Government 039

Political Psychology

Fall 2021

Version: September 7, 2021

Professor: Class: Tuesday & Thursday 10:10 – 12:00

Jennifer Jerit X-period Friday 3:30–4:20 pm

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**Course Description**

This class examines the psychological origins of citizens’ political beliefs and actions. We analyze different aspects of human psychology, including personality, motivation, values, information processing and emotion. This course is for anyone who has ever wondered how people form their political opinions, why they vote the way they do, and whether ordinary citizens are well suited to democracy. Readings will be drawn from the fields of political science and psychology. GOV 3 is a prerequisite for this class.

**Learning Objectives**

This course seeks to develop your skills in several areas:

You will learn how to think about enduring questions from the field of political science through a psychological lens; this entails close attention to the behavior of individuals, as opposed to other units of analysis, such as countries.

You will develop your ability to read and critically analyze academic research through regular exposure to articles published in political science and psychology journals.

You will hone your writing skills, which entails everything from improving prose and grammar to the sound construction of an original argument.

You will become skilled at managing your time in a course that has several different requirements (quizzes and exams, group discussion, and a culminating final paper).

**Course Requirements and Grading**

There are four components to your grade:

1. Participation (20%)
2. Reading Quizzes (25%)
3. Midterm Exam (25%)
4. Final paper (30%)

Grades for all components of the class will be assigned using the rubric on the Registrar’s [website](https://www.dartmouth.edu/reg/transcript/grade_descriptions.html). **The Government Department has a grade policy whereby the median grade in a mid-level seminar shall not exceed a B+. I will adhere to that policy in this class.**

*Participation*.

Discussion questions will be posted to Canvas before class so that you have plenty of time to reflect on the readings and be an active participant in the discussion.

*Reading Quizzes*. There will be 5 scheduled reading quizzes (administered on Canvas) on 9/23, 9/30, 10/7, 10/21, and 11/4. You can take the quiz between 5 pm the day before class up until 10 am on the day of class. There are no make ups. Each quiz is worth 5%.

*Midterm Exam.* The exam consists of fill-in-the-blank and short answer questions. The exam will draw from lectures, readings, and class discussions.

*Final paper*. The final paper (8 pages) should apply theories and concepts from class to a contemporary topic in American politics. You are expected to use 3-5 academic resources (e.g., books, journal or magazine articles) from outside of class. You have latitude in selecting a topic, but you must clearly show how political psychology (as discussed in *this* class) illuminates your topic. Please discuss your proposed topic with me during (or before) Week 9. A one-page outline is due on November 15 and you will bring 5 hard copies of this to class on November 16 for small group work.

*Device Policy.* Laptops and smartphones should be stored away during class. I recommend that you do **not** use a laptop for notes. If you believe that you need a laptop for notetaking, I ask that you sit to the side and back of the classroom, so your screen is not a distraction to others. Also, you should be willing to send me your notes, should I request them.

**\*\* Fall 2021 Covid Policies \*\***

Attendance. You are expected to attend class in person unless you have made alternative arrangements due to illness, medical reasons, or the need to isolate due to COVID-19.  For the health and safety of our class community, please: **do not attend class when you are sick** or if you have been instructed by Student Health Services to stay home. If you must miss class due to COVID-19, let me know ahead of time and I will try to provide a recording of the lecture that you have missed.

Safety: In accordance with [current College policy](https://covid.dartmouth.edu/face-mask-policy), all members of the Dartmouth community are required to wear a suitable face covering when indoors, regardless of vaccination status. This includes our classroom and office hours.  If you need to take a quick drink during class, please dip your mask *briefly*. Eating is not permitted in the classroom. (The only exception to the mask requirement is for students with an approved disability-related accommodation; see below.)  If you do not have an accommodation and refuse to comply with masking/safety protocols, I am obligated to assure that the Covid health and safety standards are followed, and you will be asked to leave the classroom. You remain subject to course attendance policies, and dismissal from class will result in an unexcused absence.  If you refuse to comply with masking or other safety protocols, and to ensure the health and safety of our community, I am obligated to report you to the Dean’s office for disciplinary action under Dartmouth’s [Standards of Conduct](https://student-affairs.dartmouth.edu/policy/standards-conduct). Additional COVID-19 protocols may emerge throughout the quarter, so monitor your email.

**Class Schedule**

**Week 1: What is Political Psychology?**

9/14: Introduction to the course

Hoover Green, Amanda. 2013. “How to Read Political Science: A Guide in Four Steps.”

Krippner, Greta. 2000. “How to Read a (Quantitative) Journal Article.

9/16: Political Cognition

Converse, Philip E. “The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics.” (Excerpt from Jost & Sidanius; Chapter 10).

Krosnick, Jon A. 1990. “Government Policy and Citizen Passion: A Study of Issue Publics in Contemporary America.” *Political Behavior* 12: 59-92.

**Week 2: Models of Attitude Formation**

9/21: Dual Process Theories (DPT) of Attitude Formation and Change

Petty, Richard E., and John T. Caccioppo. 1996. *Attitudes and Persuasion: Classic and Contemporary Approaches*. New York: Westview Press. Pp. 255-269.

9/23: Applications of DPT in Political Science

 Lavine, Howard, Christopher Johnston, and Marco Steenbergen. *The Ambivalent Partisan: How Critical Loyalty Promotes Democracy*. Oxford University Press, Chapter 1 (pp. 1-22), Chapter 2 (pp. 27-41), Chapter4 (pp. 84-100).

