

PS4417F: Special Topics in Political Psychology

Department of Political Science – Western University, Fall 2020
Wednesday 1:30pm-3:30pm, ONLINE, synchronously through Zoom on OWL
Instructor: Dr. Mathieu Turgeon
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Course description

The field of political psychology is vast and cuts through many subfields of political science. The focus in this course is about how theories of psychology apply to explain people's political attitudes and behaviours. In particular, the course is about how people receive, process, and use information they receive from their environment, interactions with others, the news media, and political elites to develop, change or maintain their political attitudes and make political decisions. Topics to be explored include candidate evaluation and choice, political knowledge and misinformation, media effects, political polarization, and racial prejudice. Students will also be introduced to basic notions of the experimental design, a requisite to understanding the work produced in political psychology.

Course text

The required text for this course is:

Druckman, J. N., Green, D. P., Kuklinski, J. H., & Lupia, A. (Eds.). 2011. *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*. Cambridge University Press.

Other readings are available electronically through Western Libraries and the course's OWL site (see the Resources tab).

Course assessment

Students will be assessed as follows:

- **Class participation (15%):** students will be responsible to sign up for leading class discussion at least three (3) times during the semester. See the Excel spreadsheet in the Resources tab on OWL to learn about the reading weeks you are responsible.
- **2 short essays each worth 25%:** Students are required to produce two essays of about 1250 words each in response to two prompts. The first prompt will be distributed on October 14 and the second on November 18. The first essay is due on OWL on **November 15, no later than 11:55pm** and the second on **December 6, no later than 11:55pm**. No late essay will be accepted.
- **Final take-home exam (35%):** Students will be given a cumulative final take-home exam on December 9 to be turned in on OWL. The date will be determined by Western. Look for the final exam schedule to be published during the semester. The exam will consist of seven short answer questions. No late exam will be accepted.

Topics and readings

Week #1 (September 9): Course introduction

Review of syllabus and class organization.

Week #2 (September 16): Introduction to Political Psychology

1. Huddy L., D. O. Sears, & J. S. Levy. 2013. "Introduction: Theoretical Foundations of Political Psychology." In Huddy L., D. O. Sears, & J. S. Levy, eds, *Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*. 2nd Edition, Oxford University Press.
2. Houghton, D. P. 2014. *Political psychology: Situations, individuals, and cases*. Routledge. Chapters 1 and 2.

Suggested/Graduate students readings:

- ◇ Krosnick et al. 2010. "The Psychological Underpinnings of Political Behavior" In S. T. Fiske et al., eds., *Handbook of Social Psychology*. 5th Edition, Wiley.
- ◇ Sears, D. O. 1987. "Political Psychology." *Annual Review of Psychology* 38: 229-58.

Week #3 (September 23): Experimental Political Science

1. Druckman, J. N., Green, D. P., Kuklinski, J. H., & Lupia, A. (Eds.). 2011. *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1-3.

Suggested/Graduate students readings:

- ◇ Druckman, J. N., Green, D. P., Kuklinski, J. H., & Lupia, A. (Eds.). 2011. *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 4-9.

Week #4 (September 30): Political attitudes

1. Druckman, J. N., Green, D. P., Kuklinski, J. H., & Lupia, A. (Eds.). 2011. *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 10: "Attitude change experiments in political science."
2. Turgeon, Mathieu. 2009. "'Just Thinking:' Attitude Development, Public Opinion, and Political Representation." *Political Behavior* 31: 353-378.
3. Arceneaux, K. and Vander Wielen, R.J., 2017. *Taming intuition: How reflection minimizes partisan reasoning and promotes democratic accountability*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1 and 2.

Suggested/Graduate students readings:

- ◇ Miller, J. and D. A. M. Peterson. 2004. "Theoretical and Empirical Implications of Attitude Strength." *Journal of Politics* 66: 847-867.
- ◇ Zaller, John and S. Feldman. 1992. "A Simple Theory of the Survey Response: Answering Questions Versus Revealing Preferences." *American Journal of Political Science* 36: 579-616.

Week #5 (October 7): Decision-Making and Judgment

1. Redlawsk, David P., and Richard R. Lau. 2013. "Behavioral Decision-Making." In L. Huddy, D. O. Sears, and J. S. Levy, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
2. Tversky, Amos, and Daniel t. Kahneman. 1974. "Judgment under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases." *Science* 185: 1124-31.

