

POL 309: Political Psychology

<https://pol309.fall24.equezadallanes.com/>

3:30 PM – 4:45 PM MW

Buttrick Hall, Room 221

Fall 2024

Instructor

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Office hours: Thursdays 10 am - 12 pm

Course Overview

Why do people vote the way they do? How do racial and gender stereotypes shape how voters evaluate candidates for elective office? How does the media influence political attitudes? Do anger and anxiety mobilize or demobilize voters? How can we answer these questions? This course examines these questions and the answers that political psychologists provide us by applying concepts from social and cognitive psychology to political phenomena. In addition to understanding how psychological processes shape how citizens engage in politics, students will gain familiarity with the tools political scientists and psychologists use to study these questions.

Learning Goals

The American Psychological Association's Guidelines 3.0 for the Undergraduate Psychology Major consists of five goals, which are being used as the student learning objectives for Agnes Scott's Psychology majors. In this course, we will focus on goals 1, 2 and 4:

- Goal 1: Content Knowledge and Applications
- Goal 2: Scientific Inquiry and Critical Thinking
- Goal 4: Communication, Psychological Literacy, and Technology Skills

To work on these objectives:

- Students will read and interpret research articles from the primary literature in the topic of the course, and demonstrate comprehension through an analysis of these articles. They will then write a paper using APA (or APSA) writing style. Students will accurately summarize general ideas and conclusions from psychological sources for these assignments.

- Students will write a response paper to a week's readings where they will synthesize what political psychologists know and how they know it. They will also offer an application to current events and/or a critique of existing work.
- Students will learn about how psychological theories can be applied to a different field of study within the social sciences.
- Students will use their knowledge of culture, values, and biases learned in courses to reduce misunderstandings in communication during class discussions, assignments, and/or projects.

Learning Outcomes

- Demonstrate an understanding of the main theories in political psychology
- Think critically about people's political behavior and how to study it
- Identify lingering questions about political behavior and ways to answer them
- Apply concepts and theories from political psychology research to their political environment

Work and Assessment

Course Expectations

Students are expected to attend class and participate during class discussions. This course has both a lecture and a discussion component. The lectures will incorporate the readings assigned for that day/week. I expected you will have completed all readings prior to class and will come prepared with comments and questions. Readings can be accessed through the library resources or, when not available through the library, via Canvas.

- *A note of caution:*

many, if not most, of the readings come from academic journals and books, mostly from political science but also from psychology. You will find that many of the articles are quite technical and they can be hard to follow even when one is familiar with the methodology. Do not despair. Make sure to understand, and wrestle with, the main ideas presented in a piece. Pay attention as well to how the authors support their arguments with data without getting bogged down by technical details.

Course Workload

This is a 4-credit hour course, meaning that you are expected to spend 12 hours of work each week (including the 3 hours spent in the classroom). This roughly means that you will spend about 2 hours on readings for each class period, and 3 hours each week working on the different assignments (pace yourself!).

Assignments and grades

Final course grades will be assigned as follows:


Grade	Range	Grade	Range
A	93–100%	C	73–76%
A–	90–92%	C–	70–72%
B+	87–89%	D+	67–69%
B	83–86%	D	63–66%
B–	80–82%	D–	60–62%
C+	77–79%	F	< 60%

Final grades will be calculated based on the following components:

Participation (20%): All students are expected to be active participants in class discussions. Our learning experience will be enhanced if you come prepared and ready to share your comments, insights, and/or questions from the material covered in the lectures and readings with the rest of the class.

- *Attendance policy:*

Attendance is part of your participation grade, and while there is no separate grade for attendance it is a prerequisite for in-class participation. That said, to accommodate unforeseeable circumstances, you have two *unexcused* absences that will not affect your participation grade. Please let the instructor know about any excused absences you anticipate during the semester. Note that students who are absent, whether excused or not, are still expected to submit the weekly summary corresponding to that class period.

Weekly summaries (20%): Each week for eight weeks, you will summarize one article from the week's readings (the reading you can summarize has a  after it in the course schedule). There are 13 weeks in the semester where you can write a summary, so you can skip some weeks. It is up to you to decide which weeks to skip. The summary must be no longer than three-quarters of a page (single-spaced, 12-point font). These summaries must be submitted on Canvas before class time *on the day the reading was assigned*.

Response paper (15%): Students will write a response paper (2 double-spaced pages, 12-point font) where they integrate the readings for a given week. In the response paper, you will highlight the connections between the readings, write about their applicability to current events, and offer a critique of the readings as a whole. You may choose to focus more on applicability to today or a critique of existing research. The response paper is due on the Friday of the week you choose to write on (11:59 pm deadline).

