

Course Manual

Understanding Politics through Psychology

Course Catalogue Number

7323A048FY

Credits

6 EC

Entry requirements

Completed first year of the bachelor's degree programme in Political Science at the UvA and at least 42 EC from the second year, including the Kernmodule: politieke theorie en politiek gedrag or Kernmodule: internationale betrekkingen. Students participating in an exchange program, see "Recommended Knowledge" for more information.

Compulsory knowledge

There are no formal prerequisites for the course. However, familiarity with research methods (namely, quantitative methods) would be helpful.

If you are unfamiliar with some concepts that will be discussed in class, do not be afraid to ask questions!

Recommended knowledge

This course is taught at a final BA level. International exchange students should be majoring in social sciences.

Instruction language

English

Time Period(s)

Academic year 2018/2019

Semester 2, Block 4.

Mondays: 15:00-17:00

Thursdays: 11:00-13:00

Location

Mondays: REC CK.07

Thursdays: REC B2.02

Lecturer

Dr. Mike Medeiros

Office: Nieuwe Achtergracht 166, Room B10.05

Office Hours: By appointment

Office Phone:

E-mail: m.medeiros@uva.nl

Course objectives

Students will:

- broaden their understanding of sociopolitical phenomena; notably regarding attitude formation, policy making, and intergroup relations.
- acquire knowledge of important concepts from psychology; such as cognition, emotions, and personality.
- develop an ability to synthesize important notions and debates.
- develop an ability to formulate well-organized arguments, supported by scholarly evidence.

Course content

Political psychology is an interdisciplinary field of social science that explores political questions through a psychological lens. The political attitudes that individuals hold and the political actions they commit can be heavily influenced by psychological processes.

The course will examine psychological approaches in order to better understand the political attitudes and behaviour of individuals and groups, both among elites and ordinary citizens. It will present important psychological theories on personality, cognition, emotions, social influence and group dynamics. These approaches will be applied to political themes such as decision-making, leadership and conflict. Specifically, the course will explore how individuals' political attitudes and behaviour are impacted by their psychological (and biological) state.

As a result, the course will, for example, delve into the following questions:

- How do cognitive and emotional barriers limit 'optimal' decision-making?
- How do leaders' personality traits influence their behaviour?
- Why do individuals obey?
- Why do ethnic, religious or other social groups enter into conflict?

The course provides an opportunity for students to familiarize themselves with a scholarship outside of political science. Many of the readings are from social and cognitive psychology.

Students will acquire a different dimension of knowledge relating to important sociopolitical phenomena. They will thus be able to better understand, for example, people's reactions to immigration as well as the process behind leaders' decisions to go to war.

Teaching methods/learning formats

The course will be taught in the form of a seminar. The sessions will primarily consist of plenary discussions among the students. Therefore, students are expected to prepare for each class by 1) critically reading the assigned literature and 2) formulating questions and topics that they would like to introduce to the discussions.

Students will receive written feedback on their two assignments, their in-class presentation and their paper.

Manner & Form of Assessment and Assessment Requirements & Criteria

Class Assignments (2x20%), Term Paper (35%), Presentation (10%) and Class Participation (15%)

The student will produce two short (5 double-spaced pages; approximately 1,500 words) assignments that will consist of synthesizing the readings assigned for a particular class. The first part of the assignment will consist of a synthesis of the readings; the second part will critically analyse them. Each assignment must be submitted via Canvas before the start of the session the readings are assigned for. No late assignments will be accepted. More details will be provided in class.

The student will also produce a term paper, on a topic of their choice, that will be used to deepen their knowledge of the course material. It will consist of a synthesis of 12 double-spaced pages (approximately 3,600 words) of important studies on a research question based on one of the themes explored in the course. In order to get useful feedback, the student **must** present, **by 28 February**, a preliminary work plan of the term paper. The term paper must be submitted via Canvas **by 25 March**. More details will be provided in class.

The student will also have an in-class presentation based on their term paper. The presentation will be on the final two scheduled sessions: **18 & 21 March**.

The student's participation will be evaluated in each session based not only on class presence and punctuality, but, most importantly, the quality of their comments and questions.

