

Psychology 407/507: POLITICAL PSYCHOLOGY seminar

2:00 - 3:50 pm, Wednesdays, 110 PAC

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 3:30-4:30 pm, Thursdays 9:30-10:30 am

Required text: Cottam, M., Mastors, E. M., Preston, T., & Dietz, B. (2015). *Introduction to political psychology* (3rd ed.). New York: Psychology Press.

Other readings (see listing following seminar schedule) **will be made available via Canvas during the term.**

Course Objectives (or, what's the purpose of this course?)

This is a specialized seminar course on political psychology. While it provides a survey of political psychology, there are some additional emphases this term on topics related to personality, culture, religion, and the sources of sociopolitical violence. We will take a somewhat unconventional and wide-ranging approach to the subject matter, with the aim of developing uncommon insights and one or more integrative models for understanding the material. For example, the seminar first examines the extent of human tendencies toward dictatorship and oligarchy, with a probe of their psychological basis, before delving into the conventional political psychology of behavior in democracies.

Many of the readings will from a major textbook on political psychology (assigned reading includes at least some parts of most chapters), the remainder being from diverse other sources, posted to Canvas. The grading is based mainly on written papers and essays rather than multiple-choice-style testing.

Each session will have its own set of assigned readings. Seminar participants are expected to read everything that is assigned. (There are also optional readings posted on Canvas: These may be of intrinsic interest to some students, and can be a resource for the term paper, but there is no requirement to read them.) Class time will be spent mainly in presentation and discussion of issues arising in the assigned readings. Some of the discussion will be stimulated from student reading-responses.

Assignments and Grading

Participants' **final course grade** is based on the following:

- 28% ...submitting adequate brief reading responses (in advance of *seven* of the class sessions; 4% each)
- 10%grade on exploratory paper due at class in hard-copy form, April 20 (in week 4 of term)
- 4% ...turning in list of ideas or plans for term paper by May 4 (in week 6 of term)
- 3%sufficient participation credit
- 25% ...grade on term paper [late policy: 10% off per weekday that it's late]
- 30% ...score on final exam

What follows in this section is more detail on each of these components.

Reading responses – These should be short – indeed the standard is a “tweet-length” response of no more than 140 characters. They are submitted via Canvas. It is best if the response identifies one or more crucial questions. For example: (a) You might identify a crucial question that the research (or scholarly work) described in the reading is trying to answer, discussing why this is an important question, and briefly summarizing how it is best answered. Or (b) you might identify a crucial question about the quality of any of the information presented, such as identifying limitations or necessary caveats on the research (or scholarly work) described in the reading, not only describing the limitation/caveat but also explaining why this limitation or caveat is an important one. Or (c) you might identify some kind of example that is anomalous and does not fit with (cannot be accounted for by) a particular point of view

described in the work, this example perhaps being one that itself identifies a crucial question about the work. Reading responses are graded on a P/NP basis. Many (though not most) reading responses will be shared in class by instructor, always anonymously. However, you are free to identify yourself (or not) as the author of the reading-response in the ensuing class discussion.

A full allotment of **sufficient participation** credit is assigned to everyone who, by evidence available to the instructor, attends a majority of the class sessions.

The **exploratory paper** is intended to help you develop a more personal connection to the subject matter, applying concepts learned in the course to your personal experience of other people. Papers will have two parts: The first will likely involve your comments on a political-views assessment, based on an experience assessing your own views. The second will likely involve any one of multiple alternatives (you choose among these). Instructions will be placed on Canvas very early in the term. The paper should have complete sentences, good grammar, reasonable organization, and at least 2 complete double-spaced pages of text. It is due April 20.

Term paper – By class in week 6 of the term (i.e., by May 4) you should turn in to the instructor a **list of ideas or plans for a term paper**. The format for list is up to you; one page is usually enough. The instructor will review and give feedback on these ideas by week 7.

There are *two possible directions for your term paper*. The more recommended direction is the option of “critical analysis of bloggers and columnists on a timely, important question” described below. This direction involves being something of a “consumer-reports investigator on political bloggers and columnists,” but it might also be seen as an exercise in compiling potential hypotheses in the conjectures and extrapolations of so-called “talking heads.” It’s also possible to pursue another direction, which is the option to “review scientific/scholarly literature on an important research question,” also described below.

