-296. |
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| | Feb. 9 (R) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper Instructions (on bblearn). • G. Allison (1969). "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis." In: American Political Science Review 63 (3), pp. 707-718 only. |
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| Week 6 | | Anxiety and Fear |
| | Feb 14 (T) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Albertson and Gadarian Chapter 2. • Albertson and Gadarian Chapter 3. • Albertson and Gadarian Chapter 4. |
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| | Feb. 16 (R) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L. M. Krauss (2016). "Thinking Rationally About Terror." In: The New Yorker (January 2, 2016). • J. Cassidy (2015) "Terrorism in the Age of Twitter." In: The New Yorker (November 23, 2015). |
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| Week 7 | | Midterm Week One |
| | Feb. 21 (T) | Midterm Exam 1 |
| | Feb. 23 (R) | No class. Instructor at Conference. |
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| Week 8 | | Obedience and "Bad" Behavior |
| | Feb. 28 (T) | No readings. |
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| | March 2 (R) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Houghton Chapter 4. • Houghton Chapter 5. |
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| | | Part III: The Individual |
| Week 9 | | Personality and Beliefs |
| | March 7 (T) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Houghton Chapter 7. • M. Lewis (2012). "Obama's Way." In: Vanity Fair (October 1, 2012). From: http://www.vanityfair.com/news/2012/10/michael-lewis-profile-barack-obama. |
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| | March 9 (R) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Houghton Chapter 8. • B. Rathbun (2011). "Before Hegemony: Generalized Trust and the Creation and Design of International Security Organizations." In: International Organization 65 (1), pp. 243-273. |

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| Week 10 | | Spring Break! |
| | March 14 (T) | No class. |
| | March 16 (R) | No class. |
| Week 11 | | Morality |
| | March 21 (T) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haidt Chapter 1. • Haidt Chapter 2. • Haidt Chapter 5. |
| | March 23 (R) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haidt Chapter 6. • Haidt Chapter 7. • Haidt Chapter 8. |
| Week 12 | | Affect and Emotion |
| | March 28 (T) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Houghton Chapter 10. • C.S. Taber and M. Lodge (2006). "Motivated Skepticism in the Evaluation of Political Beliefs." In: American Journal of Political Science 50 (3), pp. 755 – 769. |
| | March 30 (R) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E.B. Kapstein (2008). Fairness Considerations in World Politics: Lessons from International Trade Negotiations. In: Political Science Quarterly 123 (2), pp. 229-245. • A.G. Sanfey, J.K. Rilling, J.A. Aronson, et al. (2003). The Neural Basis of Economic Decision-Making in the Ultimatum Game. In: Science 300, pp. 1755-1758 |
| Week 13 | | Biopolitics |
| | April 4 (T) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Houghton Chapter 11. • D. Schreiber et al. (2013). "Red brain, blue brain: Evaluative processes differ in Democrats and Republicans." In: PLoS One 8 (2). |
| | April 6 (R) | No class. Instructor at Conference. |
| Week 14 | | Midterm Week Two & Cognition and Analogical Reasoning |
| | April 11 (T) | Midterm Exam 2 |
| | April 13 (R) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Houghton Chapter 9. • D.P. Houghton (1996). "The Role of Analogical Reasoning in Novel Foreign-Policy Situations." In: British Journal of Political Science 26 (4), pp. 523-552. |

| Part IV: Issues | | |
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| Week 15 | | The Psychology of Voting Behavior and Political Communication |
| | April 18 (T) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Houghton Chapter 12. • Houghton Chapter 13. |
| | April 20 (R) | Final Paper Workshop. (Bring two copies of a paper draft to class). |
| Week 16 | | Political Violence and Tolerance |
| | April 25 (T) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Houghton Chapter 14. • S. Power (2001). "Bystanders to Genocide." In: The Atlantic 288 (2), pp. 84-108. |
| | April 27 (R) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Houghton Chapter 15. • P. Beinart (2016). Fear of a Female President. In: The Atlantic. Online (October 2016). From: http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/10/fear-of-a-female-president/497564/ |
| Week 17 | | International Security |
| | May 2 (T) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Houghton Chapter 17. • R. Jervis (1979). Perception and Misperception in International Politics. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapter 8 • R. Jervis (1979). Perception and Misperception in International Politics. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapters 9 |
| | May 4 (R) | <p>Conclusion and Catch-up Day.</p> <p>Voluntary first paper deadline: 11:59pm via email (fjustwan@uidaho.edu).</p> |
| Week 18 | | Finals Week |
| | May 8 (M) | Paper due at 11:59am via email (fjustwan@uidaho.edu). |