Rules regarding Fraud and Plagiarism

The provisions of the Regulations Governing Fraud and Plagiarism for UvA Students apply in full. Access this regulation at <http://www.student.uva.nl/preventfraud-plagiarism>. Plagiarism is presenting someone else's ideas as your own. Copying, paraphrasing or translating of text needs to be referenced according to academic standards. Plagiarism will be sanctioned severely.

Literature

Extensive use will be made of online journal resources via the digital library. If not, the readings are available via Canvas.

Schedule

4 February

Course presentation: What is political psychology?

Rosema, Martin & Bert N. Bakker. 2017. "Social Psychology and Political Behaviour." In Linda Steg, Kees Keizer, Abraham P. Buunk & Talib Rothengatter (eds.), *Applied Social Psychology: Understanding and Managing Social Problems, Second Edition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Obedience: Why are people obedient?

Milgram, Stanley. 1965. Some Conditions of Obedience and Disobedience to Authority. *Human Relations* 18(1): 57-76.

Dambrun, Michaël & Élise Vatine. 2010. "Reopening the Study of Extreme Social Behaviors: Obedience to Authority within an Immersive Video Environment." *European Journal of Social Psychology* 40: 760-773.

Suggested: Obedience (1965), Stanley Milgram's documentary film on the experiment.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wdUu3u9Web4>

7 February

Cognition 1: Can cognitive limits be overcome in the formation of political opinions?

Lupia, Arthur. 1994. "Shortcuts versus Encyclopaedias." *American Political Science Review* 88: 63-76.

Lodge, Milton, Marco Steenbergen & Shawn Brau. 1995. "The Responsive Voter." *American Political Science Review* 89: 309-326.

Kuklinski, James H. & Paul J. Quirk. 2000. "Reconsidering the Rational Public: Cognition, Heuristics, and Mass Opinion." In Arthur Lupia, Mathew D. McCubbins & Samuel L. Popkin (eds.), *Elements of Reason: Cognition, Choice, and the Bounds of Rationality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

11 February

Cognition 2: How do cognitive limits influence decision-making?

Jervis, Robert. 1993. "The Drunkard's Search". In Shanto Iyengar & William J. McGuire (eds.), *Explorations in Political Psychology*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Golec, Agnieszka. 2002. "Cognitive Skills as Predictor of Attitudes toward Political Conflict: A Study of Polish Politicians." *Political Psychology* 23(4): 731-757.

Westen, Drew, Blagov, Pavel S., Harenski, Keith, Kilts, Clint, & Hamann, Stephan. 2006. "Neural Bases of Motivated Reasoning: An fMRI Study of Emotional Constraints on Partisan Political Judgment in the 2004 US Presidential Election." *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience*, 18(11): 1947-1958.

14 February

Emotions 1: How do emotional reactions influence citizens' political behaviour?

Gadarian, Shana K. & Bethany Albertson. 2014. "Anxiety, Immigration, and the Search for Information." *Political Psychology* 35(2):133-164.

Marcus, George E. & Michael B. MacKuen. 1993. "Anxiety, Enthusiasm, and the Vote: The Emotional Underpinnings of Learning and Involvement during Presidential Campaigns." *American Political Science Review* 87(3): 672-685.

Vasilopoulos, Pavlos. 2018. "Terrorist Events, Emotional Reactions, and Participation: The 2015 Paris Attacks." *West European Politics* 41(1): 102-127.

18 February

Emotions 2: Can emotions have an impact on world politics?

Hutchison, Emma & Roland Bleiker. 2014. "Theorizing Emotions in World Politics." *International Theory* 6(3): 491-514.

Renshon, Jonathan, Julia J. Lee & Dustin Tingley. 2017. "Emotions and the Micro-Foundations of Commitment Problems." *International Organization* 71(S1): S189-S218.

Mercer, Jonathan. 2013. "Emotion and Strategy in the Korean War." *International Organization* 67(2): 221-252.

21 February

Biopolitics 1: How do genetics influence political behaviour?

Alford, John R., Funk, Caroline L., & Hibbing, John R. 2005. Are Political Orientations Genetically Transmitted?. *American Political Science Review* 99(2): 153-167.

Cesarini, David, Magnus Johannesson, Sven Oskarsson. 2014. "Pre-Birth Factors, Post-Birth Factors, and Voting: Evidence from Swedish Adoption Data." *American Political Science Review* 108(1): 71-87.