The method for writing a **compilation and critical analysis of bloggers and columnists** on a timely/important question is as follows. *First*, identify a question (though it’s wise to identify a second, back-up question in case the first one has too few sources). *Then*, search for columns and blogposts that address the question: It is best to identify 20 to 25 that at first pass seem relevant; seek out a wide variety of viewpoints from across the political spectrum, not just sources or viewpoints you typically agree with (instructor will be posting some suggestions for how to find sources). *Next*, identify as many different points of view – ways of answering the question – as you can in that set of relevant blogposts/columns; see if you can get as many as a dozen points of view or ways of answering, though with some topics there may be only a few distinct points of view repeated among the bloggers/columnists. *Finally*, for each of those points-of-view (ways-of-answering) gather the most salient evidence about how well it is empirically supported or corresponds to theories in political psychology. The “evidence” you consider can be mainly from the textbook (whether the portions assigned or those not assigned), from other assigned readings, from the course’s optional readings, from lecture material from this class, or where needed from outside sources (the best quality sources would be articles obtained from searches on the library website). You can include points-of-view on which you find little empirical evidence one way or the other, but identify evidence for as many of the points-of-view as you can. *In the paper itself*, you should first introduce the question and indicate why it is important, then devote a paragraph to each of the points-of-view (ways-of-answering) you identify. (If you found many points of view, paragraphs can be as little as three sentences each; if you found few, the paragraphs can be longer and you can review more evidence). In the last part of the paper, synthesize what you found, comparing what is more versus less empirically supported (or at least related to theory in political psychology). Feel free to speculate as to why the less empirically-supported viewpoints have appeal or have advocates.

The method for writing a **review of scientific/scholarly literature** on an important research question is as follows. First, identify a question (you can get some feedback from the instructor with regard to how “researchable” various question-possibilities are.) Then search for articles – you can fall back on book sources if you find little in the way of articles – representing (as much as possible) different

points of view on the question. You are welcome to use/cite the textbook, assigned readings, optional readings, and lecture material in this paper, but you should use/cite at least three other sources, preferably journal articles. In the paper itself, you should first introduce the question and indicate why it is important, then describe relevant evidence, including at least one paragraph for each of the "other sources" mentioned above. In the last part of the paper, synthesize what you found -- comparing evidence and sources and what is more versus less empirically supported, and therefore what appears to be the best way to answer the question given evidence reviewed.

Whichever direction you take, **the term paper is due by the end of week 10** (Friday, June 3, 5 pm). The final version of this paper must be at least five full double-spaced pages in length (filling a third page completely, no fonts over 12 point), not counting your reference list. At a maximum, it should not exceed ten full double-spaced pages in length, not counting reference list. There should be a minimum of three references (not including the course readings) consulted; for most topics it is helpful to consult more than three references. The paper should be typed, readable, free of gross spelling and typographic errors, well-organized and focused. It helps your paper if you avoid overgeneralizing and oversimplifying, and consider that research evidence can have alternative interpretations.

Final exam – This will be a mostly-essay exam involving two "big questions" related to the seminar content. These two questions will be drawn from a list of four "big questions" made available by the instructor at least two weeks prior to the final exam. About 1/5 of the exam content/credit will be questions requiring short answers, based on specific content in readings during the term (designed to reward your conscientiously reading all or most of what is assigned).

The **final grade** in the course will be based on the total of your points from all sources (ICQ papers, term paper, final exam, etc.). **A** range is 90% or better, **B** range is 80% to 90%, **C** range 70% to 80%, **D** range 60% to 70%, **F**s are less than 60%. '+' and '-' are added to grades if they fall in the top 1/3 or bottom 1/3, respectively, of A, B, C, and D range.

Psychology 507 (graduate students)

Seminar participants enrolled in Psychology 507, i.e., as graduate students, will have the same requirements as stated above, but with the following variations. Two of the reading responses for each 507-participant should be longer (up to one page in length) and will be read to the class as a start-point for discussion. And, for 507 students, the length requirements for the term paper will be slightly different: minimum seven to maximum 14 pages in length, not counting reference list.