Suggested/Graduate students readings:

- ◇ Quattrone, George A., and Amos Tversky. 1988. "Contrasting Rational and Psychological Analyses of Political Choice." *American Political Science Review* 82: 719-36.
- ◇ Popkin, Samuel L. 1991. *The Reasoning Voter*, Chapters 1 and 4. University of Chicago Press.

Week #6 (October 14): Heuristics and Cues

1. Lupia, Arthur. 1994. "Shortcuts versus Encyclopedias: Information and Voting Behavior in California Insurance Reform Elections." *American Political Science Review* 88: 63-76.
2. Kuklinski, James. H., Paul J. Quirk, Jennifer Jerit, and Robert F. Rich. 2001. "The Political Environment and Citizen Competence." *American Journal of Political Science*, 45: 410-424.
3. Dancy, Logan and G. Sheagley. 2013. "Heuristics Behaving Badly: Party Cues and Voter Knowledge." *American Journal of Political Science* 57: 312-325.

Suggested/Graduate students readings:

- ◇ Bullock, John G. 2011. "Elite Influence on Public Opinion in an Informed Electorate." *American Political Science Review* 105: 496-515.
- ◇ Lau, R. R., & Redlawsk, D. P. 2001. "Advantages and disadvantages of cognitive heuristics in political decision making." *American Journal of Political Science*, 951-971.

Week #7 (October 21): Online and Memory-Based Information Processing

1. Druckman, J. N., Green, D. P., Kuklinski, J. H., & Lupia, A. (Eds.). 2011. *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 11: "Conscious and unconscious information processing with implications for experimental political science."
2. Hayes, Danny and Mathieu Turgeon. 2010. "A Matter of Distinction: Candidate Polarization and Information Processing in election Campaigns." *American Politics Research* 38: 165-192.
3. Kim, Young M. and Kelly Garrett. 2011. "Online and Memory-based: Revisiting the Relationship Between Candidate Evaluation Processing Models." *Political Behavior* 34: 345-368.

Suggested/Graduate students readings:

- ◇ Wyer and Srull. 1989. "Human Cognition in its Social Context." *Psychological Review* 93: 322-359.
- ◇ Lodge, Milton. et al. 1989. "An Impression-Driven Model of Candidate Evaluation." *American Political Science Review* 83:399-419.

Week #8 (October 28): Motivated Reasoning, Political Knowledge, and Misinformation

1. Taber, Charles S. and Milton Lodge. 2006. "Motivated Skepticism in the Evaluation of Political Beliefs." *American Journal of Political Science* 50: 755-769.
2. Iyengar, Shanto., and Kyu S. Hahn. 2009. "Red Media, Blue Media: Evidence of Ideological Selectivity in Media Use." *Journal of Communication* 59: 19-39.
3. Druckman, J. N., Green, D. P., Kuklinski, J. H., & Lupia, A. (Eds.). 2011. *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 12: "Political Knowledge."

Suggested/Graduate students readings:

- ◇ Kuklinski, James H., Paul J. Quirk, Jennifer Jerit, David Schwieder, and Robert F. Rich. 2000. "Misinformation and the Currency of citizenship." *Journal of Politics* 62: 585-598.
- ◇ Taber, Charles S., Damon Cann, and Simona Kucsova. 2009. "The Motivated Processing of Political Arguments." *Political Behavior* 31: 137-155.

Week #9 (November 4): Reading week

Week #10 (November 11): Candidate Evaluations

1. Druckman, J. N., Green, D. P., Kuklinski, J. H., & Lupia, A. (Eds.). 2011. *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 13: "Candidate Impressions and Evaluations."

2. Mattes, K., Spezio, M., Kim, H., Todorov, A., Adolphs, R., & Alvarez, R. M. 2010. "Predicting election outcomes from positive and negative trait assessments of candidate images." *Political Psychology*, 31(1), 41-58.
3. Tigue, C. C., Borak, D. J., O'Connor, J. J., Schandl, C., & Feinberg, D. R. 2012. "Voice pitch influences voting behavior." *Evolution and Human Behavior*, 33(3), 210-216.