Oskarsson, Sven, Dawes, Christopher T., & Lindgren, Karl-Oskar. 2018. It Runs in the Family. *Political Behavior* 40(4): 883-908.

25 February

Biopolitics 2: Does gender lead to differences in political behaviour?

Soroka, Stuart, Elisabeth Gidengil, Patrick Fournier & Lilach Nir. 2016. "Do Women and Men Respond Differently to Negative News?" *Politics & Gender* 12: 344-368.

Durante, Kristina M., Ashley Rae & Vldas Griskevicius. 2013. "The Fluctuating Female Vote: Politics, Religion, and the Ovulatory Cycle." *Psychological Science* 24(6):1007-1016.

Sapienza, Paola, Luigi Zingales & Dario Maestripieri D. 2009. "Gender Differences in Financial Risk Aversion and Career Choices are Affected by Testosterone." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 106(36): 15268-15273.

28 February

Outline Submission Deadline

Biopolitics 3: How do physiological traits influence political behaviour?

Guest lecturer: Bert Bakker

Oxley, Douglas R., Smith, Kevin B., Alford, John R., Hibbing, Matthew V., Miller, Jennifer L., Scalora, Mario, Hatemi, Peter, K., & Hibbing, J. R. 2008. Political Attitudes vary with Physiological Traits. *Science* 321(5896), 1667-1670.

Smith, Kevin B., Oxley, Douglas, Hibbing, Matthew V., Alford, John R., & Hibbing, John R. 2011. Disgust Sensitivity and The Neurophysiology of Left-Right Political Orientations. *PloS one* 6(10): e25552.

Bakker Bert N., Schumacher, Gijs, & Arceneaux, Kevin. Ideological Differences in Negativity Bias? To be distributed.

4 March

Personality 1: How do personality traits influence citizens' political behaviour?

Fatke, Matthias. 2016. "Personality Traits and Political Ideology: A First Global Assessment." *Political Psychology*. 1-19.

Bakker, Bert N., Rooduijn, Matthijs, & Schumacher, Gijs. 2016. The Psychological Roots of Populist Voting: Evidence from the United States, the Netherlands and Germany. *European Journal of Political Research* 55(2): 302-320.

Ekehammar, Bo, Nazar Akrami, Magnus Gylje & Ingrid Zakrisson. 2004. "What Matters Most to Prejudice: Big Five Personality, Social Dominance Orientation, or Right-Wing Authoritarianism?" *European Journal of Personality* 18(6): 463-482.

7 March

Personality 2: How do personality traits influence the decisions made by political leaders?

Nørgaard, Asbjørn S., & Klemmensen, Robert. 2018. "The Personalities of Danish MPs: Trait-and Aspect-Level Differences." *Journal of Personality*. DOI: 10.1111/jopy.12388.

Nai, Alessandro, Martínez I Coma, Ferran, & Maier, Jürgen. 2019. "Donald Trump, Populism, and the Age of Extremes: Comparing The Personality Traits And Campaigning Styles Of Trump And Other Leaders Worldwide." *Presidential Studies Quarterly*. DOI: 10.1111/psq.12511.

Greenstein, Fred I. 1998. "The Impact of Personality on the End of the Cold War." *Political Psychology* 19: 1-16.

11 March

Groups 1: Why are individuals influenced by others?

Asch, Solomon E. 1955. "Opinions and Social Pressure." *Scientific American* 193 (5): 31-35.

Noelle-Neumann, Elisabeth. 1974. "The Spiral of Silence: A Theory of Public Opinion." *Journal of Communication* 24: 43-51.

Janis, Irving L. 1972. *Victims of Groupthink: A Psychological Study of Foreign-Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Chapter 8.

14 March

Groups 2: How to improve intergroup relations?

Sherif, Muzafer. 1956. "Experiments in Group Conflict". *Scientific American* 195: 54-58.

Pettigrew, Thomas F., Ulrich Wagner & Oliver Christ. 2010. "Population Ratios and Prejudice: Modelling Both Contact and Threat Effects." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 36: 635-650.

Paluck, Elizabeth L. 2009. "Reducing Intergroup Prejudice and Conflict using the Media: A Field Experiment in Rwanda." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 96(3): 574-587.

18 March

Presentations

21 March

Presentations

25 March

Deadline for Term Paper