Academic Integrity

The instructor takes academic integrity seriously. Insuring the "validity" of grades requires seeing that they reflect honest work and learning rather than cheating. **Cheating** is defined as providing or accepting information on an exam, plagiarism or copying anyone's written work. Students caught cheating will be given an **"F"** for the course, and UO's student conduct coordinator will be informed. The instructor retains the right to assign seats for tests, to change individual's seating for test security purposes, to require and check ID for admission to tests. **"Plagiarism"** is basically a form of theft: putting your name on work that is (in any part) not yours, where you have not fully identified the source from which you borrowed. Even taking someone else's ideas or paraphrasing their expression, without acknowledgment, is plagiarism. "Your responsibility, when you put your name on a piece of work, is simply to distinguish between what is yours and what is not, and to credit those who in any way have contributed" (quote is from Nancy Cotton of Wake Forest U.).

PSYCHOLOGY 407/507 SCHEDULE: What's Happening When

Textbook (Cottam et al., 2015) is abbreviated below as "Cottam"

[optional readings are referenced in brackets and *italicized*]

March 30 – Syllabus; some broad introduction to political psychology; "primate politics".

Machiavellianism, and charisma [*there is no assigned reading for session 1, but the optional short readings by de Waal (2007) and Bailey (2001) are relevant, and Cottam chapters 1-2 have some relevance*]

Readings for session 2: Ember et al. (2007); Winters (2011) [*Dubreuil (2010)*]

April 6 – Anthropology of politics, hierarchy in social evolution, tendencies toward inequality and oligarchy

Readings for session 3: Buena de Mesquita & Smith (2011); Meloen (2000); [*Svolik (2015); Weeks (2012); Fuchs (2007)*]

April 13 – Dynamics of dictatorship; political cultures of authoritarianism (autocracy) and democracy

Readings for session 4: Cottam chapter 2 pages 28-31; Altemeyer (2004); Feldman (2003, pp. 41-52); Renshon (2002) [*Miller & Hoffmann (1999); Sidanius & Pratto (2004)*]

April 20 – Individual-level authoritarianism, political religion, "culture wars"

Readings for session 5: Cottam chapter 11; Malka & Soto (2015) [*Conover & Feldman (1981); Jost & Banaji (1994); Malka & Lelkes (2010); Saucier (2013)*]

April 27 – Ideology and public opinion; social movements; system justification

Readings for session 6: Cottam chapter 6 pages 161-190 and chapter 7; Westen (2007) [*Converse (1964); Markus & MacKuen (2004)*]

May 4 – Candidate perception in democracies, mass media, psychology of voting

Readings for session 7: Cottam chapter 3 pages 57-62, chapter 4 pages 79-94 and 107-118, chapter 8 in entirety; Tajfel & Turner (1986) [*Sears et al. (1997); Sidanius & Pratto (2004)*]

May 11 – Political psychology of group perceptions: group categorization, stereotyping, prejudice, race, ethnicity, diversity; relation to social dominance theory

Readings for session 8: Cottam chapter 10 pages 293-320 and chapter 13 pages 390-392; Smith (2008)

May 18 – National images; variant forms of nationalism; notion of "tribalism"; xenophobia, paranoia, and the psychology of war

Readings for session 9: Cottam chapter 9 and chapter 14 pages 418-426; Stanton (2004); Mann (2005)

May 25 – Psychology of democide (genocide, ethnic cleansing, settler violence against indigenous peoples, state terror, etc.)

Readings for session 10: Cottam chapter 12; Atran, Axelrod, & Davis (2007); Stern (2003) [*Eckstein (1980); McBride, 2011; Saucier et al. (2009)*]

June 1 – Psychology of militant extremism (political terrorism, ISIS, etc.) and of (self-)radicalization.

June 9 (Thursday) – final exam at 2:45 pm

Assigned readings to be posted on Canvas are from the following sources:

Altemeyer, B. (2004). Highly dominating, highly authoritarian personalities. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 144, 421-447.

Atran, S., Axelrod, R., & Davis, R. (2007). Sacred barriers to conflict resolution. *Science*, 317, 1039-1040.

