

Political Science 465: Political Psychology

Fall 2020

Class Time: Asynchronous

Class Location: Online (Blackboard)

Instructor: Dr. Elizabeth Connors

Office: Gambrell Hall 323

Office Hours: by appointment (please email)

Email: connors4@mailbox.sc.edu [Note: may take up to 24 hours to respond]

Course Description

This course will use lectures, readings, short papers, presentations, discussions on Blackboard, and one final exam to introduce students to the foundations of political psychology. Political psychology is a subfield of political science that approaches the field through a psychological lens—it uses theories and methods from psychology to understand key questions in political science. Why do people support certain candidates? Why do some people vote and others do not? How does emotion play into individual politics? These are the types of questions we will approach in this class. Each week, students will read one to two chapters, listen to a lecture, and engage in discussion. At one point in the semester each student will get the opportunity to write a short reaction paper and create a presentation of this paper for the class. At the end of the semester, students will take a final exam.

Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of POL 465 students will be able to:

1. Understand the foundations of the political psychology subfield;
2. Understand what questions have been mostly answered and which questions remain in political psychology;
3. Be able to use this aforementioned information to pursue independent research if desired; and
4. Be able to discuss and write about why people behave the way they do in politics.

Required Texts

“The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology,” 2nd Edition. 2013. Edited by Leonie Huddy, David O. Sears, and Jack S. Levy.

Course Website

Blackboard will allow students to access course materials. Use this page to obtain lectures, receive announcements, and complete assignments.

Course Requirements

You are expected to read the assigned material, listen to lectures (which may have additional information *not* in the textbook), and complete assignments (including a reaction paper, a presentation of that paper, weekly discussion comments, and a final exam) by the due dates. **You are responsible for keeping up with the class.** While it can be easier to fall behind in an online class without in-person reminders of due dates, etc., there are no excuses for missed work. If something does come up, you are required to reach out to me **ahead of time** to find a solution.

The best way to do well in this course is to read the assigned material carefully and before listening to the lectures each week, engage vigorously each week in the class discussions, and prepare for the reaction paper, presentation, and final exam.

Grading:	% of Final Grade
Reaction Paper	20%
Reaction Paper Presentation	20%
Discussion Comments	30%
Final Exam	30%

Reaction Paper and Presentation (total of 40% of final grade—20% for each): At some point in the semester, each student will write a short (one page, single-spaced) reaction paper as well as a presentation (5-10 minutes) of the same information in this reaction paper. These papers and presentations can either: 1) present the information from that week’s readings and why it is important; OR 2) present the information from that week’s readings and discuss what is missing from the current state of research. The papers and presentations should be closely edited (yes, I deduct points for typos and grammar mistakes), and **importantly**, should make a clear point. I don’t want just a summary of the readings—you must include an argument (either of why this research is important or what it is missing). Both the paper and presentation will be uploaded to that week’s discussion boards, where the subsequent discussion will occur.

Discussion Comments: You are expected to comment *at least twice on each person’s presentation*. This means that some weeks you will need to have at least two comments, while other weeks you will need to have at least four or six comments. These comments need to **engage** the material from the students’ presentations. You can build on their arguments, point out a flaw in their arguments, or play “devil’s advocate”—it must be *constructive* rather than emotional.

Exam: The exam will test your knowledge of the material presented as well as your ability to apply the techniques we cover—it will be multiple choice. There will be no make-up exam except under the most extraordinary circumstances as determined by the instructor. “Extraordinary circumstances” consist of severe student illness or death in the family. In either case, adequate documentation will be required. In the event that you are unable to take the exam you must contact me no later than the day of the exam. Any make-up exams will be in a different format (e.g., essay, oral).

