Poli 7903– Political Psychology
Spring 2016

Class Time: T 1:30 – 4:20pm
Classroom: Stubbs 210
Professor: Dr. Kathleen Searles
E-mail: ksearles@lsu.edu
Office Location: Stubbs 213
Office Hours: Tu 10-12pm and by appointment

Introduction: In this class we will explore the intersection of political science and psychology and in so doing, we will draw on psychological theories and concepts to better understand political attitudes and behavior. Specifically, rather than examine electoral outcomes as many political scientists do, we’ll ask why did individuals make such vote choices? What were the cognitive processes that led to such decisions? What role do genetics and biology play? We’ll uncover the extent to which much of political science relies on psychology in understanding international relations, public opinion, campaign advertising, gender, and race.

Readings
Most of our readings are from journal articles. I have done my best to make these available to you, but in the event they are not on the course website it is your responsibility to access the journal via the library website or JStor.org. I have tried to copy chapters of texts when possible. There are some texts where the amount of material required exceeds copyright laws; these are required:


For each week's readings, you should be prepared to discuss the following questions in class:

1. In your view, what are some of the major theoretical perspectives that structure research in a given area, what are their major strengths and weaknesses, and how do they compare with other perspectives you’re familiar with (encountered in the course or elsewhere)?

2. In your view, what do you see as some of the major strengths and weaknesses of the methods used to investigate the subject? What methodologies, broadly conceived (e.g., basic issues of design, measurement, etc.) do you feel are most appropriate, given the subject of inquiry, and
to what degree do you think the substantive conclusions drawn are dependent on the particular methods employed?

3. Do the authors engage with each other? Is this engagement fruitful for furthering the field? Would we learn more as scholars by more study in this area? What do we still not know?

4. What are the major implications of the findings for democratic theory and public policy? What relevance do the studies have for your interests? What does the study say about the way in which the American political system operates in practice – does the system live up to its billing as a democracy? According to what expectations and what definition of democracy?

5. What are the implications for practitioners? Think about campaign consultants, policy advisers, etc.

6. How can this research be improved, in your view? What theories, methods and substantive foci deserve more attention in future research?

Evaluation

Final grades in this course are based on your success in 5 areas for a total of 150 points.

1. **Discussion leading (24):** Two times over the course of the semester, you will help to lead discussion; each discussion leading is worth 12 points. You will lead the week’s discussion starting with a 15-20 minute overview of the week’s readings that provides a concise summary of key findings and questions and raise questions for discussion; approximately a few minutes per article is sufficient, a bit longer for book-length assignments. Do not read off notes or from the text. Rather, you may want to focus on the key issues or debate and follow those through several pieces. It is not required, but I encourage you to prepare a handout for the class to facilitate discussion. We will coordinate discussion leading during the first week of class. Since on most weeks, we will have two discussants, you should coordinate which readings you will cover so as to eliminate overlap. It should be clear that all discussants contributed substantively to the presentation. See rubric on Moodle for guidelines.

2. **Reaction papers (20):** Two times over the course of the semester, you are required to turn in 2-page reaction papers on the readings for that week; you choose the weeks. These papers should offer a brief critical analysis of the readings; each paper is worth 10 points and must be submitted via email by 5pm the Tuesday before class. These papers are structured to encourage you to develop your own arguments and evaluations of the topics in the course. Reaction papers are NOT summaries of the readings. A good reaction paper contains a well-structured argument and examines questions such as: How do the readings fit together? What are the key concepts? How are the key concepts defined and measured? Do differences in measurement and conceptualization explain differences in conclusions? What important questions were answered by the readings? How well are these questions answered? What important questions are left unanswered? What theories are being tested? Are the methodological strategies and data appropriate? What readings stand out and why? What shortcomings characterize this week’s reading? How would you improve upon them? What are the implications of these findings for our understanding of politics? See rubric on Moodle for guidelines.

3. **Research paper outline (8):** Submit a detailed paper outline including research question, tentative theory and hypotheses, a sketch of relevant literature, possible
variables and methodological approach, description of data and at least 10 formatted citations. This can be a numbered outline or similar format. Upon approval of topic and data source students will receive all points. Outlines with insufficient information or lacking cites or data source will be returned without credit.

Due: March 1st in class.

