

POLS Y661: Political Psychology and American Political Behavior

Steven W. Webster, Ph.D.

Fall 2020

E-mail: swebste@indiana.edu

Web: stevenwebster.com/teaching

Office Hours:

Class Hours:

Office:

Class Room:

Course Description

Political psychology is concerned with understanding how individuals both think and feel about politics, and how these psychological factors shape political behavior. This graduate seminar provides an introduction to the study of political psychology in the United States. Because this seminar is designed to be an introduction to the field, we will cover a wide range of topics in American politics that have been studied through a psychological lens. Topics we will cover include the source of political opinions and attitudes (e.g. socialization, genetics and politics, social influence), the role of personality and emotions in shaping political behavior, the importance of "motivated reasoning" in public opinion, the origins of misperceptions and conspiracy theories about politics, and the relationship between politically salient groups.

Course Objectives

1. Gain a foundational understanding of the literature on political psychology in the United States.
2. Learn to critically read scientific literature.
3. Develop independent research ideas pertaining to political psychology.

Required Books

The following books are required for this course. I will also place a copy of each on course reserves at the library.

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

Hetherington, Marc J., and Jonathan D. Weiler. 2012. *Authoritarianism and Polarization in American Politics*. Cambridge University Press.

Mondak, Jeffery J. 2010. *Personality and the Foundations of Political Behavior*. Cambridge University Press.

Sinclair, Betsy. 2012. *The Social Citizen: Peer Networks and Political Behavior*. University of Chicago Press.

Webster, Steven W. 2020. *American Rage: How Anger Shapes Our Politics*. Cambridge University Press. (Note: I will distribute copies)

Young, Dannagal. 2019. *Irony and Outrage: The Polarized Landscape of Rage, Fear, and Laughter in the United States*. Oxford University Press.

Course Policy

The details of the course are outlined below.

Grading Policy

- 40% of your grade will be determined by a final paper that explores a topic of interest to political psychologists. Ideally, this should be a paper that helps you write your second year paper, prospectus, dissertation, etc., or develop into a manuscript that you (eventually) submit to a journal. We can discuss on an individual basis whether this requirement is best satisfied by writing an entire research paper, developing a fleshed-out front half of a paper, etc.
- 20% of your grade will be determined by an in-class presentation of your research paper. This presentation should include slides and should mirror presentations seen at professional conferences or those given by guests in our department. Do not stress about this. Though it can cause anxiety, presenting one's work is an important part of the profession. Getting practice communicating your ideas is the best way to develop this skill.
- 20% of your grade will be determined by your completion of three response papers. These papers should be short (2-3 pages) reflections and *critical analyses* of the week's readings. You can pick any week for which you would like to write a reflection paper. These papers are due prior to the start of that week's class (e.g. a reflection paper for Week 2 is due the day we discuss those readings).
- 20% of your grade will be determined by participation in the seminar discussions. In addition to having done the readings and contributing to the class discussion each week, this grade includes serving as a discussion leader throughout the semester. Each student will serve as a discussion leader twice throughout the semester. When you are leading the discussion, be sure to have topics, themes, and questions for us to discuss based off of the readings. We will assign weeks before the first meeting.

Late assignments will not be accepted without penalty. I will deduct five percentage points from the grade on the late assignment for each day that it is late. Additionally, I do not communicate about grades over email. If you are unsatisfied with your grade on an assignment, you can appeal your grade within one week of the date the assignment was returned. To appeal your grade, you need to write a one-page, double-spaced explanation of why you think your work merits a higher grade. After reviewing the appeal, I will re-grade your assignment. Note that your grade can go up, stay the same, or go down upon re-grading.

Attendance Policy

Attending class is tremendously important. As this is a graduate seminar, learning takes place through engaging in thoughtful deliberation with your peers. This is only possible if you are in

attendance. Therefore, I expect you to attend every class session. If you know that you will not be able to attend class for some particular week, please email me a week in advance to let me know that you will not be in attendance. Not attending class due to an unexcused absence will result in a deduction of points on your participation grade. Excused absences include religious observances or other university-sanctioned absences. If you are sick, *please stay home*.

