

## **Political Psychology**

POSC 3313

Fall 2017 / Mon-Thurs 4:00 – 5:15

### Professor McDermott

Office: Faber Hall, 672

Hours: Mondays 1:00-3:00, or by appointment

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### Description

The purpose of this course is to provide an overview of the field of political psychology as it relates to Americans' attitudes and political choices. We will explore the major theories and studies in political psychology and American electoral politics. We will address questions such as, but not limited to:

- How do stereotypes, prejudice, and group conflict fit into politics, policy and elections?
- How do people form their beliefs and attitudes, and how does this affect their political behavior?
- How do people mentally process political information, and what do these processes mean for voting and democracy?
- Does a typically apathetic electorate make 'correct' decisions, and if they do, how do they do it?

This course is part of a new requirement in political science for students to take a Methods Intensive (MI) course. Courses designated as MI teach students both an important political science subject as well as a research method appropriate to that topic. They take students from the very beginning of a research program – a literature review – to design or completion of a research project. This year the requirement is only for new majors at the sophomore or freshmen levels, but all students are welcome. This course still counts as a POSC elective or as an American Politics subject requirement.

Because the course involves studying human behavior, you and an assigned group will be expected to implement a real-world experiment of “voter” behavior and candidate characteristics. You will conduct all parts of a real academic project, including conducting your own experiment and analyzing the results.

In addition, participation in class discussion is part of the grade. Much of the literature is intuitive and applicable to life in general, frequently even controversial, and as such it lends itself to fluent discussion and frequent class activities.

### Grading

*20 percent*

1. A midterm exam.

*35 percent*

2. Your group assignment components, consisting of: a literature review at 10%; a theory and hypothesis component at 5%; a research design and implementation at

10%; and a group presentation (including a brief written summary) of the results at 10%

*15 percent*

3. A brief *individual* written report on your group's experiment – from design, to implementation and effects.

*20 percent*

4. A final exam (based on the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the class content only).

*5 percent*

5. You will be expected to actively participate in class activities and discussion (which kind of means you need to be there – but that's your call).

*5 percent*

6. Occasional homework or class assignments.

#### Policies/Rules:

- The use of laptops, cell phones or any outside electronics of any kind is **prohibited** during class time. *Anyone who uses such an item in class will be required to leave for the day, and they will lose five full points off their final grade for each infraction.*
- In addition, late arrival to class will be penalized. *Multiple late arrivals will affect your participation grade.*
- All university guidelines regarding academic integrity apply. Any transgression will be reported to the university administration and appropriate actions taken. ([http://www.fordham.edu/info/21684/regulations/3695/the\\_fordham\\_university\\_undergraduate\\_policy\\_on\\_academic\\_integrity](http://www.fordham.edu/info/21684/regulations/3695/the_fordham_university_undergraduate_policy_on_academic_integrity))

#### Readings

There are two required books for the course. Both can be obtained at the Fordham Bookstore:

Iyengar, Shanto, and William J. McGuire. 1993. *Explorations in Political Psychology*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Pollock, Philip H. III. 2016. *An IBM SPSS Companion to Political Analysis, 5<sup>th</sup> ed.* Los Angeles: Sage.

Additional *required* readings are on Blackboard, and further readings may be added throughout the semester.

#### Schedule

(Assigned readings are to be done **before** the first class session to which they are assigned.)

- 8/31/17 Course introduction – Basic theories of political psychology  
*Iyengar, Chapter 1*
- 9/4/17 **Labor Day – no class held (held 9/9 instead)**
- 9/6-7/17 **Wednesday – following a Monday schedule (and Thursday)**  
Political socialization  
*Niemi – The Rebirth of Political Socialization: Blackboard*  
*Sigel – Assumptions about the Learning of Political Values: Blackboard*  
*Forestiere – Reviewing the Literature: Blackboard*
- 9/11-14/17 Stereotyping and Political Attitude Formation – Project background and group assignments  
*Schneider – The Development of Stereotypes: Blackboard*  
*Fiske and Taylor – Social Cognition, pp. 142-147: Blackboard*

## **POLITICAL ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS**

- 9/18-21/17 Self-Interest or Symbolic Politics?  
*Sears – Symbolic Politics: Iyengar, Chapter 5*  
*Tedin – Self-Interest & Symbolic Values, pp. 628-635, 646-647: Blackboard*

### **9/25/17 Literature Reviews due**

- 9/25-28/17 Group Identity and Group Conflict in Political Attitudes  
*Sidanius -- The Psychology of Group Conflict: Iyengar, Chapter 7*  
*Conover – Group Identifications and Political Perception: Blackboard*  
*Pollock Essentials of Analysis, Chapter 3: Blackboard*

- 10/2/17 Experimentation in Political Science and Research Design  
*McDermott, Rose – Experimentation in Political Science: Blackboard*  
***There will be a quiz in class on the above reading.***

- 10/5/17 Prejudice, Racism and Political Attitude Formation  
*Sniderman – Reasoning and Choice, Chapter 13: Blackboard*  
*Hutchings – The Centrality of Race in American Politics: Blackboard*

### **10/9/17 Columbus Day – no class held**

### **10/12/17 Theory and Hypotheses due**

- 10/12/17 The Psychology of Personality in the Political System  
*McCrae – The Five Factor Model of Personality: Blackboard*  
*Pollock Essentials of Analysis, Chapter 2: Blackboard*

- 10/16/17 Ideology as a Cognitive Structure  
*Feldman – Values, Ideology, and the Structure of Political Attitudes: Blackboard*  
*The Belmont Report on Human Subjects: Black board*
- 10/19/17 Ideology continued – Midterm Review
- 10/23/17 **Mid-term exam**

## **INFORMATION PROCESSING AND CHOICE**

### **10/26/17 Research Designs and IRB Protocol due**

- 10/26-30/17 Processing Information: An Overview  
*Wyer – Political Information Processing: Iyengar, Chapter 9*
- 11/2-6/17 Perception and Evaluation of Political Actors  
*Granberg – Political Perception: Iyengar, Chapter 4*  
*Lodge and Stroh – Inside the Mental Voting Booth: Iyengar, Chapter 8*
- 11/9/17 Political Knowledge  
*Delli Carpini – What Americans Know About Politics and Why It Matters, Chapter 2: Blackboard*
- 11/13/17 SPSS training in computer lab – Walsh 044  
*Pollock SPSS Companion, Chapters "Getting Started" Intro through 2*
- 11/16/17 SPSS training in computer lab – Walsh 044  
*Pollock SPSS Companion, Chapters 3 through 5*
- 11/20/17 Project completion, completion reports due**
- 11/20/17 Decision-Making (voting) under Uncertainty  
*Jervis – The Drunkard's Search: Iyengar, Chapter 12*  
*Popkin – Decision Making in Presidential Primaries, Chapter 13*
- 11/23/17 Thanksgiving break – no class held**
- 11/27/17 Electoral Choice  
*Iyengar – Information and Electoral Attitudes: Iyengar, Chapter 11*  
*Sniderman – Reasoning and Choice, Chapter 9: Blackboard*
- 11/30/17 Emotion and Affect in Political Perception and Judgment  
*Masters – Emotion and Cognition in Political Information: Iyengar, Chapter 6*  
*Ottati – Affect and Political Judgment: Iyengar, Chapter 10*  
*Marcus – Emotions in Politics: Blackboard*
- 12/4-7/17 Group Presentations

### **Final and Individual Reports due – TBA**