

Government 370
Political Psychology

Fall 2024
TR 11:00-12:30
RLP 1.102

Course Description: This course examines the psychology behind political attitudes and behaviors. By using insights from psychology and (often, but not always) experimental methods, political psychology offers a unique way of understanding politics. We will address questions such as:

- How do people acquire their political beliefs?
- What types of campaign advertisements are effective?
- Do people approach politics in a rational way, or are they more emotional?
- What are the causes of intolerance and racism? What are the prospects for change?
- How does identity affect political choices?

Prerequisites: None

Professor:

Bethany Albertson
balberts@austin.utexas.edu

Grading Policy:

2 in class exams (25% each)
1 paper proposal (5%)
1 short report (2-3 pages) (15%)
1 paper (7-10 pages) (30%)

This will be a small, discussion-based class and I expect you to come to class prepared! Also, there will be an original research component to the course, and students will be expected to design surveys for their class papers. There is no formal attendance requirement for this class, but keep in mind that participation will be factored into your grade, and there will be a series of short, in-class assignments used to supplement your participation score.

Exams: Will consist of short answer, identifications and essay questions.

Paper: Course components related to your original research paper are highlighted. You are going to write an original research paper during this class, meaning you will develop a question and a hypothesis, design a study, collect data, and write up your results. Your paper proposal and your short report are pieces of the paper.

This is a challenging, rewarding aspect of the class, and it will be important to keep up with each step and ask questions along the way.

Class Policies:

Review Sheets: I'll post a review sheet prior to exams on Canvas. These are meant to help you focus your studies on the most important topics -- **WARNING** simply memorizing a short definition for each of the terms WILL NOT leave you prepared for the exam.

Disability Accommodations: Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259, <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>. If you require accommodation, it is your responsibility to bring your note to me EARLY in the semester so we can work our arrangements.

Academic Integrity: Plagiarism, cheating, and other academic misconduct are serious violations of your contract as a student. Plagiarism is using someone else's language without quotations and attribution or using someone else's idea (even in different language) without attribution. I expect that you will know and follow the University's policies on cheating and plagiarism. If you are unsure about the standards of academic integrity, it is your responsibility to ask the professor. Any suspected cases of academic misconduct will be handled according to University regulations. A copy of the University's Honor Code can be found here: <http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/gi09-10/ch01/index.html>.

Make-up Policy: Full credit make-up exams will only be allowed for (1) University sanctioned events (verification required) (2) extraordinary circumstances (verification -- e.g., physician's note -- required) or (3) religious observances. Make-up exams are any exams taken before or after the scheduled exam time. Make-up exams requested for any other reason will be decided on a case by case basis, and will be subject to a 10% grade penalty. I do not approve make-up exams under any circumstances for vacations or early departure for breaks. Make-up exams will be given within one week of the exam and will be offered at only one time. If you know you are going to miss an exam, notify me as soon as possible BEFORE the exam – no later than 14 days prior to the exam date. Students who miss exams without prior notification will face a 20% grade penalty, and will be given the chance to participate in the make-up ONLY if they contact me before the make-up administration.

Emergency Evacuation Policy: In the event of a fire or other emergency, it may be necessary to evacuate a building rapidly. Upon the activation of a fire alarm or the announcement of an emergency in a university building, all occupants of the building are required to evacuate and assemble outside. Once evacuated, no one may re-enter the building without instruction to do so from the Austin Fire Department, University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office. Students should familiarize themselves with all the exit doors of each room and building they occupy at the university, and should remember that the nearest exit routes may not be the same as the way they typically enter buildings. Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructors in writing during the first week of class. Faculty members must then provide this information to the Fire Prevention Services office by fax (512-232-2759), with "Attn. Mr. Roosevelt [REDACTED] Easley" written in the subject line.

Frequently asked questions:

1. Q: What should I call you?
A: Please call me Professor Albertson. I go by my first name with graduate students and undergrads who have become research assistants and use professor with all other undergraduates. I mention this because I've learned that many undergrads find titles confusing, and default to "hey" – when in doubt, use a title or ask!
2. Q: What are your pet peeves?
A: Cheating on exams & papers, talking in class. I encourage discussion, but side conversations are distracting.

Texts:

Readings will be made available on-line. Some readings are subject to change and all changes will be posted on Canvas and announced in class.

Course Schedule:

Week 1: August 27, 29 – Asking Research Questions
Introduction

Week 2: September 3, 5 – Developing Hypotheses
Political Socialization

Greenstein, Fred I. 1960. "The Benevolent Leader: Children's Images of Political Authority." *American Political Science Review* 54: 934-945.

Sears, David O. and Nicholas A. Valentino. 1997. "Politics matters: Political events as catalysts for pre-adult socialization." *American political science review* 91(1): 45-65.

Levitian, Lindsey Clark and Penny S. Visser. 2009. Social Network Composition and Attitude Strength: Exploring the Dynamics within Newly Formed Social Networks. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*. 45: 1057-1067.

Week 3: September 10, 12 – Workshop Research Proposals
Belief Systems

Kinder, Donald R. 1993. "Coming to Grips with the Holy Ghost." In Kinder and Palfrey (eds.), *Experimental Foundations of Political Science*. Pages 43-51.