Buena de Mesquita, B., & Smith, A. (2011). *The dictator's handbook: Why bad behavior is almost always good politics*. New York: Public Affairs. (pages 1-20 only)

Ember, C. R., Ember, M., & Peregrine, P. N. (2007). *Anthropology* (12th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ:

- Pearson. (pages 418-430 only, though the entire chapter is posted on Canvas; the rest is optional)
- Feldman, S. (2003). Enforcing social conformity: A theory of authoritarianism. *Political Psychology*, 24, 41-74.
- Malka, A. & Soto, C. J. (2015). Rigidity of the economic right? Menu-independent and menu-dependent influences of psychological dispositions on political attitudes. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 24, 137-142.
- Mann M. (2005). *The dark side of democracy: Explaining ethnic cleansing*. New York: Cambridge University Press. (pages 1-33 only)
- Meloan, J. D. (2000). The political culture of state authoritarianism. In S. A. Renshon & J. Duckitt (Eds.), *Political psychology: Cultural and cross-cultural foundations* (pp. 108-127). New York: New York University Press.
- Renshon, S. A. (2002). Lost in plain sight: The cultural foundations of political psychology. In K. R. Monroe (Ed.), *Political psychology* (pp. 121-139). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Smith, A. D. (2008). *The cultural foundations of nations: Hierarchy, covenant, and republic*. Malden, MA: Blackwell. (pages 12-17 only)
- Stanton, G. H. (2004). Could the Rwandan genocide have been prevented? *Journal of Genocide Research*, 6, 211-228.
- Stern, J. (2003). *Terror in the name of God: Why religious militants kill*. New York: Harper-Collins. (pages xiii-xxxiii only)
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1986). The social identity theory of intergroup behavior. In S. Worchel & W. G. Austin (Eds.), *Psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 7-24). Chicago: Nelson-Hall.
- Westen, D. (2007). *The political brain: The role of emotion in deciding the fate of the nation*. New York: Public Affairs. (pages 3-23, 145-169 only)
- Winters, J. A. (2011). *Oligarchy*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press. (pages 1-39 only)

Optional readings on Canvas are from the following sources (starting list, others may be added):

- Bailey, F. G. (2001). *Treasons, stratagems, and spoils: How leaders make practical use of values and beliefs*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. (pages 1-2 only)
- Conover, P., & Feldman, S. (1981). The origins and meaning of the liberal-conservative self-identification. *American Journal of Political Science*, 25, 617-645.
- Converse, P. E. (2004). The nature of belief systems in mass publics. In J. T. Jost & J. Sidanius (Eds.), *Political psychology: Key readings* (pp. 181-199). New York: Psychology Press. (Originally published in 1964)
- Dubreuil, B. (2010). *Human evolution and the origins of hierarchies: The state of nature*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press. (pp. 1-9 and 84-93 only)
- De Waal, F. (2007). *Chimpanzee politics: Power and sex among apes* (25th anniversary edition). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. (pages 205-209 only)
- Eckstein, H. (1980). Theoretical approaches to explaining collective political violence. In T. R. Gurr (Ed.), *Handbook of political conflict: Theory and research* (pp. 135-166). New York: Free Press.
- Fuchs, D. (2007). The political culture paradigm. In R. J. Dalton & H.-D. Klingemann (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of political behavior* (pp. 161-184). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Jost, J. T., & Banaji, M. R. (1994). The role of stereotyping in system-justification and the production of false consciousness. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 33, 1-27.
- Malka, A., & Lelkes, Y. (2010). More than ideology: Conservative-liberal identity and receptivity to political cues. *Social Justice Research*, 23, 156-188.
- Marcus, G. E., & MacKuen, M. G. (2004). Anxiety, enthusiasm, and the vote: The emotional underpinnings of learning and involvement during presidential campaigns. In J. T. Jost & J. Sidanius (Eds.), *Political psychology: Key readings* (pp. 163-176). New York: Psychology Press. (Originally published in 1993)
- Saucier, G. (2013). Isms dimensions: Toward a more comprehensive and integrative model of belief-system components. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.
- Saucier, G., Akers, L. G., Shen-Miller, S., Stankov, L., & Knezevic, G. (2009). Patterns of thinking in militant extremism. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 4, 256-271.
- Sears, D. O., van Laar, C., Carrillo, M., & Kosterman, R. (1997). Is it really racism? The origins of white Americans' opposition to race-targeted policies. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 61, 16-53.
- Sidanius, J. & Pratto, F. (2004). Social dominance theory: A new synthesis. In J. T. Jost & J. Sidanius (Eds.), *Political psychology: Key readings* (pp. 315-332). New York: Psychology Press. (Originally published 1999)
- Svolik, M. W. (2015). Which democracies will last? Coups, incumbent takeovers, and the dynamic of democratic consolidation. *British Journal of Political Science*, 45, 715-738.
- Weeks, J. L. (2012). Strongmen and straw men: Authoritarian regimes and the initiation of international conflict. *American Political Science Review*, 106, 326-347.