The Honor Code and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious offense. If you are using someone's words without proper citation, you are guilty of plagiarism. See the IU [policy handbook](#) for a more thorough definition. Any work that is suspected of containing plagiarism will receive a zero and will be reported to the appropriate University committee. If you are in doubt, cite your sources!

Laptop/Phone Policy

Technology is a wonderful thing. However, it can also be distracting. Because this seminar is designed to facilitate discussion, using any technology that might detract from that goal – including laptops and cellphones – is prohibited. Should the seminar be forced to move online due to COVID-19, these rules will be modified.

Students with Disabilities

If any student requires assistance or accommodations for a disability, please get in touch with me at your earliest convenience. You can reach me via email or by attending office hours. You must have established your eligibility for disability support services through the Office of Disability Services for Students in Wells Library, W302, 812-855-7578.

Masks and Physical Distancing Requirements

In recognition of what all IU community members owe to each other all students, staff, and faculty signed an acknowledgement of their responsibility to follow public health measures as a condition for returning to the campus this fall. Included in that commitment were requirements for wearing masks in all IU buildings and maintaining physical distancing in all IU buildings. Both are classroom requirements.

Both requirements are necessary for us to protect each other from transmission of COVID-19. Therefore, if a student is present in class without a mask, the instructor will ask the student to put a mask on immediately or leave the class. If a student comes to class a second time without a mask, *the student's final grade will be reduced by one letter* (e.g., from an A to a B, for instance), and the instructor will report the student to the Office of Student Conduct of the Division of Student Affairs. If a student refuses to put a mask on after being instructed to do so, the instructor may end the class immediately and report the student to the Office of Student Conduct. The student will be summarily suspended from the university pursuant to IU's Summary Suspension Policy. If Student Conduct receives three cumulative reports from any combination of instructors or staff members that a student is not complying with the requirements of masking and physical distancing, the student will be summarily suspended from the university for the semester.

Summary Suspension Policy

"A student may be summarily suspended from the university and summarily excluded from university property and programs by the Provost or designee of a university campus. The Provost or designee may act summarily without following the hearing procedures established by this section

if the officer is satisfied that the student's continued presence on the campus constitutes a serious threat of harm to the student or to any other person on the campus or to the property of the university or property of other persons on the university campus."

The Provost has determined that refusal to comply with the public health requirements specified in the Student Responsibility form, including the requirement of wearing a mask in all IU buildings, constitutes "a serious threat of harm to other persons" within the meaning of the summary suspension policy. In addition, the Provost has determined that a person who does not comply with these requirements, as evidenced by three credible violations of the policy reported to the campus from any source, constitutes "a serious threat of harm to other persons" within the meaning of the summary suspension policy.

Student Rights

Any student who believes another person in a class is threatening the safety of the class by not wearing a mask or observing physical distancing requirements may leave the class without consequence.

Attendance

The student responsibility form requires that you take your temperature every morning and that you refrain from attending class if you have a temperature of 100.4 or other symptoms of illness. In order to ensure that you can do this, attendance will not be a factor in the final grade. Attendance may still be taken to comply with accreditation requirements.

Assigned Seating

In order to ensure we can contact you in the event you are exposed to COVID-19, you must remain in your assigned seat for the entire semester.

Class Schedule

Students must read the following before the class meeting to which they are assigned. All of the readings should be available on Google Scholar or JSTOR. If you have trouble accessing one of these articles, feel free to email me and I will provide you a pdf. Book chapters will be posted on the course website. Note that these readings are subject to change. Any adjustments will be communicated in advance.

Week 1: Socialization and Genetics

Alford, John R., and Funk, Carolyn L., and John R. Hibbing. 2008. "Beyond Liberals and Conservatives to Political Genotypes and Phenotypes." *Perspectives on Politics* 6 (2): 321-328.

Charney, Evan. 2008. "Genes and Ideologies." *Perspectives on Politics* 6 (2): 299-319.