Final Grading Scheme:

92 – 100	A
89 – 91	B+
83 – 88	B
80 – 82	C+
74 – 79	C
71 – 73	D+
65 - 73	D
0 - 64	F

Schedule

Week 1 (August 20th): Introduction and Course Expectations

- Read syllabus and watch introduction lecture

Week 2 (August 24th): chapter 1 (Introduction: Theoretical Foundations of Political Psychology)

- By Wednesday: read and watch lecture
- By Thursday, 8 am: short papers and presentations by 1
- By Friday, midnight: discussion

Week 3 (August 31st): chapter 2 (Personality Approaches to Political Behavior) and chapter 3 (Childhood and Adult Political Development)

- By Wednesday: read and watch lecture
- By Thursday, 8 am: short papers and presentations by 2, 3, and 4
- By Friday, midnight: discussion

Week 4 (September 7th): chapter 4 (Degrees of Rationality in Politics) and chapter 5 (Behavioral Decision-Making)

- By Wednesday: read and watch lecture
- By Thursday, 8 am: short papers and presentations by 5, 6, and 7
- By Friday, midnight: discussion

Week 5 (September 14th): chapter 6 (Emotion and Political Psychology) and chapter 7 (Toward an Evolutionarily Informed Political Psychology)

- By Wednesday: read and watch lecture
- By Thursday, 8 am: short papers and presentations by 8, 9, and 10
- By Friday, midnight: discussion

Week 6 (September 21st): chapter 8 (Genetic Foundations of Political Behavior) and chapter 9 (Political Rhetoric)

- By Wednesday: read and watch lecture
- By Thursday, 8 am: short papers and presentations by 11, 12, and 13
- By Friday, midnight: discussion

Week 7 (September 28th): chapter 10 (Psychology and Foreign Policy Decision-Making) and chapter 11 (Perceptions and Image Theory in International Relations)

- By Wednesday: read and watch lecture
- By Thursday, 8 am: short papers and presentations by 14, 15, and 16
- By Friday, midnight: discussion

Week 8 (October 5th): chapter 12 (Threat Perception in International Relations) and chapter 13 (Crisis Management)

- By Wednesday: read and watch lecture

- By Thursday, 8 am: short papers and presentations by 17, 18, and 19
- By Friday, midnight: discussion

Week 9 (October 12th): chapter 14 (Personality Profiles of Political Elites) and chapter 15 (Psychobiography: “The Child is Father of the Man”)

- By Wednesday: read and watch lecture
- By Thursday, 8 am: short papers and presentations by 20, 21, and 22
- By Friday, midnight: discussion

Week 10 (October 19th): chapter 16 (Conflict Analysis and Resolution) and chapter 17 (Political Information Processing)

- By Wednesday: read and watch lecture
- By Thursday, 8 am: short papers and presentations by 23, 24, and 25
- By Friday, midnight: discussion

Week 11 (October 26th): chapter 18 (Political Communication: Form and Consequence of the Information Environment) and chapter 19 (Political Ideology)

- By Wednesday: read and watch lecture
- By Thursday, 8 am: short papers and presentations by 26, 27, and 28
- By Friday, midnight: discussion

Week 12 (November 2nd): chapter 20 (Social Justice) and chapter 21 (Networks, Interdependence, and Social Influence in Politics)

- By Wednesday: read and watch lecture
- By Thursday, 8 am: short papers and presentations by 29, 30, and 31
- By Friday, midnight: discussion

Week 13 (November 9th): chapter 22 (Political Deliberation) and chapter 23 (From Group Identity to Political Cohesion and Commitment)

- By Wednesday: read and watch lecture
- By Thursday, 8 am: short papers and presentations by 32, 33, and 34
- By Friday, midnight: discussion

Week 14 (November 16th): chapter 24 (Social Movements and the Dynamics of Collective Action) and chapter 25 (Prejudice and Politics)

- By Wednesday: read and watch lecture
- By Thursday, 8 am: short papers and presentations by 35, 36, and 37
- By Friday, midnight: discussion

Week 15 (November 23rd): chapter 26 (Migration and Multiculturalism) and chapter 27 (Discrimination: Conditions, Consequences, and “Cures”)

- By Wednesday: read and watch lecture

Week 16 (November 30th): chapter 28 (The Psychology of Intractable Conflicts: Eruption, Escalation, and Peacemaking)

- By Wednesday: read and watch lecture
- By Thursday, 8 am: short papers and presentations by 38, 39, and 40
- By Friday, midnight: discussion

Week 17 (December 7th)

- Monday: final exam