

**POLITICAL SCIENCE 361R:
POLITICAL PSYCHOLOGY**

Spring Term 2007

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Office Hours:
Monday 10:00-11:30
Wednesday 1:30-3:00
and by appointment

Course Description

This course will explore the psychological dimensions of politics. Specific topics include stereotypes, personality, obedience, altruism, emotions and group decision-making. Questions to be addressed include: Do the personalities of leaders impact the decisions that they make? How is information from the political environment (such as candidates' campaigns, news media stories, etc.) processed by individuals? How do stereotypes and emotions influence individuals' attitudes? When and why do groups make poor decisions? Why are some people more altruistic than others? What are the political effects of conformity and obedience? Throughout the course, we will evaluate how well psychological theories help us understand political behavior, as well as the limits of evaluating the political world from a psychological perspective.

Additionally, this course carries an "R" designation, which means that it will emphasize the research process and research skills. These goals will be accomplished in a variety of ways. We will read and critique original research throughout the term. We will devote class time to discussing topics related to research. Finally, all students will produce a major research paper on a political psychology topic of their choice.

Course Readings

The two books listed below are required for this course and can be purchased from the bookstore. A packet of readings is also required for the course; details about this packet will be announced in class.

David Altheide, *Terrorism and the Politics of Fear*, 2006.

Richard E. Nisbett and Dov Cohen, *Culture of Honor: The Psychology of Violence in the South*, 1996.

The book listed below is recommended for purchase (it is also available from the bookstore), but it is not required. This book will be especially useful for anyone who has not taken an introductory psychology or social psychology course.

Elliot Aronson, *The Social Animal*, 2004, 9th edition.

Student Responsibilities, Grading and Course Policies

Students are expected to read the reading assignments before each class session, to attend class, and to come to class prepared to discuss the day's assigned reading material. Class sessions will be very discussion-oriented and all students are expected to participate actively. Class participation grades will be based on the number of days that a student joins in the class discussion as well as the quality of his/her comments. Contributions which focus on material from the assigned readings will be especially valued during class discussions. Students will occasionally complete in-class assignments based upon the assigned reading. Performance on these assignments will also be factored into the class participation grade.

This is a writing intensive course. Students will complete a variety of writing assignments including brief critiques of most assigned readings, a short paper integrating a set of readings, and a long research paper. Details about these writing assignments will be distributed in class.

Final grades for the course will be calculated according to the following:

Class Participation/In-class Assignments	15%
Reading Critiques	25%
Paper Integrating Class Readings	10%
Research Paper	50%

Make-Up Policy. Students are expected to turn in assignments at the scheduled times. Extensions will be granted only under exceptional circumstances and only with my consent prior to the due date (with the exception of emergency situations, when I must be contacted as soon as possible after the emergency). Proper documentation will be required before an extension is granted. Grades for late assignments will be reduced by one letter grade for each day that they are late. In-class assignments that are missed cannot be made up.

Students with Learning Disabilities. It is the policy of Union College to make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities. I encourage students with disabilities, including non-visible disabilities, to discuss with me (during office hours or after class) appropriate accommodations to help facilitate your learning. You will need appropriate documentation in the Dean of Students Office. All discussions will remain confidential.

Academic Honesty. All students at Union College are expected to uphold the standards of academic honesty. Incidents of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this course. Suspected cases of dishonesty will be reported to the Dean for Undergraduate Education for investigation. Being found guilty of academic dishonesty is very serious; the expected penalty is *failure in a course* and repeated instances can result in *expulsion from Union*.

Copying exam answers or assignments from another student, using notes during an exam, turning in another person's work as your own and plagiarism are all forms of academic dishonesty. Plagiarism occurs whenever you represent another author's words or arguments (whether or not you use his/her/their exact words) as your own. If you are at all confused about what constitutes plagiarism, please consult a writing manual or talk to me as soon as possible. If you are accused of academic dishonesty, pleading ignorance as to what constitutes academic dishonesty is not an acceptable excuse.