Fowler, James H., and Baker, Laura A., and Dawes, Christopher T. 2008. "Genetic Variation in Political Participation." *American Political Science Review* 102 (2): 233-248.

Jennings, M. Kent, and Stoker, Laura, and Jake Bower. 2009. "Politics across Generations: Family Transmission Reexamined." *The Journal of Politics* 71 (3): 782-799.

Settle, Jaime E., and Dawes, Christopher T., and James H. Fowler. 2009. "The Heritability of Partisan Attachment." *Political Research Quarterly* 62 (3): 601-613.

Week 2: Social Influence

Sinclair, Betsy. 2012. *The Social Citizen: Peer Networks and Political Behavior*. University of Chicago Press.

Carlson, Taylor N. 2019. "Through the Grapevine: Informational Consequences of Interpersonal Political Communication." *American Political Science Review* 113 (2): 325-339.

Connors, Elizabeth C. 2019. "The Social Dimension of Political Values." *Political Behavior* doi: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-019-09530-3>.

Klar, Samara. 2014. "Partisanship in a Social Setting." *American Journal of Political Science* 96 (1): 687-704.

Week 3: Personality

Mondak, Jeffery J. 2010. *Personality and the Foundations of Political Behavior*. Cambridge University Press.

Gerber, Alan S., and Huber, Gregory A., and Doherty, David, and Dowling, Conor M., and Shang E. Ha. 2010. "Personality and Political Attitudes: Relationships across Issue Domains and Political Contexts." *American Political Science Review* 104 (1): 111-133.

Ramey, Adam J., and Klingler, Jonathan D., and Gary E. Hollibaugh, Jr. 2017. *More Than a Feeling: Personality, Polarization, and the Transformation of the US Congress*. University of Chicago Press. Read Chapters 3 & 4.

Webster, Steven W. 2018. "It's Personal: The Big Five Personality Traits and Negative Partisan Affect in Polarized U.S. Politics." *American Behavioral Scientist* 62 (1): 127-145.

Week 4: Hot and Cold Cognition

Lau, Richard R., and David P. Redlawsk. 1997. "Voting Correctly." *American Political Science Review* 91 (3): 585-598.

Lau, Richard R., and David P. Redlawsk. 2001. "Advantages and Disadvantages of Cognitive Heuristics in Political Decision Making." *American Journal of Political Science* 45 (5): 951-971.

Lodge, Milton, and Charles S. Taber. 2013. *The Rationalizing Voter*. Cambridge University Press. *Read Chapters 1 & 2*.

Lupia, Arthur. 1994. "Shortcuts versus Encyclopedias: Information and Voting Behavior in California Insurance Reform Elections." *American Political Science Review* 88 (1): 63-76.

Olivola, Christopher Y., and Tingley, Dustin, and Alexander Todorov. 2018. "Republican Voters Prefer Candidates Who Have Conservative-Looking Faces: New Evidence From Exit Polls." *Political Psychology* 39 (5): 1157-1171.

Week 5: Anxiety and Fear

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

Brader, Ted, and Valentino, Nicholas A., and Elizabeth Suhay. 2008. "What Triggers Public Opposition to Immigration? Anxiety, Group Cues, and Immigration Threat." *American Journal of Political Science* 49 (2): 388-405.

Lerner, Jennifer S., and Gonzalez, Roxana M., and Small, Deborah A., and Baruch Fischhoff. 2003. "Effects of Fear and Anger on Perceived Risks of Terrorism: A National Field Experiment." *Psychological Science* 14 (2): 144-150.

Week 6: Anger

Webster, Steven W. 2020. *American Rage: How Anger Shapes Our Politics*. Cambridge University Press.

Banks, Antoine J. 2014. "The Public's Anger: White Racial Attitudes and Opinions Toward Health Care Reform." *Political Behavior* 39: 493-514.

Suhay, Elizabeth, and Cengiz Erisen. 2018. "The Role of Anger in the Biased Assimilation of Political Information." *Political Psychology* 39 (4): 793-810.

