

POIS 385: POLITICAL PSYCHOLOGY

Spring 2020

Instructor: Florian Justwan, Ph.D.

Class: Monday, Wednesday, Friday; 1:30 pm - 2:20 pm (Administration 326)

Office Hours: Wednesday; 03:00 pm - 05:00 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 two books for this class:

- Houghton, David Patrick (2015). Political Psychology. Situations, Individuals, and Cases. New York and London: Routledge.
- Woodward, Bob (2018). Fear: Trump in the White House. New York and London: Simon and Schuster.

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 (March 6, April 27)
20%	Final Paper (Due Date: May 11)

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 toward 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 in this class is required to write a final paper. 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

It is the policy of our department to refer instances of suspected academic dishonesty to the Student Judicial Council. For the Dean of Students' Academic Integrity site which includes UI Policies and Student Academic Dishonesty Resources, see <https://www.uidaho.edu/student-affairs/dean-of-students/student-conduct/academic-integrity>.

Disabilities

Reasonable accommodations are available for students who have documented temporary or permanent disabilities. All accommodations must be approved through the Center for Disability Access and Resources located in the Bruce M. Pitman Center, Suite 127 in order to notify your instructor(s) as soon as possible regarding accommodation(s) needed for the course.

- Phone: 208-885-6307
- Email: cdar@uidaho.edu
- Website: www.uidaho.edu/current-students/cdar

Special Assistance

If you experience difficulty in this course for any reason, please do not hesitate to consult with me. A wide range of services is available to support students in their efforts to meet the course requirements. Tutoring and College Success helps students increase their mastery of course material through course-specific tutoring and academic skills development. Check out their workshops, tutorial groups, and drop-in tutoring schedules posted on their website <http://www.uidaho.edu/current-students/academic-support/asp>, or sign up for services at their main office, Idaho Commons 306. Finally, Counseling & Testing Service is available to assist students who are encountering personal, social, and emotional difficulties or crises. Visit them in Mary E. Forney Hall Room 306, 885-6716, or see their website at <https://www.uidaho.edu/current-students/ctc>.

Electronic Device Policy

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

Assignment and Grade Record-Keeping

Students are responsible for saving all graded work until final grades are recorded with the registrar and checked by the student.

Classroom Learning Civility

In any environment in which people gather to learn, it is essential that all members feel as free and safe as possible in their participation. To this end, it is expected that everyone in this course will be treated with mutual respect and civility, with an understanding that all of us (students, instructors, professors, guests, and teaching assistants) will be respectful and civil to one another in discussion, in action, in teaching, and in learning. Should you feel our classroom interactions do not reflect an environment of civility and respect, you are encouraged to meet with your instructor during office hours to discuss your concern. Additional resources for expression of concern or requesting support include the Dean of Students office and staff (5-6757), the UI Counseling & Testing Center's confidential services (5-6716), or the UI Office of Human Rights, Access, & Inclusion (5-4285).

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		
Week 1		Course Introduction
	Jan. 13 (M)	Winter Break. No class.
	Jan. 15 (W)	This syllabus.
	Jan. 17 (F)	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.
Week 2		Rational Choice I: Foundations
	Jan. 20 (M)	No Class. MLK Day.
	Jan. 22 (W)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economist (2012). Is It Irrational to Vote? In: The Economist (October 23, 2012). • G. Allison (1969). "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis." In: American Political Science Review 63 (3), pp. 689-698 only.
	Jan. 24 (F)	Reader on the Logic of Political Survival (available on bblearn).
Week 3		Rational Choice II: Modifications and Criticisms
	Jan. 27 (M)	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. 29 (W)	<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.
	Jan. 31 (F)	Houghton Chapter 3.
Part II: The Situation		
Week 4		Prospect Theory
	Feb. 3 (M)	<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. 5 (W)	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.
	Feb. 7 (F)	No Readings.
Week 5		Group Dynamics
	Feb. 10 (M)	Houghton Chapter 6.
	Feb. 12 (W)	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.
	Feb. 14 (F)	G. Allison (1969). "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis." In: American Political Science Review 63 (3), pp. 707-718 only.
Week 6		Anxiety and Fear
	Feb. 17 (M)	No Class. President's Day.
	Feb. 19 (W)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Albertson and Gadarian Chapter 2. • Albertson and Gadarian Chapter 3.
	Feb. 21 (F)	Albertson and Gadarian Chapter 4.
Week 7		Obedience and "Bad" Behavior I
	Feb. 24 (M)	<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).
	Feb. 26 (W)	No readings.
	Feb. 28 (F)	No readings. CLASS IN AD 317!
Week 8		Obedience and "Bad" Behavior II Midterm Week
	March 2 (M)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Houghton Chapter 4. • Houghton Chapter 5.
	March 4 (W)	Catch-Up and Exam Review.
	March 6 (F)	Midterm Exam 1

Part III: The Individual		
Week 9		Personality and Beliefs
	March 9 (M)	Houghton Chapter 7.
	March 11 (W)	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 .
	March 13 (F)	<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.
Week 10		Spring Break!
	March 16 (M)	No class.
	March 18 (W)	No class.
	March 20 (F)	No class.
Week 11		Affect and Emotion
	March 23 (M)	<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 25 (W)	Reader on Affect and Emotion (bblearn).
	March 27 (F)	Readings tba.
Week 12		Morality
	March 30 (M)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haidt Chapter 1. • Haidt Chapter 2. • Haidt Chapter 5.
	April 1 (W)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haidt Chapter 6. • Haidt Chapter 7.
	April 3 (F)	Haidt Chapter 8.

Week 13		Biopolitics
	April 6 (M)	<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 8 (W)	J. Useem (2017). "Power Causes Brain Damage." In: The Atlantic Online (August 2017). From: https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/07/power-causes-brain-damage/528711/ .
	April 10 (F)	"Current Events" Reader (bblearn).
Week 14		Analogical Reasoning
	April 13 (M)	Houghton Chapter 9.
	April 15 (W)	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.
	April 17 (F)	Start reading the book for next week.
		Part IV: Issues
Week 15		The Psychology of President Trump
	April 20 (M)	Woodward Chapters 1 -21.
	April 22 (W)	Woodward Chapters 21 -42.
	April 24 (F)	No readings.
Week 16		Political Violence
	April 27 (M)	Midterm Exam 2
	April 29 (W)	Houghton Chapter 14.
	May 1 (F)	Power (2001). "Bystanders to Genocide." In: The Atlantic 288 (2), pp. 84-108.

Week 17		Tolerance
	May 4 (M)	<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/
	May 6 (W)	Catch-up Day.
	May 8 (F)	Conclusion.
Week 18		Finals Week
	May 11 (M)	Paper due at 11:59am via email (fjustwan@uidaho.edu).