

Lewis-Clark State College

POLS/PSYC 464: Political Psychology Syllabus

Course Information:

Sacajawea Hall, 144

Tuesday/Thursday 1:30PM-2:45PM

Instructor: Dr. Britzman

Email: kjbritzman@lcsc.edu | Office: 306 Spalding Hall

Office Hours: Thursdays 12:00PM-1:00PM (virtual and in person) or by appointment

Course Description:

This course provides an introduction to the field of political psychology. As its name suggests, the field of political psychology lies principally at the intersection of two disciplines, psychology and political science. In this class we will survey the major theoretical and methodological approaches that political scientists and psychologists have used to understand the political attitudes, decisions, and behavior of citizens, groups, and elites. Particular emphasis will be placed on the psychology of mass political behavior. Readings will cover both classic and recent studies in the field, with an emphasis on more contemporary and more empirical work.

In this course we will sample from across this broad range of topics in order to discover what ordinary people think and feel about politics. How do individuals organize their thoughts on politics? How do people acquire political beliefs? How do emotions influence political decision-making? What considerations drive people's racial attitudes and tolerance judgments? Do liberals and conservatives have different motivations and goals? How do personality characteristics shape the political attitudes that people adopt and the behaviors in which they engage? How does identity shape political choices? In order to understand the key concepts in political psychology we will read much of this research in its original form (academic research articles and book chapters).

Course Goals:

There are several key learning goals of this course. First, students will learn how to use psychological theories to critically analyze and understand political phenomena in everyday life, ranging from how and why people vote to the ways in which a person's political ideology might inform their behaviors. Second, students will learn about and discuss the importance of using scientific methods to empirically examine political questions. Third, students will work to understand how scientific methods can be most effectively employed to test different types of research questions, as well as the hurdles that researchers must work to overcome. We will accomplish these goals course readings, discussions during class, and writing assignments.

Required Reading:

There is not a required textbook for this class. All readings will be available on the course Canvas page. Readings will generally be peer-reviewed scholarly articles, but we will also read news articles and research reports. All readings must be completed **before** the class session for which they are assigned.

Assignments and Grading:

Assignments

Class engagement	20%
Reading reaction papers (2)	20%
Analytical writing assignment 1	15%
Analytical writing assignment 2	15%
Analytical writing assignment 3	15%
Take home final exam	15%

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage
A	92.50 - 100
A-	89.50 - 92.49
B+	87.50 - 89.49
B	82.50 - 87.49
B-	79.50 - 82.49
C+	77.50 - 79.49
C	72.50 - 77.49
C-	69.50 - 72.49
D+	67.50 - 69.49
D	62.50 - 67.49
D-	59.50 - 62.49
F	59.49 or lower

My policy is that all grade inquiries must be made **in writing** no fewer than 24 hours and no more than one week after the class in which the graded assignment is first handed back.

For students completing the class asynchronously:

Several students are completing the class asynchronously. Although we have one Canvas page for the class the requirements will be slightly different for students not taking the class in person.

The attendance and participation grade will be based on each asynchronous student sending a brief email (by Sunday evenings at 11:59PM) to the instructor identifying 2-3 key takeaways from each reading. Additionally, each student is expected to set up at least two Zoom check-in meetings with the instructor over the course of the semester.

For the reading reaction papers, asynchronous students will complete two reading reaction papers and should include discussion questions. However, they will not be graded based on the class discussion given the asynchronous mode of instruction.

All other writing assignments will be the same between the two version of this class.

Course Assignments:

1. Reading Reaction Papers

Each student will complete two reading reaction papers over the course of the semester. The papers will be 2-3 pages and must include a brief summary of the reading, your reaction to the reading, and conclude with several discussion questions for the class. Reaction papers will be due by 5:00PM (posted on the class Canvas discussion page) the night before our class sessions. All students should review the discussion questions before class.

2. Analytical Writing Assignments

You will be asked to write three essays over the course of the semester. The due dates are indicated in the schedule below. More detailed instructions will be provided in class two weeks before each due date. All writing assignments must be submitted via Canvas.

3. Take home final exam

The final project for the class will be an exam that you will complete over the last two weeks of the semester. This will be an opportunity reflect on and synthesize the information you learned throughout the semester.