Discussion leader (15%): Students will serve as discussion leaders for a portion of class time each week. At the beginning of the semester, students will choose one week where they will co-lead the discussion. You are expected to have done the readings and come up with discussion questions for the class. I encourage you to meet with me before your week to talk about the material. (P.S.: this is also a good opportunity to write your response paper since you will have read the material in more detail.)

Research Design paper (30% total): Students will propose a research design to answer a question of interest. This paper must include an introduction, a literature review that situates the present question in the broader field, an answer to the question (the argument/theory), and a proposed design to answer the question. Students should meet with the instructor to discuss the paper and think about how one might design a study to answer the question of interest. This paper will be broken down into four parts that will be due throughout the semester.

1. Research question and list of literature (5% of final grade)
 2. Literature review (5% of final grade)
 3. Theory and research design (5% of final grade)
 4. Full research design paper (15% of final grade)
- Papers must be submitted via Canvas. Late submissions will be penalized: half a point (out of 10) if turned in late but within 24 hours and one point for each 24-hour period after the due date.

Course Conduct

In this class, we will discuss how citizens engage in politics and we will do so in a respectful environment. As is bound to be the case when we talk about politics, we may discuss topics that are controversial or of a sensitive nature for some or all in our group. Our goal in this class is to have constructive discussions about politics by understand how our psychology shapes political engagement. Derogatory comments toward other students or members of a particular social group will not be tolerated.

Communication Policy

If you have questions about class in general or about a specific assignment, you can email me or come by my office. You can expect a response within 24 hours (unless you email me on Friday). Students are also more than welcome to attend office hours, as this is time set aside specifically for you. In addition, if my office door is open, feel free to stop by. Please note that I will not be “pre-grading” assignments, but I am happy to answer clarifying questions about them either via email or, preferably, during office hours.

Regrading Policy

If a student wishes to appeal a grade, they must do so in writing within one week of receiving their graded assignment back. The student must indicate clearly what part of the assignment’s grading they disagree with, making sure to respond to the instructor’s comments in that section and making their case for why they should not have been deducted points. These requests should be done via email and the subject name should read “POL 310 Regrading request - [Name of assignment].”

Honor Code

Students are expected to do their own work and cite sources appropriately. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. In other words, students will be held to the standards of the Agnes Scott Honor System to which they agreed when enrolling at this institution. The Agnes Scott College honor code embodies an ideal of character, conduct, and citizenship, and is an important part of the College's mission and core identity. This applies especially to academic honesty and integrity. Passing off someone else's work (or Chat GPT's) as your own represents intellectual fraud and theft and violates the core values of our academic community. To be honorable, you should understand not only what counts as academic dishonesty, but also how to avoid engaging in these practices.

You are responsible for the content of any work submitted for this course. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) to generate a first draft of text is permitted, but you must review and revise any AI-generated text before submission. AI text generators can be useful tools but they are often prone to factual errors, incorrect or fabricated citations, and misinterpretations of abstract concepts. I neither encourage nor discourage their use, but utilize them with caution.

Course Accessibility and Academic Accommodations

Agnes Scott College views disabilities as an integral part of the rich diversity of our community and strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you are a student who receives academic accommodations through the Office of Accessible Education, please schedule a meeting with me within the first two weeks of classes to discuss how your accommodations will be implemented for this course. During this meeting, you are not expected to disclose any details concerning your disability, though you may discuss these details at your discretion.

If you are a student with a disability—physical, medical, psychological, or learning-specific—and have not connected with Accessible Education to discuss your accessibility needs, please visit the [main Office of Accessible Education webpage](#) to learn more about accommodations, helpful resources and support, available through the Office of Accessible Education. Students who register for accommodations during the semester should schedule a meeting with me after accommodations have been approved by the Office of Accessible Education.

Wellbeing and Mental Health

The wellbeing and mental health of students is important; if you are having trouble completing your coursework, please reach out to the [Wellness Center](#). Agnes Scott College provides cost-free mental health services to help you manage personal challenges that threaten your personal or academic well-being. If you believe you are experiencing unusual amounts of stress, sadness, or anxiety, please contact the Wellness Center and ask about their [Counseling and Psychological Services](#).

Title IX

Agnes Scott is here to help you if you have experienced any form of sexual harassment or violence, dating or domestic violence, or stalking. Please talk to any faculty or staff member with whom you feel comfortable. Faculty and staff members want to support you and have been trained to help. They will also inform the Title IX office so that you learn about options available to you. If you do not want college administrators to know what you have experienced, you may talk to the chaplain, as well as nurses or counselors in the Wellness Center with complete confidentiality. They will not tell anyone what you share with them unless you give your express permission. You may contact the Title IX Coordinator directly at T9Coordinator@agnesscott.edu.

