POLITICAL PSYCHOLOGY
POLITICAL SCIENCE 324
BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY
FALL 2010

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3-4pm or by appointment

Course Meeting Times and Location
T-Th 12:05-1:20pm
280 SWKT

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

Political psychology is an extraordinarily wide-ranging, interdisciplinary field that seeks to understand the role of human thought, emotion, and behavior in politics. In this seminar, we will explore several core concepts and current controversies in the field, with special attention to understanding the psychology of mass political behavior. The field of political psychology is vast – whole graduate programs are devoted to its study. Because of the limits of time, we will not be able to cover several valuable research traditions. Instead, the course focuses on a selection of issues that deal with how citizens think and feel about politics and the ways in which those beliefs shape their interactions with the political world. We will pause frequently to assess the implications of what we have learned about citizens for the success of democratic politics. Because my training is primarily in American politics, most of the readings emphasize politics in the United States, though the field itself speaks to every aspect of political science. As you think about the implications of what we are learning, I hope you will incorporate insights from your political experience, whether in the United States or elsewhere.

Because this is a relatively small, upper-division course, I will conduct the class as a seminar. I will begin each session with an overview of the important elements that I see in the reading, adding some background and context to allow you to gain a broader perspective on the scholarly landscape. We will then discuss the issues together, working to delve more deeply into the implications of particular lines of thought and to draw whatever connections we can to more fully understand the subject matter. You are expected to arrive at class having read the material carefully and ready to participate actively in the discussion.

Beyond the themes in political psychology we will investigate, this course will be a success if it develops in you the habits of work and mind that are central to college-level thought and argument and that will serve you well long after the final exam. We will emphasize the importance of attentive reading, thoughtful questioning, and compelling writing. By the end of the term, you should be practiced in the scholarly skills of critical reflection and persuasive reason-giving, and you should be able to craft an effective, insightful, and perhaps even eloquent college-level argument. In the language of our department learning outcomes, I hope this course helps you to think critically, analytically, and synthetically. It should increase your knowledge of political psychology as an important part of the discipline of political science, and it should help you critically assess the methods of analysis and research typically used by political psychologists.

* Special thanks to Tali Mendelberg, Penny Visser, Kathy Cramer Walsh, Rob Rodgers, and Debbie Schildkraut, whose syllabi were integral to creating this course. I have used ideas and insights from their courses in developing this syllabus.
More generally, I hope this course will help you begin to become a producer of ideas, not just a consumer of them. By adding something new – your unique ideas and perspectives – to the intellectual life of the university, you will become an integral part of the BYU community. The course will be valuable not simply because of what has been taught, but because of what you have learned.

While this process of learning can be demanding, it can also be exhilarating and extremely rewarding. Remember, too, that we are in this together – I expect our class to be an intellectual community in which we support and respect one another, giving each other constructive feedback and encouragement along the way.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

The requirements for this course are rigorous but fair. Because this is an upper-division seminar, class participation will be an essential component of the course. I expect you to come to every class prepared to discuss the issues raised in the readings. That means you should complete all reading assignments before class. The reading assignments consist of between 150 and 200 pages per week (between 3 and 5 chapters or articles per week). Adequately preparing for our discussions will mean considerable time spent before class working through the texts, making notes, and critically assessing their content and method.

The majority of your final grade (85%) comes from your essays and exams. The final 15% comes from your participation in class. Here is the grade breakdown:

- 15% 3 Response Essays (5% each)
- 20% Midterm Exam
- 25% Final Paper
- 25% Final Exam
- 15% Participation

You will write three response essays of 3-4 pages through the course of the semester. These essays should respond to, reflect upon or critique some aspect of the assigned reading. The best papers are not summaries of the readings, but include your own argumentative thesis. Such a paper might begin with a brief introduction that identifies a key argument or claim mentioned or implied in the readings. The body of the paper could then give a careful and thorough analysis of the claim or argument. Such an analysis might include the following – elaborating on the claim, constructively questioning or criticizing some aspect of it, developing an interesting application of it, comparing and contrasting one reading with another, or commenting on the implications of the readings for understanding contemporary political thought and behavior. In other words, your task is to process the readings and say something interesting and thoughtful, not just parrot back what you read. To the extent that you can draw connections across the various readings, or between the current readings and other topics we’re discussing, all the better.

Response papers are to be submitted via Blackboard by noon the day of class. They are meant to be a thoughtful reflection that is completed prior to our classroom discussion. Three response essays are required, but you may submit up to four. If you submit a fourth (you are not required to do so), your lowest grade will be dropped. At least one response paper must be submitted prior to the midterm. Keep in mind that you will be hard at work on your final paper during the second half of
the course, so I strongly encourage you to complete response papers earlier in the semester rather than procrastinating until the last few weeks of class.

You will receive detailed instructions for the final paper, which will be approximately 15 pages, later in the semester.

When grading essays and exams, I evaluate only the words on the page before me. The effort you put into an essay or exam will most certainly be evident in what you submit. Please note that I expect your revisions to be free of grammatical, spelling, and formatting errors. (I am happy to explain any technical issues that seem confusing or obscure.) Failure to meet these expectations may result in a lowered final grade.