Kalmoe, Nathan P. 2020. "Uses and Abuses of Ideology in Political Psychology." *Political Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12650>

Coppock, Alexander, and Donald P. Green. 2022. "Do Belief Systems Exhibit Dynamic Constraint?" *Journal of Politics* 84: 725-738

Fishman, Nic, and Nicholas T. Davis. 2022. "Change We Can Believe In: Structural and Content Dynamics within Belief Networks." *American Journal of Political Science* 66: 648-663.

Week 4: September 17, 19

Knowledge & Heuristics – Research Proposals Due

Lupia, Arthur. 2016. *Uninformed: Why People Know So Little about Politics and What We Can Do About It*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (Chapters 14-16).

Miller, Melissa K. 2019. "Who knows more about politics? A dual explanation for the gender gap." *American Politics Research*, 47(1), 174-188.

Popkin, Samuel L. *The Reasoning Voter: Communication and Persuasion in Presidential Campaigns*. Ch. 3.

Clifford, Scott and Jennifer Jerit. 2016. Cheating on Political Knowledge Questions in Online Surveys. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 80 (4): 858-887.

Week 5: September 24, 26 – Research Proposal Feedback
Emotion

Westen, Drew. *The Political Brain. The Role of Emotion in Deciding the Fate of a Nation*. Chapter 1-3.

Albertson, Bethany and Shana Gadarian. 2015. *Anxious Politics: Democratic Politics in a Threatening World*. Chapters 3 & 4.

Week 7: October 1, 3 – Submit proposed survey questions
Emotion II

Valentino, Nicholas A., Ted Brader, Eric W. Groenendyk, Krysha Gregorwicz, and Vincent L. Hutchings. 2011. Election Night's Alright for Fighting. *Journal of Politics*. 73:1, 156-170.

Pheonix, Davin. 2020. *The Anger Gap: How Race Shapes Emotion in Politics*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 3 & 4

Week 8: October 8, 10 – Workshop survey questions
Media Effects

Iyengar, Shanto, Mark D. Peters, and Donald R. Kinder. 1982. "Experimental Demonstrations of the 'Not-So-Minimal' Consequences of Television News Programs." *American Political Science Review* 81: 848-5

Krosnick, Jon A., and Donald R. Kinder. 1990. "Altering the Foundations of Support for

the President through Priming.” American Political Science Review 84: 497-512.

Nelson, Thomas E., Rosalee A. Clawson, and Zoe M. Oxley. 1997. “Media Framing of a Civil Liberties Case and Its Effects on Tolerance.” American Political Science Review 91: 567-84.

Week 9: October 15, 17 – Finalize survey

Misinformation

Lyons, Benjamin A., Jacob M. Montgomery, Andrew M. Guess, Brendan Nyhan, and Jason Reifler. 2021. Overconfidence in news judgments is associated with false news susceptibility. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. June 8, 2021. 118(23).

Graham, Matthew H. and Shikhar Singh. An Outbreak of Selective Attribution: Partisanship and Blame in the COVID-19 Pandemic. American Political Science Review.

Druckman, James and Mary C. McGrath. 2019. The evidence for motivated reasoning in climate change preference formation. Nature Climate Change, 9: 111-119.

Berinsky, Adam. 2023. Political Rumors: Why we accept misinformation and how to fight it. Princeton University Press. Chapters 3-4.

October 22: Review Session
October 24: Exam 1

Week 10: October 29, 31 – Survey goes out

Polarization

Krupnikov, Yanna, and John Barry Ryan. 2022. The Other Divide: Polarization and Disengagement in American Politics. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 2-4.

Huddy, Leonie, Lilliana Mason and Lene Aaroe. 2015. “Expressive Partisanship: Campaign Involvement, Emotion and Partisan Identity.” American Political Science Review, 109, 1-17.

Park, Barum. 2018. “How are we apart? Continuity and change in the structure of ideological disagreement in the American public, 1980-2012.” Social Forces 96: 1757-1784.

Costa, Mia. 2021. “Ideology, Not Affect: What Americans Want from Political Representation.” American Journal of Political Science, 65, 342-358.

Week 11: November 5, 7 (November 5 is Election Day)
Groups

Klar, Samara. 2014. Partisanship in a Social Setting. *American Journal of Political Science*. 58(3): 687-704.

Karpowitz, Christopher F., Tali Mendelberg and Lee Shaker. 2012. Gender Inequality in Deliberative Participation. *American Political Science Review*, 106, 533-547.

Week 12: November 12,14 – Data, What to do with it

Research & Paper Writing

There is no original reading this week. I've set this time aside for us to workshop drafts of your papers, get feedback from me and from your peers. This week will also include a statistics tutorial in order to prepare you for working with your survey data.

Week 13: November 19, 21 – Short report writing
Racial Attitudes

Berinsky, Adam J., Vincent L. Hutchings, Tali Mendelberg, Lee Shaker, and Nicholas Valentino. Sex and Race: Are Black Candidates More Likely to be Disadvantaged by Sex Scandals? 2011. *Political Behavior*, 33: 179-202.

White, Ismail. 2007. When Race Matters and When it Doesn't: Racial Group Differences in Response to Racial Cues. *American Political Science Review*, 101 (2): 339-354.

Valentino, Nicholoas A. and Ted Brader. 2011. The Sword's Other Edge: Perceptions of Discrimination and Racial Policy Opinion after Obama. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 75 (2): 201-226.

Thanksgiving Break

Week 14: December 3, 5 – Short report due

Review session (December 3) and Exam II (December 5)

December 9: Paper Due