Diversity and Inclusion

Agnes Scott is a diverse and inclusive community. As one of the most diverse colleges in the nation, ASC is ideally positioned to be the model of a diverse and inclusive community that society can aspire to be. Such diversity raises the intellectual quality of the classroom experience, creating a unique environment for learning to understand and navigate the challenges of our times. By studying, living, and playing together, Agnes Scott College's remarkably diverse student body hones the habits of mind, skills, and knowledge essential to ethical and innovative leadership in our increasingly heterogeneous and global society. As such, this course adheres to the principles of diversity and inclusion as integral to the Agnes Scott community and respects people from all backgrounds. As a first step, this course affirms people's decisions about gender expression and identity and will use each other's preferred names and gender pronouns at all times.

Center for Writing and Speaking

The Center for Writing and Speaking offers one-on-one appointments with trained peer tutors who can help you improve your written and oral communication skills. You are encouraged to use this resource when working on your class assignments to make your arguments more compelling, your sentences clearer, and persistent grammatical errors nonexistent. You can schedule an appointment at <https://www.agnesscott.edu/center-for-writing-and-speaking/index.html>.

Syllabus Change Policy



This syllabus is only a guide for the course and is subject to change with advanced notice.

Schedule

Week 1 - What is Political Psychology?

Wednesday, August 28

- [Syllabus](#)


- Rahn, Wendy M., John L. Sullivan, and Thomas J. Rudolph. 2002. “Political Psychology and Political Science.” In *Thinking About Political Psychology*, ed, James H. Kuklinski. New York: Cambridge University Press, 155-86.  available on Canvas.
- Krosnick, Jon A. 2002. “Is Political Psychology Sufficiently Psychological? Distinguishing Political Psychology from Psychological Political Science.” In *Thinking About Political Psychology*, ed, James H. Kuklinski. New York: Cambridge University Press, 187-216.  available on Canvas.

Week 2 - Social Identity Theory

Monday, September 2

NO CLASS. Labor Day Holiday.



Wednesday, September 4

- Tajfel, Henri, and John C. Turner. 1979. “An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict.” In *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, edited by Stephen Worchel and William G. Austin, 33–47. Monterey, CA: Brooks-Cole.  available on Canvas.




Week 3 - Social Identity Theory (cont.)

Monday, September 9


- Brewer, Marilynn B. 2016. “Intergroup Discrimination: Ingroup Love or Outgroup Hate?” In *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, edited by Chris G. Sibley and Fiona Kate Barlow, 90–110. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.  available on Canvas. 

Wednesday, September 11



- Rubin, Mark, Constantina Badea, and Jolanda Jetten. 2014. “Low Status Groups Show In-Group Favoritism to Compensate for Their Low Status and Compete for Higher Status.” *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations* 17 (5): 563–76. 

Week 4 - Partisanship and Ideology as Social Identities

Monday, September 16



- Conover, Pamela Johnston, and Stanley Feldman. 1981. “The Origins and Meaning of Liberal/Conservative Self-Identifications.” *American Journal of Political Science* 25 (4): 617-645. 

Wednesday, September 18


- Huddy, Leonie, Lilliana Mason, and Lene Aarøe. 2015. “Expressive Partisanship: Campaign Involvement, Political Emotion, and Partisan Identity.” *American Political Science Review* 109 (1): 1–17.  available on Canvas. 

Week 5 - Partisanship (cont.) / Theories of Cognition and Memory

Monday, September 23

- 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.  

Wednesday, September 25



- Kahneman, Daniel. 2003. “Maps of Bounded Rationality: Psychology for Behavioral Economics.” *American Economic Review* 93 (5): 1449–75. 

 Deadline

Research question and list of literature due Friday, September 27, at 11:59pm on Canvas

Week 6 - Theories of Cognition and Memory

Monday, September 30


- Lodge, Milton, Charles Taber, and Christopher Weber. 2006. “First Steps Toward a Dual-Process Accessibility Model of Political Beliefs, Attitudes, and Behavior.” In *Feeling Politics: Emotion in Political Information Processing*, edited by David P. Redlawsk, 11–30. Springer.  

Wednesday, October 2

- [Literature review assignment](#)
- [Guide on writing a literature review in political science](#) (link updated)

Week 7 - Knowledge and Sophistication

Monday, October 7

- Dalton, Russell J. 2019. “The Nature of Citizen Beliefs.” In *Citizen Politics: Public Opinion and Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies. Seventh Edition*. Los Angeles, California: SAGE, CQ Press. (Chapter 2: 15–38).  available on Canvas.

Wednesday, October 9

- Jerit, Jennifer, and Jason Barabas. 2017. “Revisiting the Gender Gap in Political Knowledge.” *Political Behavior* 39 (4): 817–38. [📖](#)
- Pereira, Frederico Batista. 2019. “Gendered Political Contexts: The Gender Gap in Political Knowledge.” *Journal of Politics* 81 (4): 1480–93. [📖](#) 

Week 8 - Writing Assignments

Monday, October 14

NO CLASS. Fall Break.