Valentino, Nicholas A., and Brader, Ted, and Groenendyk, Eric W., and Gregorowicz, Krysha, and Vincent L. Hutchings. 2011. "Election Night's Alright for Fighting: The Role of Emotions in Political Participation." *The Journal of Politics* 73 (1): 156-170.

Week 7: Authoritarianism

Hetherington, Marc J., and Jonathan D. Weiler. 2012. *Authoritarianism and Polarization in American Politics*. Cambridge University Press.

Luttig, Matthew D. 2017. "Authoritarianism and Affective Polarization: A New View on the Origins of Partisan Extremism." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 81 (4): 866-895.

Wronskik Julie, and Bankert, Alexa, and Amira, Karyn, and Johnson, April A., and Lindsey C. Levitan. 2018. "A Tale of Two Democrats: How Authoritarianism Divides the Democratic Party." *The Journal of Politics* 80 (4): 1384-1388.

Week 8: Intergroup Relations and Affective Polarization

Cassese, Erin C. 2019. "Partisan Dehumanization in American Politics." *Political Behavior* doi: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-019-09545-w>.

Iyengar, Shanto, and Sean J. Westwood. 2015. "Fear and Loathing Across Party Lines: New Evidence on Group Polarization." *American Journal of Political Science* 59 (3): 690-707.

Martherus, James L., and Martinez, Andres G., and Piff, Paul K., and Alexander G. Theodoridis. 2019. "Party Animals? Extreme Partisan Polarization and Dehumanization." *Political Behavior* doi: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-019-09559-4>.

Mason, Lilliana. 2015. "'I Disrespectfully Agree': The Differential Effects of Partisan Sorting on Social and Issue Polarization." *American Journal of Political Science* 59 (1): 128-145.

Mason, Lilliana, and Julie Wronski. 2018. "One Tribe to Bind Them All: How Our Social Group Attachments Strengthen Partisanship." *Political Psychology* 39: 257-277.

Rogowski, Jon C., and Joseph L. Sutherland. 2016. "How Ideology Fuels Affective Polarization." *Political Behavior* 38 (2): 485-508.

Webster, Steven W., and Alan I. Abramowitz. 2017. "The Ideological Foundations of Affective Polarization in the U.S. Electorate." *American Politics Research* 45 (4): 621-647.

Week 9: Motivated Reasoning or Bayesian Updating?

Gaines, Brian J., and Kuklinski, James H., and Quirk, Paul J., and Peyton, Buddy, and Jay Verkuilen. 2007. "Same Facts, Different Interpretations: Partisan Motivation and Opinion on Iraq." *The Journal of Politics* 69 (4): 957-974.

Guess, Andrew, and Alexander Coppock. 2018. "Does Counter-Attitudinal Information Cause Backlash? Results From Three Large Survey Experiments." *British Journal of Political Science*: 1-19.

Hill, Seth J. 2017. "Learning Together Slowly: Bayesian Learning About Political Facts." *The Journal of Politics* 79 (4): 1403-1418.

Redlawsk, David P. 2002. "Hot Cognition or Cool Consideration? Testing the Effects of Motivated Reasoning on Political Decision Making." *The Journal of Politics* 64 (4): 1021-1044.

Taber, Charles S., and Milton Lodge. 2006. "Motivated Skepticism in the Evaluation of Political Beliefs." *American Journal of Political Science* 50 (3): 755-79.

Week 10: Misinformation, Misperceptions, and Conspiracy Theories

Berinsky, Adam J. 2018. "Rumors and Health Care Reform: Experiments in Political Misinformation." *British Journal of Political Science* 47 (2): 241-262.

Flynn, D.J., and Nyhan, Brendan, and Jason Reifler. 2017. "The Nature and Origins of Misperceptions: Understanding False and Unsupported Beliefs About Politics." *Political Psychology* 38: 127-150.