Schedule of Topics and Reading Assignments

Below is an outline of course topics and reading assignments. For all readings marked with an *, a reading critique will be due in class on the day that the reading is assigned. Readings from Aronson's book are suggested, but not required; all other readings assignments are required.

Apr. 2, 4	What is Political Psychology?
4/4	David Sears, Leonie Huddy and Robert Jervis, "The Psychologies Underlying Political Psychology," in <i>Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology</i> , 2003, pp. 3-16
4/4	Brian Braiker, "Q&A: The Politics of Denial," <i>Newsweek</i> Web Exclusive, May 13, 2004
4/4	Aronson, chapters 1 and 9
April 6, 9, 11	Personality and Political Leadership

- 4/6 *Fred Greenstein, "Can Personality and Politics Be Studied Systematically?"
Political Psychology, 1992, pp. 105-128
- 4/6 Jeffrey Rosen, "Robert's Rules," *The Atlantic*, January/February 2007
- 4/9 *David Winter, "Leader Appeal, Leader Performance, and the Motive Profiles of
Leaders and Followers: A Study of American Presidents and Elections,"
Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 1987, pp. 196-202
- 4/9 *Stanley Renshon, "George W. Bush's Cowboy Politics: An Inquiry," *Political
Psychology*, 2005, 585-614
- 4/11 *Betty Glad, "Why Tyrants Go Too Far: Malignant Narcissism and Absolute
Power," *Political Psychology*, 2002, pp. 1-37

April 13 Research Workshop at Schaffer Library with Gail Golderman (meet in
lobby of Schaffer Library promptly at 11:45)

April 16, 18 **Group Decision-Making**

- 4/16 *Irving Janis, "Groupthink," *Yale Alumni Magazine*, 1973
- 4/16 *Irving Janis, *Groupthink*, 1982, chapter 8
- 4/16 Aronson, pp. 11-15
- 4/18 *Martin Kaplan and Charles Miller, "Judgments and Group Discussion: Effect of
Presentation and Memory Factors on Polarization," *Sociometry*, 1977, pp.
337-343
- 4/18 *Sarah Tanford & S. Penrod, "Computer Modeling of Influence in the Jury: The
Role of the Consistent Juror," *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 1983, 200-212

April 20 Research Day: Citing Sources and Literature Reviews

April 23, 25, 27 **Obedience, Conformity and Altruism**

- 4/23 *Solomon Asch, "Opinions and Social Pressure," *Scientific American*, 1955
- 4/23 *Stanley Milgram, "Behavioral Study of Obedience," *Journal of Abnormal and
Social Psychology*, 1963
- 4/23 Aronson, pp. 16-45
- 4/25 *John Sabini and Maury Silver, "Destroying the Innocent with a Clear
Conscience: A Sociopsychology of the Holocaust," in *Survivors, Victims and
Perpetrators*, 1980
- 4/25 *Neal Osherow, "Making Sense of the Nonsensical: An Analysis of Jonestown"
- 4/27 *Kristen Renwick Monroe, "John Donne's People: Explaining Differences
between Rational Actors and Altruists through Cognitive Frameworks,"
Journal of Politics, 1991, pp. 394-433

April 30, May 2 **Social Cognition: Information Processing, Heuristics and Biases**

- 4/30 *Samuel Popkin, *The Reasoning Voter*, 1994, chapters 4 and 10
- 4/30 Aronson, pp. 93-113, 131-141