Wednesday, October 16


- Jerit, Jennifer, and Yangzi Zhao. 2020. “Political Misinformation.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 23 (1): 77–94. [📖](#) 

Week 9 - Information Processing and Heuristics

Monday, October 21



- Coronel, Jason C., Melissa C. Duff, David E. Warren, Kara D. Federmeier, Brian D. Gonsalves, Daniel Tranel, and Neal J. Cohen. 2012. “Remembering and Voting: Theory and Evidence from Amnesic Patients.” *American Journal of Political Science* 56 (4): 837–48. [📖](#)

Wednesday, October 23


- Swire-Thompson, Briony, Ullrich K. H. Ecker, Stephan Lewandowsky, and Adam J. Berinsky. 2020. “They Might Be a Liar but They’re My Liar: Source Evaluation and the Prevalence of Misinformation.” *Political Psychology* 41 (1): 21–34. [📖](#) 

Week 10 - The Media Environment: Framing and Priming

Monday, October 28

- Nelson, Thomas E., Rosalee A. Clawson, and Zoe M. Oxley. 1997. “Media Framing of a Civil Liberties Conflict and Its Effect on Tolerance.” *American Political Science Review* 91 (3): 567–83.  available on Canvas. 
- Valentino, Nicholas A., Vincent L. Hutchings, and Ismail K. White. 2002. “Cues That Matter: How Political Ads Prime Racial Attitudes during Campaigns.” *American Political Science Review* 96 (1): 75–90. [📖](#)

Wednesday, October 30


- Peterson, Erik, and Ali Kagalwala. 2021. “When Unfamiliarity Breeds Contempt: How Partisan Selective Exposure Sustains Oppositional Media Hostility.” *American Political Science Review* 115 (2): 585–98.  available on Canvas.

! Deadline



Literature review due Friday, November 1, at 11:59pm on Canvas

Week 11 - Personality Traits

Monday, November 4

- Johnston, Christopher D., and Julie Wronski. 2015. “Personality Dispositions and Political Preferences Across Hard and Easy Issues.” *Political Psychology* 36 (1): 35–53. 

Wednesday, November 6


- Pérez, Efrén O., and Marc J. Hetherington. 2014. “Authoritarianism in Black and White: Testing the Cross-Racial Validity of the Child Rearing Scale.” *Political Analysis* 22 (3): 398–412.  

Week 12 - Emotions in Politics

Monday, November 11



- Discuss Theory and Research Design

Wednesday, November 13

- Gadarian, Shana Kushner, and Ted Brader. year. 2023. “Emotion and Political Psychology.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*, edited by Leonie Huddy, David O. Sears, Jack S. Levy, and Jennifer Jerit, 11–30. New York: Oxford University Press.  available on Canvas.

Week 13 - Emotions in Politics

Monday, November 18

- Valentino, Nicholas A., Ted Brader, Eric W. Groenendyk, Krysha Gregorowicz, and Vincent L. Hutchings. 2011. “Election Night’s Alright for Fighting: The Role of Emotions in Political Participation.” *Journal of Politics* 73 (1): 156–70.  

Wednesday, November 20

- Gadarian, Shana Kushner, and Bethany Albertson. 2014. "Anxiety, Immigration, and the Search for Information." *Political Psychology* 35 (2): 133–64. [📖](#)

Week 14 - Assignment and Break

Monday, November 25

! Deadline

[Theory and Research Design](#) due Monday, November 25, at 11:59pm on Canvas

Wednesday, November 27


NO CLASS. Thanksgiving break.

Week 15 - Racial Stereotypes and Prejudice

Monday, December 2


- Devine, Patricia G. 1989. "Stereotypes and Prejudice: Their Automatic and Controlled Components." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 56 (1): 5–18. [📖](#)

Wednesday, December 4

- Krupnikov, Yanna, and Spencer Piston. 2015. "Racial Prejudice, Partisanship, and White Turnout in Elections with Black Candidates." *Political Behavior* 37 (2): 397–418. [📖](#) 
- Krupnikov, Yanna, and Spencer Piston. 2016. "The Political Consequences of Latino Prejudice against Blacks." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 80 (2): 480–509. [📖](#)

Week 16 - Gender Stereotypes

Monday, December 9

- Bauer, Nichole M. 2020. "Shifting Standards: How Voters Evaluate the Qualifications of Female and Male Candidates." *Journal of Politics* 82 (1): 1–12. [📖](#) 

Wednesday, December 11

- Winter, Nicholas J. G. 2010. "Masculine Republicans and Feminine Democrats: Gender and Americans' Explicit and Implicit Images of the Political Parties." *Political Behavior* 32 (4): 587–618. [📖](#)

Week 17 - Final Paper

Sometime between December 13 and 18.

! Deadline

Final draft of research design paper due Wednesday, December 18, at 5 pm on Canvas