4. Class engagement

I believe that learning works best as an interactive process among students and a teacher. Your personal insights and experience will help your classmates (and me) understand the material in a unique way. Throughout the semester there will be many opportunities for discussion and small-group activities. Your class engagement in this class will comprise 20% of your final grade. If you have any questions or concerns about your participation, please talk to me.

Course Policies:

1. Late Work

In order to be successful in this course, it is necessary to attend class regularly, keep up with the assigned readings, and turn in all work on time. I recognize that life happens, and I ask that you notify me at least **24 hours before the due date** to discuss a deadline extension. Barring such an agreement, late work will be assessed a penalty of ten percentage points per day for each day past the due date. In general, you should plan ahead so that you will be able to meet class requirements and deadlines even if you have computer troubles, are sick, or are out of town in the days before an assignment is due.

2. Academic Integrity

University standards for academic integrity apply in this class. Any form of plagiarism or cheating will not be tolerated. When you hand in an assignment, make sure everything in it is your own work and that you have made the appropriate references where necessary. You are expected to know and understand the college's policies on this matter. If you have questions about these standards, please consult the student code of conduct on academic integrity (<http://www.lcsc.edu/student-affairs/student-code-of-conduct/prohibited-conduct/>).

We will discuss guidelines for written work in more detail in class, but when in doubt, do not hesitate to ask for clarification. The LCSC Writing Center (Library, room 172) is also a good resource for students who have questions about writing or would like assistance with their writing assignments. Full information about their services is provided at their website (<http://www.lcsc.edu/writing-center>).

3. Course Website

You will find the syllabus, additional course readings, assignment information, announcements, and your grades on the Canvas.

4. Office Hours

If you have any questions about course policies, about the material covered in lectures or readings, or about the political science discipline in general, I encourage you to contact me. Generally, Monday through Friday I will answer emails within 24 hours. I also encourage you to come to office hours (either virtually or via an in-person appointment). If you have class or work conflicts at these times, let me know and we can set up an appointment. I want to help you do well in this course, so please do not hesitate to ask me questions and be in touch.

5. Classroom Environment

Diverse backgrounds and experiences are essential to the critical thinking endeavor at the core of university education. I view the diverse backgrounds and experiences of our class as a resource, strength, and benefit. I expect you to feel challenged and sometimes outside of your comfort zone in this course, but it is my intent to present materials and activities that are inclusive and respectful of all persons, no matter their gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, socioeconomic status, citizenship and immigration status, veteran status, race, ethnicity, religious and political beliefs, and other background characteristics. Please talk with me right away if you experience disrespect in this class, and I will work to address it in an educational manner.

6. Accessibility and the Counseling Center

Students with learning disabilities will be accommodated in accordance with university guidelines. Additionally, if you are in need of counseling services please reach out the LCSC Student Counseling Center (Sam Glenn Complex, room 212; phone 208-792-2211).

Course Schedule

Week 1

Introduction

January 18

Syllabus and introduction to class

What is political psychology?

January 20

“How to Read a Journal Article in Social Psychology” by Christian H. Jordan and Mark P. Zanna (1999)

“What is Political Psychology?” by Kristen Renwick Monroe, William Chiu, Adam Martin, and Bridgette Portman (2009)

Week 2

Political socialization

January 25

“Not Your Parents’ Political Socialization: Introduction for a New Generation” by Virginia Sapiro (2004)

January 27

“Politics across Generations: Family Transmission Reexamined” by M. Kent Jennings, Laura Stoker, and Jake Bowers (2009)

Week 3

Political participation

February 1

“College Roommates Have a Modest but Significant Influence on Each Other’s Political Ideology” by Logan Strother, Spencer Piston, Ezra Golberstein, Sarah Gollust, and Daniel Eisenberg

“The Growing Partisan Divide in Views of Higher Education” by Kim Parker of the Pew Research Center (2019)

February 3

“Life-Cycle Transitions and Political Participation: The Case of Marriage” by Laura Stoker and M. Kent Jennings (1995)

Week 4

Belief systems and values

February 8

“A Simple Theory of Survey Response: Answering Questions versus Revealing Preferences” by John Zaller and Stanley Feldman (1992)