- 5/2 *Cindy Kam, "Political Campaigns and Open-Minded Thinking," *Journal of Politics*, 2006, pp. 931-945
- 5/2 *Matthew Baum and Angela Jamison, "The *Oprah* Effect: How Soft News Helps Inattentive Citizens Vote Consistently," *Journal of Politics*, 2006, pp. 946-959
- May 4 NO CLASS – Steinmetz Symposium
- May 7, 9 **Social Cognition: Stereotyping**
- 5/7 *Patricia Devine, "Stereotypes and Prejudice: Their Automatic and Controlled Components," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1989, pp. 5-18
- 5/7 *Martin Gilens, "Racial Attitudes and Opposition to Welfare," *Journal of Politics*, 1995, pp. 994-1014
- 5/7 Aronson, pp. 113-117, 241-252
- 5/9 *Thomas Nelson, Michele Acker and Melvin Manis, "Irrepressible Stereotypes," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 1996, pp. 13-38
- 5/9 *Richard Fox and Zoe Oxley, "Gender Stereotyping in State Executive Elections: Candidate Selection and Success," *Journal of Politics*, 2003, pp. 833-850
- May 11 Research Day: Updates on Research Projects
- May 14, 16, 18 **Mass Communication and Persuasion**
- 5/14 Rosalee Clawson and Zoe Oxley, "Attitude Stability and Attitude Change," chapter 3 of *Public Opinion: Democratic Ideals and Practice*
- 5/14 *George Bizer and Richard Petty, "How We Conceptualize Our Attitudes Matters: The Effects of Valence Framing on the Resistance of Political Attitudes," *Political Psychology*, 2005, pp. 553-568
- 5/14 Aronson, chapter 3
- 5/16 *Shanto Iyengar, Mark Peters and Donald Kinder, "Experimental Demonstrations of the 'Not-So-Minimal' Consequences of Television News Programs," *American Political Science Review*, 1982, pp. 848-858
- 5/16 *Thomas Nelson, Rosalee Clawson and Zoe Oxley, "Media Framing of a Civil Liberties Conflict and Its Effect on Tolerance," *American Political Science Review*, 1997, pp. 567-583
- 5/18 *Altheide, chapters 1-4
- May 21, 23, 25 **Emotion and Politics**
- 5/21 *Denis Sullivan and Roger Masters, "'Happy Warriors': Leaders' Facial Displays, Viewers' Emotions, and Political Support," *American Journal of Political Science*, 1988, pp. 345-368

- 5/21 *George Marcus and Michael MacKuen, "Anxiety, Enthusiasm and the Vote: The Emotional Underpinnings of Learning and Involvement During Presidential Campaigns," *American Political Science Review*, 1993, 672-685
- 5/23 *Altheide, chapters 5-7
- 5/25 *Altheide, chapters 8-10

May 28, 30, June 1 **Group Identity and Group Conflict**

- 5/28 *Muzafer Sherif, "Experiments in Group Conflict," *Scientific American*, 1956
- 5/28 *Ervin Staub, "Reconciliation after Genocide, Mass Killing, or Intractable Conflict: Understanding the Roots of Violence, Psychological Recovery, and Steps toward a General Theory," *Political Psychology*, 2006, pp. 867-894
- 5/30 *Ronald Inglehart, Mansoor Moaddel and Mark Tessler, "Xenophobia and In-Group Solidarity in Iraq: A Natural Experiment on the Impact of Insecurity," *Perspectives on Politics*, 2006, pp. 495-505
- 5/30 *Michal Shamir and Tammy Sagiv-Schifter, "Conflict, Identity, and Tolerance: Israel in the Al-Aqsa Intifada," *Political Psychology*, 2006, pp. 569-595
- 6/1 *Jerrold Post, "When Hatred is Bred in the Bone: Psycho-cultural Foundations of Contemporary Terrorism," *Political Psychology*, 2005, pp. 615-636

June 4, 6, 8 **Aggression**

- 6/4 *David Phillips, "The Impact of Mass Media Violence on U.S. Homicides," *American Sociological Review*, 1983, pp. 560-568
- 6/4 Aronson, chapter 6
- 6/6 *Nisbett and Cohen, *Culture of Honor*, Introduction, Chapters 1-3
- 6/8 *Nisbett and Cohen, *Culture of Honor*, Chapters 4-6

Wed., June 13 Research Paper Due (5:00 pm, to Prof. Oxley's office)