

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 2017/2018

Semester 1, Block 1.

Mondays: 13:00-15:00

Thursdays: 9:00-11:00

Location

Mondays: REC B2.03

Thursdays: REC B1.03

Lecturer

Dr. Mike Medeiros

Office: Nieuwe Achtergracht 166, Room B10.05

Office Hours: By appointment

Office Phone:

E-mail: m.medeiros@uva.nl

Website:

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 more comprehensive knowledge of 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 three assignments and their paper.

Manner & Form of Assessment and Assessment Requirements & Criteria

Class Assignments (3x15%), Term Paper (40%) and Class Participation (15%)

The student will produce three short (5 to 6 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 Blackboard 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 the student's knowledge of the course material. It will consist of a synthesis of 15 double-spaced pages (approximately 4,500 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 September**, a preliminary work plan that will count for 5% of the term paper. The term paper must be submitted via Blackboard **by 23 October at noon**. More details will be provided in class.

The student's participation will be evaluated in each session based on class presence and punctuality as well as 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 Blackboard or the digital library.

Schedule

4 September 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.

7 September Biopolitics 1: How do physiological traits influence political behaviour?

Schreiber, Darren, Greg Fonzo, Alan N. Simmons, Christopher T. Dawes, Taru Flagan, James H. Fowler & Martin P. Paulus. 2013. "Red Brain, Blue Brain: Evaluative Processes Differ in Democrats and Republicans." *PLoS ONE* 8(2): e52970.

Ahn, Woo-Young., Kenneth T. Kishida, Xiaosi Gu, Terry Lohrenz, Ann Harvey, John R. Alford, Kevin B. Smith, Gideon Yaffe, John R. Hibbing, Peter Dayan and P. Read Montague. 2014. "Nonpolitical Images Evoke Neural Predictors of Political Ideology." *Current Biology* 24(22): 2693-2699.

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.

11 September 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 & Vladas 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.

14 September 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. 2017. "Terrorist Events, Emotional Reactions, and Participation: The 2015 Paris Attacks." *West European Politics*.

18 September 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 September 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.

25 September 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.

Tetlock, Philip E., 1984. "Cognitive Style and Political Belief Systems in the British House of Commons." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 46(2): 365-375.

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

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

Peterson, Bill E., Richard M. Doty & David G. Winter. 1993. "Authoritarianism and Attitudes toward Contemporary Social Issues." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 19: 174-184.

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

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.

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

George, Alexander L. & Juliette L. George. 1964. *Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House: A Personality Study*. New York: Dover. Introduction and Chapter 1.

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

Owen, David & Jonathan Davidson. 2009. "Hubris Syndrome: An Acquired Personality Disorder? A Study of US Presidents and UK Prime Ministers over the last 100 Years." *Brain* 132(5):1396-1406.

5 October Guest Lecture: Martin Rosema, Assistant Professor of Political Science at the Universiteit Twente

Nyhuis, Martin, Jordy Gosselt & Martin Rosema. 2016. "The Psychology of Electoral Mobilization: A Subtle Priming Experiment." *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 26(3): 293-311.

Bankert, Alexa, Leonie Huddy & Martin Rosema. 2017. "Measuring Partisanship as a Social Identity in Multi-Party Systems." *Political Behavior* 39(1): 103-132.

9 October Obedience: Why are people obedient?

Obedience. 1962. Produced by Milgram, Stanley. The Pennsylvania State University: Films in the Behavioral Sciences...or Milgram, Stanley. 1965. Some Conditions of Obedience and Disobedience to Authority. *Human Relations* 18(1): 57-76.

Tyler, Tom R. 1990. *Why People Obey the Law*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Chapter 12.

If writing an assignment, also include:

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.

12 October Groups 1: Why do individuals act in a collective manner?

Freud, Sigmund. 1922. *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*. Chapters 4 & 10.

Leon Festinger, A. Pepitone & T. Newcomb. 1952. "Some Consequences of De-Individuation in a Group." *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 47(2S): 382-389 (also in Stanley Schachter & Michael Gazzaniga (eds.), *Extending Psychological Frontiers*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1990).

Drury, John & Steve Reicher. 1999. "The Intergroup Dynamics of Collective Empowerment:

Substantiating the Social Identity Model of Crowd Behavior.” *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations* 2(4): 381-402.

16 October Groups 2: 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.

19 October Groups 3: How to improve intergroup relations?

Course Evaluation

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.

23 October (at noon) **Deadline for Term Paper**