Kuklinski, James H., and Quirk, Paul J., and Jerit, Jennifer, and Schwieder, David, and Robert F. Rich. 2000. "Misinformation and the Currency of Democratic Citizenship." *The Journal of Politics* 62 (3): 790-816.

Miller, Joanne M., and Saunders, Kyle L., and Christina E. Farhart. 2016. "Conspiracy Endorsement as Motivated Reasoning: The Moderating Roles of Political Knowledge and Trust." *American Journal of Political Science* 60 (4): 824-844.

Nyhan, Brendan, and Jason Reifler. 2010. "When Corrections Fail: The Persistence of Political Misperceptions." *Political Behavior* 32 (2): 303-330.

Nyhan, Brendan, and Porter, Ethan, and Reifler, Jason, and Thomas J. Wood. 2019. "Taking Fact-Checks Literally but Not Seriously? The Effects of Journalistic Fact-Checking on Factual Beliefs and Candidate Favorability." *Political Behavior*: 1-22.

Week 11: Race, Prejudice, and Stereotyping

Brewer, Marilynn B. 1999. "The Psychology of Prejudice: Ingroup Love and Outgroup Hate?" *Journal of Social Issues* 55 (3): 429-444.

Feldman, Stanley, and Leonie Huddy. 2005. "Racial Resentment and White Opposition to Race-Conscious Programs: Principles of Prejudice?" *American Journal of Political Science* 49 (1): 168-183.

Kam, Cindy D. 2007. "Implicit Attitudes, Explicit Choices: When Subliminal Priming Predicts Candidate Preference." *Political Behavior* 29 (3): 343-367.

Krupnikov, Yanna, and Piston, Spencer, and Nichole M. Bauer. 2016. "Saving Face: Identifying Voter Responses to Black Candidates and Female Candidates." *Political Psychology* 37 (2): 253-273.

Homola, Jonathan, and Margit Tavits. 2018. "Contact Reduces Immigration-Related Fears for Leftist but not for Rightist Voters." *Comparative Political Studies* 51 (3): 1789-1820.

Week 12: Race and the State

Hajnal, Zoltan, and Lajevardi, Nazita, and Linday Nielson. 2017. "Voter Identification Laws and the Suppression of Minority Votes." *The Journal of Politics* 79 (2): 363-379.

Grimmer, Justin, and Hersh, Eitan, and Meredith, Marc, and Mummolo, Jonathan, and Clayton Nall. 2018. "Obstacles to Estimating Voter ID Laws' Effect on Turnout." *The Journal of Politics* 80 (3): 1045-1051.

Hajnal, Zoltan, and Kuk, John, and Nazita Lajevardi. 2018. "We All Agree: Strict Voter ID Laws Disproportionately Burden Minorities." *The Journal of Politics* 80 (3): 1052-1059.

Johnson, David J., and Tress, Trevor, and Burkel, Nicole, and Taylor, Caley, and Joseph Cesario. 2019. "Officer Characteristics and Racial Disparities in Fatal Officer-Involved Shootings." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 116 (32): 15877-15882.

Knox, Dean, and Jonathan Mummolo. 2020. "Making Inferences About Racial Disparities in Police Violence." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 117 (3): 1261-1262.

Week 13: Psychology and the Media

Young, Dannagal. 2019. *Irony and Outrage: The Polarized Landscape of Rage, Fear, and Laughter in the United States*. Oxford University Press.

Gerber, Alan S., and Gimpel, James G., and Green, Donald P., and Darron R. Shaw. 2011. "How Large and Long-Lasting Are the Persuasive Effects of Televised Campaign Ads? Results from a Randomized Field Experiment." *American Political Science Review* 105 (1): 135-150.

Mutz, Diana C., and Byron Reeves. 2005. "The New Videomalaise: Effects of Televised Incivility on Political Trust." *American Political Science Review* 99 (1): 1-15.

Mutz, Diana C. 2007. "Effects of 'In-Your-Face' Television Discourse on Perceptions of a Legitimate Opposition." *American Political Science Review* 101 (4): 621-635.

Week 14: Student presentations

Week 15: Student presentations