4. **Final research paper (50):** A 15-20 page double-spaced research paper (not including figures, appendices, tables and references). Students should view this paper as a preliminary draft of a conference paper, thesis, or dissertation chapter. Pick a question or a theory from the course and apply it to a problem of interest to you. My preference is that the paper lay out an experimental research design to test a political psychology proposition. It would be best if this paper actually tested said hypotheses using experimental data including at least some preliminary results based on this empirical investigation. If this is not possible then a very thorough and in-depth literature review and design is required. Alternatively observational/secondary data may be appropriate for some questions. This paper should correspond to the paper outline submitted earlier in the course. Students should use footnotes (note this is a departure from the JOP style guide); other stylistic questions refer to The JOP Style Guide. See rubric on Moodle for guidelines.

Due: May 4th by 4pm. Turn in hard copy to political science main office, Stubbs 240.

5. **Class Presentation (23):** We will devote the last class to presentations on the research you have done for your research paper. This presentation should be styled after an academic conference paper presentation lasting no more than 15 minutes. See rubric on Moodle for guidelines.

University policy is to utilize a plus/minus grading scale. Below is the 10-point +/- grading scale I will use for this class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading Scale</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>96.5 and above</td>
<td>A+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93.50 – 96.49</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90.00–93.49</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>86.50–89.99</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83.50–86.49</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>80.00–83.49</td>
<td>B-</td>
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<tr>
<td>76.50–79.99</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>73.50–76.49</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70.00–73.49</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69.99 and below*</td>
<td>F</td>
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*there are no D grades in grad. courses

**Class Policies**

**FILMING & RECORDING.** You may not film or record this class without permission.

**OFFICE HOURS AND AVAILABILITY.** If you do not understand any material covered in class please do not hesitate to come to my office hours. Also feel free to ask questions during the lecture. Class participation is encouraged. The best way to get a hold of me is either during office hours or via email. When you email me treat it like formal correspondence, in other
words, do not use “texting” language. If I get an email like this, “what r we doing tmrw? NE thing important?” I will ignore it. In an email it is standard to have a greeting, a main body in which the request or question is stated, and a sign-off. I will do my best to respond to emails within 24 hours if received during standard business hours during the week. Expect responses in 48-72 hours for emails received on holidays or over the weekend. I will not discuss grades via email. Come see me during my office hours or before/after class if you need to discuss grades.

MOODLE. I will use the course website to post readings, supplementary material, and to sometimes make announcements. Please visit the course website on a regular basis. I will not use Moodle to post grades; I will however update my gradebook regularly so that you can talk to me about how you’re doing anytime.

CLASS ATTENDANCE AND HOURS OUTSIDE OF CLASS. Attendance and participation is integral to your success in this class. Each class will build on preceding class lectures, so it is very important you attend each class. If you miss a class it is your responsibility to get notes from a peer. As a general policy, for each hour you are in class, you (the student) should plan to spend at least two hours preparing for the next class. Since this course is for three credit hours, you should expect to spend around six hours outside of class each week reading or writing assignments for the class.

EXTRA CREDIT. At some point in the semester I will offer at least 3 points extra credit for students who participate in a study at the Media Effects Lab or MEL. For any student under the age of 18 please notify me and I will make an alternative extra credit opportunity available. For more information about the MEL including commonly asked questions see here: [http://melresearch.com/undergraduate-students/](http://melresearch.com/undergraduate-students/). For directions to the MEL see here: [http://www.lsu.edu/faculty/msand/MELmap.pdf](http://www.lsu.edu/faculty/msand/MELmap.pdf)

LATE ASSIGNMENTS. No late assignments will be accepted. Assignments will be turned in at the beginning of class; if you are late to class and I choose to accept the assignment at a minimum you will be docked 10%.

MAKE-UP POLICY. Missing an exam or an assignment will result in a zero grade except under extraordinary circumstances. Such exceptional circumstances, for example illness or medical emergencies, must be either university-approved or verified in other ways (e.g. a doctor’s note indicating grave illness, not routine check-up). In such cases, I have two expectations. First, that the student will contact me as soon as physically able via email to alert me regarding the emergency. This will ideally be before the student misses the deadline. Second, students must make arrangements as soon as possible to both provide documentation of the excusable absence and reschedule the assignment or exam. I reserve the right to make make-up exams or assignments different from the original.

