

# Political Psychology

PSYC 4150 01

**Professor: Dr. Linda M. Woolf**

**Office Hours:**

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**Text:**

- Cottam, M. L., Dietz-Uhler, B., Mastors, E., & Preston, T. (Eds.). (2004). *Introduction to political psychology*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Additional Readings Placed on eReserves in the Library.

**Course Description:**

When one hears the term, political psychology, one might envision the study of elections, campaigns, and voting behavior. While not inaccurate, this perception excludes a broad range of topics that fall within the purview of political psychology. For example, the following questions all address political psychology topics.

1. Why would someone knowingly join a hate group such as the KKK?
2. What role does personality play in leadership?
3. Could the space shuttle disasters have been averted?
4. Why did Hutus begin feverishly murdering their Tutsi neighbors in Rwanda?
5. What possessed a scandal-ridden President to make the choice to have an illicit affair knowing full well that he was living under constant press scrutiny?
6. What is the impact of prejudice on people's lives and do we all harbor a measure of racism, sexism, homophobia, etc.?
7. Why did the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 happen?
8. Why war?

This course will examine these questions and more! In other words, we will examine the interaction of political and psychological processes and their impact on behavior in both our

local and global communities.

## **Course Objectives:**

1. **Objective:** To become more knowledgeable about the field of political psychology - its definition, its various domains of study, and its methodologies.
2. **Objective:** To examine the impact of personality on political behavior.
3. **Objective:** To become familiar with the role of social cognition, social influences, and social relations factors in political behavior.
4. **Objective:** To examine the myriad of factors involved in the political psychology of groups.
5. **Objective:** To become familiar with the various psychological and political impacting voting behavior.
6. **Objective:** To explore the political psychology of race and ethnicity.
7. **Objective:** To examine the impact of political psychology as it related to broader international concerns such as nationalism, political extremism, and war.

## **Incoming Competencies/Prerequisites:**

Twelve credit hours of social science or permission of the instructor. All students should be capable of integrating and evaluating information, critical thinking, and writing at the college level.

## **Class Meetings:**

The class will meet on Monday, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 11:00-11:50. Classroom attendance as expected and class discussion will greatly enhance your understanding of the material presented in this class. Also, material will be presented that is not in any of the readings.

## **Course Requirements:**

Three exams, class presentation, a critique, and four short exercises/papers.

## **Percent of Grade:**

Examinations	60%
Class presentation	10%
Exercise/Papers	20%
Critique	10%

**Examinations:** The three exams are designed to test for basic understanding of core concepts and ideas. They will cover material presented in class, readings, and discussion. Each exam will be worth 20% of your final grade.

**Class Presentation:** Each student will be assigned a particular chapter from which to base their presentation. You can select to present on anything within that chapter. In other words, you are not presenting on the entire chapter but rather just a topic (of your choice) from within that chapter. You are to present the topic, add additional information based on the research literature, provide a short handout for the class, and present to the class (PowerPoint is preferable). Your presentation will be worth 10% of your final grade.

**Article Critique:** The journal *Political Psychology* is available through the databases in our library. You are to read and critique a recent article. Specific instructions will be handed out later in the semester and the critique will be worth 10% of your final grade.

**Exercise/Papers:** Four short exercise with accompanying papers will be required for the class. More than four topics will be sent to the class list during the course of the semester. You must complete at least four of the exercises and turn in a paper based on the experience and what you have learned in class (3-4 pages). If you respond to more than four questions, only the four highest grades will be recorded; one additional paper can be used for extra credit. Exercises will include topics such as debate analysis, analysis of political advertisements; analysis of political cartoons; review of end of term Presidential decision-making; visiting a campaign headquarters; writing an editorial.

### **Policy Statements:**

Use of Electronic Devices in the Classroom: Please respect others in the class by turning off all cell phones and pagers before entering the room. Text messaging during class is not acceptable. Laptops may be used in class but are only to be utilized for class related activities (e.g., taking notes). If it becomes apparent you are using the computer for non-class activities (e.g., checking your email, playing games) then you may be asked to turn off your computer and refrain from bringing it into class in the future. Laptop use is restricted to the back or sides of the classroom so that other students are not distracted during lecture.

Plagiarism (attempting to pass off the work of another as one's own) is not acceptable. Plagiarism includes copying all or part of another's writings (even a single sentence), inappropriate paraphrasing, using another student's paper as your own, submitting a paper for more than one class. All papers will be submitted to the university's plagiarism database for review. Plagiarism, either intentional or unintentional, will result in a grade of 0 for that assignment and will be turned over to the appropriate university source for disciplinary action. In addition, cheating on exams will also result in the same fate.

Here are some Web sites that will help you avoid the problem of plagiarism particularly plagiarism resulting from paraphrasing too closely to the original source. -

- [Establishing Authorship by Paul C. Smith, Alverno College](#)
- [How to Avoid Plagiarism Tutorial](#)
- [The University of Indiana's Online Plagiarism Tutorial](#) - You can print out a certificate of completion!

Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are

encouraged to contact me or the Director of the Academic Resource Center, as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations can be implemented in a timely fashion.

Late withdraws from this class will not be approved by the instructor except in cases of emergency discussed with the instructor. No late withdraws will be approved on the basis of poor class performance.

This syllabus is subject to change at the instructor's discretion. All changes concerning course requirements will be provided in writing. Changes concerning exam dates may be made at the instructor's discretion and communicated verbally to the class.

It is understood that remaining in this course (not dropping or withdrawing from this course) constitutes an agreement to abide by the terms outlined in this syllabus and an acceptance of the requirements outlined in this document. No grade of Incomplete will be issued for this course.

### Course Outline

The schedule below provides a general guideline to the semester and is flexible based on any need for additional discussion of a particular topic.

<b>Week Ending</b>		<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading</b>
August	29	Introduction to class Introduction to Political Psychology	Chapter 1
September	5	Introduction to Political Psychology continued Methods Personality and Politics	Chapter 1 Chapter 2
September	12	Personality and Politics continued	Chapter 2
September	19	Cognition, Social Identity, Emotions, and Attitudes in Political Psychology	Chapter 3
September	26	<b>Exam I</b> Voting, Role of the Media, and Tolerance	Chapter 6
October	3	Voting, Role of the Media, and Tolerance	Chapter 6

October	10	The Study of Political Leaders	Chapter 5
October	17	The Political Psychology of Groups	Chapter 4
Fall Break			
October	31	The Political Psychology of Groups continued	Chapter 4
November	7	The Political Psychology of Race and Ethnicity	Chapter 7
November	14	The Political Psychology of Race and Ethnicity <b>Exam II</b>	Chapter 7
November	21	The Political Psychology of Political Extremists	Chapter 9
November	26	The Political Psychology of Political Extremists continued	Chapter 9
December	5	The Political Psychology of International Security and Conflict	Chapter 10
December	12	The Political Psychology of International Security and Conflict continued	Chapter 10
December	See Final Exam Schedule	<b>Exam III</b> ( Check on posted exam schedule)	