February 10

“The Secret Lives of Liberals and Conservatives: Personality Profiles, Interaction Styles, and the Things They Leave Behind” by Dana R. Carney, John T. Jost, Samuel D. Gosling, and Jeff Potter (2008)

Analytical Writing Assignment #1 DUE Sunday February 13

Week 5

Personality and biology

February 15

“Personality and Civic Engagement: An Integrative Framework for the Study of Trait Effects on Political Behavior” by Jeffery Mondak, Matthew V. Hibbing, Damaris Canache, Mitchell A. Seligson and Mary R. Anderson (2010)

February 17

“Friendships Moderate an Association between a Dopamine Gene Variant and Political Ideology” by Jaime Settle, Christopher Dawes, Nicholas Christakis, and James Fowler (2012)

Week 6

Knowledge and heuristics

February 22

“Who Toes the Party Line: Cues, Values, and Individual Differences” by Cindy Kam (2005)

February 24

“The Knowledge Gap: A Reexamination of Gender-Based Differences in Political Knowledge” by Jeffery Mondak and Mary Anderson (2004)

Week 7

Information processing and motivated reasoning

March 1

“The Case for Motivated Reasoning” by Ziva Kunda (1990)

“The Science of Why We Don’t Believe Science” from *Mother Jones* by Chris Mooney (2011)

March 3

“Motivated Skepticism in the Evaluation of Political Beliefs” by Charles S. Taber and Milton Lodge (2006)

Week 8

Emotions

March 8

“Black Politics: How Anger Influences the Political Actions Blacks Pursue to Reduce Racial Inequality” by Antoine Banks, Ismail White, and Brian McKenzie (2019)

March 10

“Anxiety, Immigration, and the Search for Information” by Shana Kushner Gadarian and Bethany Albertson (2014)

Analytical Writing Assignment #2 DUE Sunday March 13

Week 9

Partisanship

March 15

“One Tribe to Bind Them All: How Our Social Group Attachments Strengthen Partisanship” by Lilliana Mason and Julie Wronski (2018)

March 17

“Negative Partisanship: Why Americans Dislike Parties but Behave Like Rabid Partisans” by Alan I. Abramowitz and Steven W. Webster (2018)

Week 10

Political trust

March 22

“Does Incivility Hurt Democracy? Here’s What Political Science Can Tell Us” by Emily Sydnor (2018)

“Trust and Distrust in in America” by Lee Rainie, Scott Keeter and Andrew Perrin of the Pew Research Center (2019)

March 24

“Conspiracy Endorsement as Motivated Reasoning: The Moderating Roles of Political Knowledge and Trust” by Joanne Miller, Kyle Saunders, and Christina Farhart (2015)

Spring break (March 28 – April 1)

Week 11

Misperceptions

April 5

“Misinformation and the Currency of Democratic Citizenship” by James Kuklinski, Paul Quirk, Jennifer Jerit, David Schwieder and Robert Rich (2000)

April 7

No class: Dr. Britzman attending the Midwest Political Science Association conference

Week 12

April 12

“The Nature and Origins of Misperceptions: Understanding False and Unsupported Beliefs about Politics” by D.J. Flynn, Brendan Nyhan, and Jason Reifler (2017)

Group behavior

April 14

“The Many Faces of Social Identity: Implications for Political Psychology” by Marilynn Brewer (2001)

Analytical Writing Assignment #3 DUE Sunday April 17

Week 13

Group behavior (continued)

April 19

“Putting Inequality in Its Place: Rural Consciousness and the Power of Perspective” by Katherine Cramer (2012)

April 21

“Selling Out?: The Politics of Navigating Conflicts between Racial Group Interest and Self-interest” by Ismail White, Chryl Laird, and Troy Allen (2014)

Week 14

Prejudice and intolerance

April 26

“The Price of Racial Bias: Intergroup Negotiations in the Ultimatum Game” by Jennifer T. Kubota, Jian Li, Eyal Bar-David, Mahzarin R. Banaji and Elizabeth A. Phelps (2013)

April 28

“The Ideological-Conflict Hypothesis: Intolerance Among Both Liberals and Conservatives” by Mark J. Brandt, Christine Reyna, John R. Chambers, Jarret T. Crawford and Geoffrey Wetherell (2014)

Week 15

Course wrap-up and summary

May 3

No readings

May 5

No readings

Take home final exam due Wednesday May 11