Due dates for assignments are **firm and final.** Personal extensions are not fair to other members of the class, including me. For this reason, there will be **no personal extensions** under any circumstances except documented illness or family emergency.

Because personal extensions are not allowed, **failure to meet assigned due dates will bring serious consequences.** For essay assignments, including drafts and final revisions, your assignment grade will be docked one full letter grade per 24-hour period beginning one minute after the deadline. Exams must be taken on the days indicated in the schedule. The date and time of the final exam are set by the university. Do not ask for extensions or changes; I am not allowed to give them.

**COURSE TEXTS**

In this course, nearly all readings will be made available electronically, via Blackboard. We will read a wide variety of book chapters and journal articles. The only book we will read in its entirety is Diana Mutz’s *Hearing the Other Side*. Again, please be aware that the reading for this course is rigorous – most weeks, you will read between 3 and 5 book chapters or journal articles. Sometimes, these articles or chapters are technical and will require you to spend extra time working through the basic evidence and argument. If you encounter an article that employs statistical techniques you are not yet familiar with, don’t despair! Work to understand the gist of the argument and its normative implications. I am happy to discuss technical questions at any point.

**New York Times**

One of the goals of this course is to help you apply what you are learning to current events. Regularly following the news about politics through a high-quality national newspaper will, I hope, become a lifelong habit for you (studies show that people who read a newspaper regularly are far more likely to be active, engaged, and informed citizens). Students are therefore **strongly encouraged to read the New York Times or a comparable national newspaper (ex., the Washington Post) each weekday.** (The *Daily Universe* does not count as a national newspaper.) I recommend taking advantage of the substantially discounted rate provided on campus to subscribe to the *New York Times*. This is available at the service desk on the third floor in the BYU Bookstore. You may also read it online at the *Times* website at [http://www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com).
COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: Reading assignments are to be completed before class on the day indicated. Detailed instructions for the final paper will be furnished during the semester. Readings marked with an asterisk (*) are recommended, not required. Recommended readings are additional articles or chapters that may be helpful for research papers or if you want to explore a topic more deeply. They will not, however, be discussed in class.

Week 1

August 31: Introduction and Course Overview


Hermann, Margaret G. 2002. “Political Psychology as a Perspective in the Study of Politics.” In Kristen Renwick Monroe (ed.), Political Psychology. (*)


September 2: Political Psychology and Experiments


Week 2

September 7: Personality and Politics – Elites


September 9: Personality and Politics – The Mass Public


Week 3

September 14: Political Socialization: Families and Children


September 16: Political Socialization: Genetics and Life Experiences


Week 4

September 21: Philip Converse and His Legacy

Kinder, Donald R. 1993. “Coming to Grips with the Holy Ghost.” In Kinder and Palfrey (eds.), *Experimental Foundations of Political Science.* (*)

**September 23: Ideology**


**Week 5**

**September 28: Ideology (cont’d)**


**September 30: Political Knowledge**


**FINAL PAPER ASSIGNMENT DISTRIBUTED**

**Week 6**

**October 5: Heuristics**


October 7: Heuristics – Potential Problems?


Week 7

October 12: Information Processing: On-line versus Memory-based Models


October 14: **GROUP WORKSHOPS: FINAL PAPER ASSIGNMENT**

Week 8

October 19: **MIDTERM EXAM**
October 21: Emotions


**FINAL PAPER PROPOSAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE BY 5PM ON FRIDAY, OCTOBER 22**

**Week 9**

October 26: Framing Effects


October 28: Mass Media


**Week 10**

November 2 (ELECTION DAY!): Mass Media (cont’d)


November 4: Tolerance


**Week 11**

**November 9: Authoritarianism, Threat, and Tolerance**


**November 11: Groups, Norms and Conformity**


**Week 12**

**November 16: Race – Controversies**


**November 18: Race – Dynamics**


**FINAL ESSAY DRAFT DUE TO WRITING GROUPS BY MIDNIGHT ON FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 19.**

**MEET WITH WRITING GROUPS NO LATER THAN WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 1.**

**Week 13**

**November 23: NO CLASS** (Attend your Friday courses. The reading for next week is heavy, so read ahead over the break.)

**November 25: NO CLASS – HAPPY THANKSGIVING!**
Week 14

November 30: The Psychology of Political Participation and Political Processes


December 2: The Psychology of Political Participation and Political Processes (cont’d)


Week 15

December 7: Deliberation versus Participation?


December 9: Political Psychology and Democracy


**FINAL PAPER DUE BY MIDNIGHT**

Tuesday, December 14: **FINAL EXAM, 7am – 10am**
POLICIES

It is your responsibility to read and follow these policies. Their presence in writing here constitutes fair notice to you. Please pay careful attention and follow each one!

• Attendance and Participation: In order to succeed in this course, your consistent attendance and regular participation in class discussions is essential. Multiple unexcused absences are grounds for a significantly lower participation grade. During class meetings, I expect everyone to participate meaningfully in our discussions. If you find that such participation is a special challenge for you, please come see me so we can talk about how you can most effectively join the conversation.

