Course description

Political psychology is an interdisciplinary field that applies theories from the study of human psychology to the study of politics. The focus of political psychology is on how psychological processes influence political thoughts and actions. Thus, we will spend the initial portion of the course discussing the structure of political attitudes and opinions and some of the primary ways that politicians and the media can influence public opinion.

This course is unique in that the application of these theories will predominately be within the context of racial politics within the U.S. Of particular interest is the racial components of White Americans’ policy preferences on “race-neutral” issues. Social norms of racial equality often lead Americans to shy away from explicitly acknowledging the racial-basis of their own policy preferences. Yet, social scientists have devised numerous methodologies to estimate the extent that beliefs about race (prejudice, stereotypes, group identities) influence various policy preferences. Most of the research we examine will be within the U.S., but we will sometimes examine race-based opinions and behaviors within other countries.

This is an advanced undergraduate course. The expectations for class participation (i.e., discussion) are high. Students are expected to intelligently discuss concepts, theories, and the pros and cons of various research designs. Success in this course will depend on an understanding of the concepts and ideas in POS 301 or an equivalent research methods course.

Course goals

- Introduce the key concepts, theories, and methodologies of political psychology
- Provide an understanding of the racial-components of various policy-preferences
- Increase your understanding and enthusiasm for interdisciplinary research
Required readings

The course will focus on evaluating empirical research. For this reason, students should be familiar with the concepts and ideas from POS 301: Empirical Political Inquiry or an equivalent course. An understanding of basic statistics will be helpful, but not necessary. When you read each research article, you should be prepared to answer the following questions to the best of your ability:

1. What is the research question? Specifically, what is the basic information the researchers are seeking in their project?
2. What are the key concepts—the phenomena implicitly or explicitly referenced in the research question? How are these concepts defined?
3. What are the key variables? That is, how are the concepts measured? What do the numerical scales that measure the concepts look like?
4. What is the theory—the logical explanation of how and why the concepts are related?
5. What are the hypotheses—the statements predicting a relationship between two or more variables?
6. How is the data collected? That is, how are cases identified and selected to be included in the study?
7. What research method or methods do the researchers use to test their hypotheses?
8. What are the key empirical findings? That is, do the authors present convincing evidence that supports their hypotheses? If not, why not?

The articles for this course are free for download at either www.jstor.com or Google scholar (for ASU students). It is often easier to access these documents while on campus. Otherwise, you can use your MyASU account to access articles while off-campus. There are some formal instructions for accessing jstor articles below. If you need further help in accessing articles, please see a campus librarian.

Course requirements and grading

There are a total of 100 points for the course with the following point break-down,

- Participation (25 points)
- Homework write-ups (25 points)
- Presentation (25 points)
- Exam (25 points)
Participation: Students are expected to participate during each class period. This includes completing the required reading prior to each class period and being able to discuss the required articles in an intelligent manner (i.e., from the standpoint of a social scientist rather than a layman). Students may use their computers in class to take notes. However, any student using a cell phone in class will be deducted 5 participation points from their final grade. If you need to text or make a call please leave the classroom.

It is your responsibility (and your decision) to come to class. I will not, however, redistribute materials, lecture notes, or assignments to students that miss class. I’m also not interested in the reasons why you miss a class.

Write-ups: Each week students should submit a brief abstract for each required article. The abstract should provide 1 or 2 sentence answers to the following questions,

1. What is the research question? Specifically, what is the basic information the researchers are seeking in their project?
2. What is the main theory or argument proposed by the research?
3. What research method or methods do the researchers use to test their hypotheses?
4. What are the key empirical findings or conclusions the author(s) reach?

Any abstract from a 1997 article in the American Journal of Political Science can provide an example of the format for these write-ups. Each write up should be typed in single spaced 12-point font and turned in at the beginning of class. I do not accept late assignments under any circumstance. Each student will start the semester with 25 homework points. I will deduct 3 points for each incomplete assignment up to a total of 25 points.

Presentation: Students will choose 1 of the recommended articles and present it to the class. The presentation should 1) present the basic ideas of the article (see above) and 2) connect the article to the political strategies discussed in the film, Boogie Man: The Lee Atwater Story. Students may watch the film on their own time. The film is available on Netflix streaming. In addition, I will be showing the film in-class for students that do not have an alternative means of accessing the film.

Presentations should be between 5 to 10 minutes, but not exceed 10 minutes. Students may use presentation slides or handouts. There is no write-up component to the presentation assignment. These presentations will occur on November 28th and December 5th. Names will be chosen at random on the day of class. You will lose all of your presentation points if your name is drawn and you are not in-class or unable to make the presentation on that day.

Exams: There is one in-class exam worth 25 points. The exam will cover material discussed in class and in the assigned readings on the structure of political attitudes and opinions. The exams may take any format: definitions, multiple choice, short answers, and essays. Students do not need a scantron, but should bring a pencil and paper for the exams. Students requiring special needs for the exam must contact me immediately. Students should
come to exams on time and will not be allowed to leave the classroom while taking the exam for any purpose. Computers, notes, cell phones, and other mobile devices are not allowed during exams unless otherwise noted. The use of any such device during an exam will be viewed as cheating.

For this course your total point scores will translate into the following letter grades,

- A 90-100
- B 80-89.9
- C 70-79.9
- D 60-69.9
- E 59.9 and below

There are no extra credit opportunities in this course. There is no rounding of grades in this course (e.g., a 89.9 is a B and not an A). Providing point bumps is unfair to your classmates who do not receive such a bump and against University policy so please do not ask me for any grade adjustment. If you need an A (or B or C) then you must earn it.