ACADEMIC ETIQUETTE. Do not carry on side conversations or read the newspaper during class. Do not text, update your relationship status on Facebook, tweet/subtweet, take selfies, post pictures of your food on Instagram, etc. I will ask you to leave the room if you are disturbing others. Turn off all cellular phones prior to entering class. If your phone rings I will answer it. Seriously, I will.

LAPTOPS. There are some students that use their laptops in class effectively. There are many more that use their laptops as a means to pay partial attention. Inappropriate use of laptops in class is not just ill advised, but it is also disruptive, distracting, and disrespectful. Use of a laptop in class is a privilege not a right. If you abuse this privilege I will assign you a 0 for participation that day, and in some cases you may be asked to leave. If a preponderance of students abuse this privilege I will ban laptops.
ELECTRONIC SUBMISSIONS. Do you have SARS? Ebola? If the answer is no to either of these questions then I will not accept assignments via email with the obvious exception being response papers, which I require to be sent via email. Please turn in a hard copy of assignments unless told otherwise.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT. I do not tolerate plagiarizing or cheating of any kind. Such behavior will result in disciplinary action. LSU’s policy on plagiarism is the following: “Plagiarism is defined to include any use of another's work and submitting that work as one's own. This means not only copying passages of writing or direct quotations but also paraphrasing or using structure or ideas without citation.” Please review the University’s excellent guidelines on plagiarism and academic integrity at http://www.lsu.edu/judicialaffairs/ and http://www.lsu.edu/judicialaffairs/Plagiarism.htm.

CITATION. I do ask that the structure of your citations be parenthetical rather than footnote, but I do not require a style of citation for this class. I DO ask you to cite extensively and often – when in doubt, cite! I prefer APSA or Chicago/Turbanian.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION. The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that reasonable accommodations be provided for students with physical, cognitive, systemic, learning and psychiatric disabilities. Please contact me at the beginning of the semester to discuss any such accommodations for this course. In order to have any accommodations met, you must be registered with the LSU Office of Disabilities Services. More information on registering and accommodation is available on the ODS website: http://appl003.lsu.edu/slas/ods.nsf/index

GRADE REVIEW. I am willing to review a written request to review a grade submitted no earlier than one-week following receipt of the grade, and no later than 4 weeks after receipt of the grade. If such a request is made, students must be prepared that a review may result in either a lower or higher grade.

Course Outline*
Note: that when possible, in addition to providing some pdfs on Moodle, I have linked the article to the journal; if you are on campus or signed-in LSU remotely you should be able to access them directly.

January 19 – Introduction
January 26 – The Rational Citizen
• Huddy, Leonie, David O. Sears, and Jack S. Levy. 2013. “Introduction: Theoretical Foundations of Political psychology.” Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology. (Chapter 1)
• Chong, Dennis. 2013. “Degrees of Rationality in Politics.” Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology. (Chapter 4)
• Tetlock, Phillip E. 2005. Expert Political Judgment: how good is it? How can we know? Princeton University Press. (Chapters 1-3; entire text available for free via LSUL, Project Muse)

Optional


February 2 – Information Processing


Optional


February 9 – NO CLASS (Mardis Gras)

February 16 – Politics is for lovers: Affect in Politics


Optional

Response by Marcus et al, and Brader in *Political Psychology*, 32, April.


February 23 – Politics is for fear-mongering: Affect in Politics

• Albertson, Bethany and Shana Kushner Gadarian. 2015. Anxious Politics: Democratic Citizenship in a Threatening World. Cambridge University Press. (all)

March 1 – Man is by nature a social (political) animal: Social Cognition


Optional


March 8 – Bio-Politics

  o Complete the Left/Right 20 Questions before class.
  o Meet at MEL lab (see link to map in extra credit note on syllabus)

March 15 – Evolution + Geno-Politics


Optional

March 22 – NO CLASS (Spring Break)
March 29 – Persuasion

Optional

April 5 – Social Identity/Social Groups
• Huddy, Leonie. 2013. “From Group Identity to Political Cohesion and Commitment.” Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology. (Chapter 23)

Optional

April 12 – War
• Matthews, Michael. 2014. Head Strong: How Psychology is Revolutionizing War. Oxford University Press. (all)

Optional

April 19 – NO CLASS (Professor traveling): Work on your final research papers!
April 26 – Research Presentations

*The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the schedule and syllabus.