• Communication: My door is always open to you, and I hope you will feel free to contact me about any issues that arise during the course of the semester. I’m happy to meet with you during office hours or by appointment to discuss any aspect of this course. Just ask or e-mail me, or drop by my office during my regularly scheduled office hours.

Because it is the best way for us to communicate with each other outside of class, all class members are required to maintain an active email account. It is your responsibility to ensure that the email address that is listed for you in the BYU directory is accurate. I will relay important or time-sensitive class announcements via email. I strongly encourage you to check your email daily throughout the semester. You are responsible for any information that I pass along via this medium.

• Extensions: All deadlines in this course are firm. Except in the case of medical or family emergency, I give no individual extensions. If, due to such an emergency, you cannot meet a deadline, please contact me as soon as possible. In the event of a medical emergency, you must produce a note from a doctor or from the Student Health Center (or bring me pictures of your newly born baby). Late written work will be marked down one full letter grade for each day late, beginning one minute after the assignment is due.

• Honor Code: I expect that you will live by the university’s academic honesty policy, which you have already signed: BYU students should seek to be totally honest in their dealings with others. They should complete their own work and be evaluated based upon that work. They should avoid academic dishonesty and misconduct in all its forms, including plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, cheating, and other academic misconduct. Students are responsible not only to adhere to the Honor Code requirement to be honest but also to assist other students in fulfilling their commitment to be honest.

• Plagiarism: While all students sign the honor code, there are still specific skills most students need to master over time in order to correctly cite sources, especially in this new age of the internet; as well as deal with the stress and strain of college life without resorting to cheating. Please know that as your professor I will notice instances of cheating on exams or plagiarizing on papers. See http://www.byu.edu/honorcode for specific examples of intentional, inadvertent plagiarism, and fabrication, falsification.

Writing submitted for credit at BYU must consist of the student's own ideas presented in sentences and paragraphs of his or her own construction. The work of other writers or speakers may be included when appropriate (as in a research paper or book review), but such material must support the student's own work (not substitute for it) and must be clearly identified by appropriate introduction and punctuation and by footnoting or other standard referencing. The substitution of another person's work for the student's own or the inclusion of another person's work without
adequate acknowledgment (whether done intentionally or not) is known as plagiarism. It is a violation of academic, ethical, and legal standards and can result in a failing grade not only for the paper but also for the course in which the paper is written. In extreme cases, it can justify expulsion from the University. Because of the seriousness of the possible consequences, students who wonder if their papers are within these guidelines should visit the Writing Lab or consult a faculty member who specializes in the teaching of writing or who specializes in the subject discussed in the paper. Useful books to consult on the topic include the current Harbrace College Handbook, the MLA Handbook, and James D. Lester's Writing Research Papers.

You should be careful to avoid the following examples of plagiarism: (1) Turning in work or portions of work that are identical to work submitted by another student. If two paragraphs of different papers are identical, we will assume that plagiarism occurred and will treat the incident as a serious violation of the Honor Code. (2) Using work from past semesters as anything other than a guide or supplement. If work is submitted for this semester which follows the format or instructions of a previous semester, we will assume that plagiarism occurred. We encourage you to work with other students and even consult work done in previous semesters. However, the work you turn in must be entirely your own work. Because of the simplicity of "cut and paste," it is easy to pass off another person's work as your own. It is your responsibility to make sure that your work is entirely your own.

• Honor Pledge: As a way of reinforcing the importance of academic honesty, I am adopting a tradition from Princeton University for the essays you turn in this semester. You should write the following pledge at the end of all drafts and revisions, and then sign it (or, if the paper is submitted electronically, print your name, which will count as your signature): “This paper represents my own work in accordance with University regulations.”

• Discrimination: Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity that receives federal funds. The act is intended to eliminate sex discrimination in education. Title IX covers discrimination in programs, admissions, activities, and student-to-student sexual harassment. BYU's policy against sexual harassment extends not only to employees of the university but to students as well. If you encounter unlawful sexual harassment or gender based discrimination, please talk to your professor; contact the Equal Employment Office at 378-5895 or 367-5689 (24-hours); or contact the Honor Code Office at 378-2847.

• Access: Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere which reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability which may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the University Accessibility Center (422-2767). Reasonable academic accommodations are reviewed for all students who have qualified documented disabilities. Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the UAC office. If you need assistance or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, you may seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures. You should contact the Equal Employment Office at 378-5895, D-282 ASB.

• Learning Outcomes: Each program at BYU has developed a set of expected student learning outcomes. These will help you understand the objectives of the curriculum in the program, including this class. To learn the expected student outcomes for the programs in this department and college go to http://learningoutcomes.byu.edu and click on the College of Family, Home and Social Sciences and then this department. We welcome feedback on the expected student learning outcomes. Any comments or suggestions you have can be sent to <FHSS@byu.edu>.
**WHAT TO DO NOW**

When you get to this point in the syllabus, please e-mail Dr. Karpowitz at ckarpowitz@byu.edu to say that you read it, and tell him something about yourself and about your goals for the semester. Feel free to ask any questions that you may have about the course.