Political Science 3100: Political Psychology

University of North Texas, Spring 2007

Professor
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MW 9:30am-11am

Description

Political psychologists study political phenomena using theories and methods borrowed from psychology and political science. They examine many different questions from many different fields of political science, including most notably international relations and political behavior. The focus of this class, however, is on the latter. The emphasis is on the masses, that is, the people, and not on the elites or decision-makers. In this class, students will first be introduced to the subject of political psychology. We will discuss the kinds of questions political psychologists study. Students will then be introduced to the various methodologies political psychologists use in their analyses. Particular attention will be given, of course, to experimentation. Finally, we will take a close look at some of the political psychologists’ contributions to the study of ideology and public opinion, the media, decision-making, and citizen competence.

The format of the class is as follows. For each class, students will have to read an article or a book chapter. Students should be advised that the reading load for this class is heavy. To ensure that students do the readings, pop-up quizzes will be administered throughout the semester. Students are also expected to participate in class discussions. Finally, a group (2 students per group) research project will be assigned and due at the end of the semester (see date below). Details about the research project will be given in class on January 19.

Required Texts

There is one required text for the class and a series of articles or book chapters that are posted on the class WebCT Vista webpage.


Assignments and Grading

There will be one midterm exam (worth 20% of the final grade), a final (worth 20%), and one research project (worth 25% of the final grade). Pop-up quizzes will be worth 25% and participation 10%. Questions on the exams will be drawn from the readings and the lectures. The final exam is not cumulative. The midterm and final exams consist of one essay question and five short-answer questions.

A make-up exam for the midterm will be offered only for documented absences and family emergencies. The make-up exam will be scheduled during dead week on April 30.

Class evaluations will take place on May 4 when the research project will be due. NOTE THAT NO RESEARCH PROJECT WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER MAY 4.

Finally, note that extra credit will NOT be offered under any circumstances and that plagiarism and cheating will be pursued according to university policies.
Classroom Policies

Attendance is expected of all students but is not required (except for TAMS students). If a student misses a class, he or she is the sole responsible for any consequences. Cell phones and food are not permitted in class.

Course Schedule

1 Introducing Political Psychology

January 17: Presentation of syllabus.
January 19: Presentation of research project and SHJ Chapter 1.

2 Methodology

February 2: Time allocated for group projects (Class does not meet).

3 Ideology and Public Opinion

February 16: SHJ Chapter 3.
February 19: SHJ Chapter 13.
February 21: SHJ Chapter 14.

**March 2: Midterm covering all material from sections 1, 2, and 3.

4 The Media

March 5: SHJ Chapter 11.
5 Decision-Making

March 16: SHJ Chapter 2.

**April 6: NO CLASS (Easter).**

6 Citizen Competence

April 4: SHJ Chapter 18.
April 13: Guess lecture.
April 23: WebCT Vista: Kuklinski et al. 2001

**April 30: Make-up Exam day.**
**May 4: Class evaluations and research projects are due.**
**May 11: Final Exam, in class at 10:30am.**