Suggested/Graduate students readings:

- ◇ Ballew, C. C., & Todorov, A. 2007. "Predicting political elections from rapid and unreflective face judgments." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 104(46), 17948-17953.
- ◇ Milazzo, C., & Mattes, K. 2016. "Looking good for election day: Does attractiveness predict electoral success in Britain?" *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 18(1), 161-178.

Week #11 (November 18): Evolutionary approaches to political psychology (special guest Jordan Mansell, post-doctoral fellow at NEST (Western))

1. Mansell, J. Forthcoming. "Causation and Behavior: The Necessity and Benefits of Incorporating Evolutionary Thinking into Political Science." *Social Science Quarterly*.
2. Aarøe, L., Petersen, M. B., & Arceneaux, K. (2017). "The behavioral immune system shapes political intuitions: Why and how individual differences in disgust sensitivity underlie opposition to immigration." *American Political Science Review*, 111(2), 277-294.
3. Petersen, M. B., Sznycer, D., Sell, A., Cosmides, L., & Tooby, J. 2013. "The ancestral logic of politics: Upper-body strength regulates men's assertion of self-interest over economic redistribution." *Psychological science*, 24(7), 1098-1103.

Suggested/Graduate students readings:

- ◇ Hibbing, J. R., Smith, K. B., & Alford, J. R. 2014. "Differences in negativity bias underlie variations in political ideology." *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 37(3), 297-307.
- ◇ Petersen, M. B., & Laustsen, L. 2019. "Upper-body strength and political egalitarianism: Twelve conceptual replications." *Political Psychology*, 40(2), 375-394.

Week #12 (November 25): Media Effects

1. Druckman, J. N., Green, D. P., Kuklinski, J. H., & Lupia, A. (Eds.). 2011. *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 14: "Media and Politics."
2. Nelson, Thomas E., et al. 1997. "Media Framing of a Civil Liberties Conflict and Its Effect on Tolerance." *American Political Science Review* 91: 567-584.
3. Druckman, James. 2004. "Political Preference Formation: Competition, Deliberation, and the (Ir)relevance of Framing." *American Political Science Review* 98: 671-686.

Suggested/Graduate students readings:

- ◇ Tversky, Amos, and Daniel Kahneman. 1981. "The Framing of Decisions and the Psychology of Choice." *Science* 211: 453-58.
- ◇ Chong, Dennis, and James N. Druckman. 2007. "Framing Public Opinion in Competitive Democracies." *American Political Science Review* 101: 637-55.

Week #13 (December 2): Race, Racial Priming and Racial Prejudice

1. Druckman, J. N., Green, D. P., Kuklinski, J. H., & Lupia, A. (Eds.). 2011. *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 22: "The Determinants and Political Consequences of Prejudice."

2. Gilliam Jr., F. D. and S. Iyengar. 2000. "Prime Suspects: The Influence of Local Television News on the Viewing Public." *American Journal of Political Science* 44: 560-573.
3. Tesler, Michael. 2012. "The Spillover of Racialization into Health Care: How President Obama Polarized Public Opinion by Racial Attitudes and Race." *American Journal of Political Science* 56: 690-704.

Suggested/Graduate students readings:

1. Huber, Gregory A., and John S. Lapinski. 2006. "The 'Race Card' Revisited: Assessing Racial Priming in Policy Contests." *American Journal of Political Science* 50: 421-40.
- ◊ Mendelberg, Tali. 2008. "Racial Priming Revived." *Perspectives on Politics* 6: 109-23.

Week #14 (December 9): Intergroup Relations and Polarization

1. Druckman, J. N., Green, D. P., Kuklinski, J. H., & Lupia, A. (Eds.). 2011. *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 21: "Racial Identity and Experimental Methodology."
2. Iyengar, Shanto, Gaurav Sood, and Yphtach Lelkes. 2012. "Affect, Not Ideology: A Social Identity Perspective on Polarization." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 76: 405-31.
3. Iyengar, Shanto, and Sean J. Westwood. 2015. "Fear and loathing across party lines: New evidence on group polarization." *American Journal of Political Science* 59: 690-707.

Suggested/Graduate students readings:

- ◊ Tajfel, Henri. 1982. "Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations." *Annual Review of Psychology* 33: 1-39.
- ◊ White, Ismail K. 2007. "When Race Matters and When It Doesn't: Racial Group Differences in Response to Racial Cues." *American Political Science Review* 101: 339-354.