**Make up Policy:** There are NO makeup assignments or exams. If an emergency or University excused absence prevents you from completing an assignment, you must contact me prior to class (and receive confirmation from me regarding such contact), explain the nature of the emergency, and subsequently present documentation verifying the explanation. If the emergency proves valid you will not be penalized.

**Academic integrity:** There are severe sanctions for cheating, plagiarizing and any other form of dishonesty (see [http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity/policy/Sanctions](http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity/policy/Sanctions)). Any cheating incident will result in a failure (E or possibly an XE— failure for academic dishonesty) for the course. All work must be yours and it must be original to this class (i.e., do not simply copy the abstracts from the articles). If you have questions about this, please ask. All instances of academic dishonesty will, per CLAS policy, be reported to the appropriate authority in CLAS.

**Course calendar**

The course calendar is an outline and subject to change. Changes in the course calendar will be announced in class.

**August 29: Introduction to political psychology**

We will discuss the field of political psychology and alternative approaches to the study of politics. I will also provide an overview of the structure of opinions and the expectancy value model of an attitude. We will also review research methodological problems in the study of
political psychology.

Required reading: Course syllabus

**September 5: Partisanship, race, and issue constraint**


**September 12: Values**


**September 19: Emotions and affect**


**September 26: Stereotypes and Prejudice**


October 3: Groups and Social Identities


October 10: Personality Traits


October 17: Exam

October 24: Influence: Persuasion, Framing, and Priming


October 31: Political intolerance


November 7: Welfare


**November 14: Attitudes toward crime and criminal justice**


**November 21: Race and campaign strategies**

Required: Boogie Man: The Lee Atwater Story

**November 28: Immigration**


**December 5: Class presentations**

Students will present 5 - 10 minute presentations
Further considerations

How to access articles in JSTOR

You will need to access articles from JSTOR, a scholarly journal database. Being able to successfully navigate library materials and scholarly journal articles is an important part of your college training. You should consult the Arizona State University Libraries Staff for help on how to access these and other materials should you encounter any difficulties. Note, newer articles within the last several years are not archived in JSTOR. These will have to be directly obtained from the relevant journal using the libraries on-line journal access.

• Go to the JSTOR homepage at www.jstor.org from any ASU computer and click on the Search option. Then click on Advanced Search on the next page that appears.

• On the next page that appears list the author of the article you are seeking, e.g. Segal, Jeffrey A., in the all of these words line. Then check the boxes for Author and Articles. Then check the box associated with Political Science journals from the list of scholarly disciplines that follows. You can also search using keywords in the title of the article.

Statement about students with disabilities

Disability Accommodations: Qualified students with disabilities who will require disability accommodations in this class must to make their requests to me at the beginning of the semester either during office hours or by appointment. Note: Prior to receiving disability accommodations, verification of eligibility from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) is required. Disability information is confidential.

Establishing Eligibility for Disability Accommodations: Students who feel they will need disability accommodations in this class but have not registered with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) should contact DRC immediately. Their office is located on the first floor of the Matthews Center Building. DRC staff can also be reached at: 480-965-1234 (V), 480-965-9000 (TTY). For additional information, visit: www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc. Their hours are 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday.

University Academic Integrity Policy

Each student must act with honesty and integrity, and must respect the rights of others in carrying out all academic assignments. A student may be found to have engaged in academic dishonesty if, in connection with any Academic Evaluation or academic or research assignment (including a paid research position), he or she:

1. Engages in any form of academic deceit;

2. Refers to materials or sources or uses devices (e.g., computer disks, audio recorders, camera phones, text messages, crib sheets, calculators, solution manuals, materials from previous classes, or commercial research services) not authorized by the instructor for use during the Academic Evaluation or assignment;
3. Possesses, reviews, buys, sells, obtains, or uses, without appropriate authorization, any materials intended to be used for an Academic Evaluation or assignment in advance of its administration;

4. Acts as a substitute for another person in any Academic Evaluation or assignment;

5. Uses a substitute in any Academic Evaluation or assignment;

6. Depends on the aid of others, including other students or tutors, in connection with any Academic Evaluation or assignment to the extent that the work is not representative of the student’s abilities;

7. Provides inappropriate aid to another person in connection with any Academic Evaluation or assignment, including the unauthorized use of camera phones, text messages, photocopies, notes or other means to copy or photograph materials used or intended for Academic Evaluation;

8. Engages in Plagiarism;

9. Uses materials from the Internet or any other source without full and appropriate attribution;

10. Permits his or her work to be submitted by another person in connection with any Academic Evaluation or assignment, without authorization;

11. Claims credit for or submits work done by another;

12. Signs an attendance sheet for another student, allows another student to sign on the student’s behalf, or otherwise participates in gaining credit for attendance for oneself or another without actually attending;

13. Falsifying or misrepresenting hours or activities in relationship to an internship, externship, field experience, clinical activity or similar activity; or

14. Attempts to influence or change any Academic Evaluation, assignment or academic record for reasons having no relevance to academic achievement.

Copyright statement

The materials used in this course are copyrighted. By materials, I mean all products generated for this class, which include but are not limited to syllabi, web pages, multimedia files, presentations, quizzes, exams, lab problems, in-class materials review sheets, lectures and additional problem sets. Because these are copyrighted, you do not have the right to copy the handouts, unless I expressly grant permission. Students are prohibited from selling or distributing lecture notes or other material generated from this course. Moreover, it is illegal to record and videotape course lectures and discussions and distribute such recordings on any multimedia device including the internet, unless I expressly grant permission.