POLI 100M: Political Psychology
Todd Levinson
Spring 2020
Tuesday & Thursday 11:00-12:20pm
Peterson Hall, Room 102

Course Description and Goals

This course will explore the psychological basis of political attitudes and behavior. Classes will be interactive and course assignments will ask you to apply your understanding of the material in practical ways, with the intention of helping you to build skills that will be useful to you later in your career. Questions that we will attempt to answer include:

- How do people differ psychologically based on their political ideology and what factors explain these differences?
- How do variations in moral attitudes impact individuals’ political attitudes and behavior?
- What role do authoritarianism, egalitarianism, and prejudice play in political behavior?
- How do emotions and group psychology factor into our political inclinations?

As we learn what research has to say about these topics, we will also evaluate how the research was conducted, how the research strategy might affect the validity of its conclusions, and how the research could be improved or built upon. You will not be expected to read or understand the statistical methods that are used in the articles, but you will be asked to think critically about how the authors designed their research and how they measured the concepts that they are studying so that you can evaluate the validity of their findings.

Assignments

Your grade will be based on two memos (20% each), a final paper (40%), and participation in in-class questions and other class activities (20%).

- **Memos (40%)**: You will write three two-page memos during the course of the quarter. Memos will be focused on the topic of the week and will be due one week after a topic is covered. You will be able to choose your three memo topics from the five topics that I will offer during the quarter. I will drop your lowest memo grade, but you can earn extra credit for writing three strong memos. Not writing your third memo will incur a 10% penalty on your final memo grade. The goal is for you to gain practical experience in applying and thinking critically about the knowledge that you are gaining each week and to do so in a way that will build your professional skills. I will provide instructions for writing the memos during the second week.

- **Final Project (40%)**: Your final project paper will be due through Turnitin by Tuesday, June 9 at 2:30pm. I will provide the prompts and instructions for the final well in advance to give you time to prepare. You will also be required to write a brief outline for your paper as part of your participation grade (see below), and you will receive feedback from fellow students to help you improve your paper before the final submission.
• **Course Participation (20%)**: My goal is for us to make class time an engaging, learning experience. To help us achieve that, I will use small group and full class discussions, and in-class questions (Zoom polls) to ensure that you are actively learning. These activities are also intended to help you develop ideas for your memos and final project so that class time supports your success on assignments. Your participation grade will be based on being actively involved during class, answering in-class questions, attending office hours, and completing short outside-of-class assignments, including but not limited to taking a survey, discussing politics with someone who differs in their views, and emailing me your goals and burning questions about political psychology. You will get a high grade by making a good faith effort in your participation.

**Course Policies**

- The use of laptops, cell phones, tablets, or other type of electronic device is not allowed during class time for reasons not related to class. Research shows that you learn more and distract others less if you stick to pen and paper: [https://www.brookings.edu/research/for-better-learning-in-college-lectures-lay-down-the-laptop-and-pick-up-a-pen/](https://www.brookings.edu/research/for-better-learning-in-college-lectures-lay-down-the-laptop-and-pick-up-a-pen/).

- **Students are required to use Turnitin to submit all written assignments through the course website.** Turnitin is an Internet-based plagiarism prevention service, which will be used to ensure academic integrity. Hard copies of assignments will not be accepted.

- If you have a disability that requires special accommodations, please see me **as soon as possible** and present your certification to me and Natalie Ikker (nbikker@ucsd.edu).

- Assignment extensions will be given only under justifiable circumstances, and not without **proper written documentation** justifying your absence (i.e., a doctor’s note) **and submitted to the instructor in advance**.

- Please consult [http://senate.ucsd.edu/Operating-Procedures/Senate-Manual/Appendices/2 for UCSD’s Academic Integrity Policy](http://senate.ucsd.edu/Operating-Procedures/Senate-Manual/Appendices/2). Students in this course are expected to comply with this policy. Any student in violation of the policy will automatically fail this class.

- If you seek a **re-grade**, you must email me **within 72 hours** of the assignment being returned and explain why you deserve reconsideration. I will then review the entire exam and can either increase your grade, decrease your grade, or keep the grade unchanged.

- Sexual Misconduct/Title IX Statement: UC San Diego prohibits sexual violence and sexual harassment and will respond promptly to reports of misconduct. If you wish to speak confidentially about an incident of sexual misconduct, please contact CARE at the Sexual Assault Resources Center at (858) 534-HELP. Students should be aware that faculty members are considered responsible employees and are not a confidential resource; as such, if you disclose an incident of sexual misconduct to a faculty member, they have an obligation to report it to UC San Diego’s Title IX office, the Office for the Prevention of Harassment & Discrimination (OPHD). To learn more about sexual misconduct, visit: [https://students.ucsd.edu/sponsor/sarc/](https://students.ucsd.edu/sponsor/sarc/). To report an incident to the University, please contact OPHD at ophd@ucsd.edu

**Contact & Office Hours**

Instructor: Todd Levinson, tslevins@ucsd.edu, OH: Tue, 2-4 PM, Zoom video conference

TA: Alison Boehmer, apboehme@ucsd.edu, OH: By appointment only (Mon, Tue, Fri)

TA: Alexandra Lange, arwoodru@ucsd.edu, OH: By appointment only
**WEEKLY READINGS**

**Week 1 (March 31 & April 2): The Psychology of Political Ideology, Part 1**


**Week 2 (April 7 & 9): The Psychology of Political Ideology, Part 2**


Kanai et al 2011. Political Orientations are Correlated with Brain Structure in Young Adults.


**Week 3 (April 14 & 16): Moral Psychology and Politics, Part 1**


**Week 4 (April 21 & 23): Moral Psychology and Politics, Part 2**


**Week 5 (April 28 & 30): Authoritarianism and Social Dominance**


**Week 6 (May 5 & 7): Prejudice, Intolerance, and Politics**


**Week 7 (May 12 & 14): Identity, Intergroup Behavior, and Politics**


**Week 8 (May 19 & 21): Egalitarianism**


**Week 9 (May 26 & 28): Emotions and Political Behavior**


Outgroups.

**Week 10 (June 2 & 4): Partisanship and Political Participation**


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**FINAL PAPERS DUE: Tuesday, JUNE 9, 2:30PM**

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