**Week 3: Decision Making**

9/28: Individual Differences in Motivation and Ability

Kam, Cindy D. 2005. “Who Toes the Party Line? Cues, Values, and Individual Differences.” *Political Behavior* 27(2): 163-82.

9/30: Pathologies (Information versus Cues)

Cohen, Geoffrey L. 2003. “Party over Policy: The Dominating Impact of Group Influence on Political Beliefs.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 85 (Nov): 808–22. Read Studies 1, 2, and 3 and the “General Discussion.”

Sides, John. 2016. “Stories or Science? Facts, Frames, and Policy Attitudes.” *American Politics Research* 44 (3): 387-414.

**Week 4: Political Sophistication**

10/5: What is Political Sophistication?

Delli Carpini, Michael X., and Scott Keeter. 1996. *What Americans Know about Politics and Why it Matters*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. Chapter 1 (pp. 49–61) and Chapter 2 (entire, but you can skim).

Jerit, Jennifer. 2019. “How People Learn about Politics: Navigating the Information Environment, “in *New Directions in Public Opinion*, pp. 282–96.

10/7: What Should People Know?

Prior, Markus. 2014. “Visual Political Knowledge? A Different Road to Competence?” *American Journal of Political Science* 76 (1): 41-57.

**Week 5: Emotion in Politics**

10/12: Theories from Psychology

Valentino, Nicholas A., Ted Brader, Eric W. Groenendyk, Krysha Gregorowicz, and Vincent L. Hutchings. 2011. “Election Night’s Alright for Fighting: The Role of Emotions in Political Participation. *Journal of Politics* 73(1):156-70.

Filindra, Alexandra, Lore Collingwod, and Noah Kaplan. 2020. “Anxious about Social Violence: The Emotional Underpinnings of Support for Gun Control.” *Social Science Quarterly* 101 (5): 2101-2020.

10/14: Midterm Exam

**Week 6: Unconscious Influences**

10/19: Automaticity and Unconscious Influences

Arcuri et al. 2008. “Predicting the Vote: Implicit Attitudes as Predictors of the Future Behavior of Decided and Undecided Voters.” *Political Psychology* 29: 369-387.

10/21: Application to the Political Parties

Iyengar, Shanto, and Sean J. Westwood. 2015. “Fear and Loathing across Party Lines: New Evidence on Group Polarization.” *American Journal of Political Science* 59: 690-707.

Mason, Lilliana, and Julie Wronski. 2018. “One Tribe to Bind Them All: How Our Social Group Attachments Strengthen Partisanship.” *Political Psychology* 39 (1): 257-277.

**Week 7: Political Communication and Media Effects**

10/26: Theories of Media Effects

Iyengar, Shanto, Mark D. Peters, and Donald R. Kinder. 1982. “Experimental Demonstrations of the ‘Not-So-Minimal’ Consequences of Television News Programs.” *American Political Science Review* 76(4):848-58.

10/28: Applications

Taber, Charles S., and Milton Lodge. 2006. “Motivated Skepticism in the Evaluation of Political Beliefs.” *American Journal of Political Science* 50(3):755-769.

Van Boven, Leaf, Phillip J. Ehert, and David K. Sherman. 2018. “Psychological Barriers to Bipartisan Public Support for Climate Policy.” *Psychological Science* 13(4): 492-507.

Kam, Cindy D., and Maggie Deichert. 2019. “Boycotting, Buycotting, and the Psychology of Political Consumerism.” *Journal of Politics* 82(1): 72–88.

**Week 8: Biology & Dispositional Influences**

11/2: Personality Influences

Carney, Dana R., John T. Jost, Samuel D. Gosling, and Jeff Potter. 2008. “The Secret Lives of Liberals and Conservatives: Personality Profiles, Interaction Styles, and the Things They Leave Behind.” *Political Psychology* 29:807-840.

Take Big Five Personality Inventory (posted on Canvas; see pp. 3-4).

11/4: Elite Personality and Genetic Influences

Rice, Matthew, Megan Remmel, and Jeffery Mondak. 2020. “Personality on the Hill: Expert Evaluations of U.S. Senators’ Psychological Traits.” *Political Research Quarterly* <https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912920928587>.

Alford, John R., Carolyn L. Funk, and John R. Hibbing. 2005. “Are Political Orientations Genetically Transmitted?” *American Political Science Review* 99:153-167.

Kalmoe, Nathan, and Johnson, Martin. 2021. “Genes, Ideology, and Sophistication.” *Journal of Experimental Political Science* doi:10.1017/XPS.2021.4.

**Week 9: Guest Speaker & Wrap Up**

11/9: Guest Speaker

Professor [John Kane](https://www.sps.nyu.edu/homepage/academics/faculty-directory/17402-john-kane.html), New York University: expert on the political psychology of public opinion and political behavior.

Sherif, Muzafer. 1956. “Experiments in Group Conflict” *Scientific American* 195 (5): 54-59.

Mason, Lilliana, Julie Wronksi, and John Kane. 2021. “Activating Animus: The Uniquely Social Roots of Trump Support.” *American Political Science Review* doi:10.1017/S0003055421000563.

11/11: Wrap Up & Talk about final paper

Your paper topic must be approved by me by this week (e.g., by 5 pm Friday, Nov 12).

**Week 10: Final Meeting**

11/16: Small Group Work

Bring 5 copies of your one-page outline to class.

Your final paper is due by 5 pm EST on the day of our regularly scheduled final exam (exam period for 2021 is Nov 19 to 23).

**Other Class Policies**

**Contacting Me**

Please schedule appointments to meet with me during my office hours via calendly.com. Office hours are most effective if you have spent time with the readings and given some thought to your question. Please note that if you email me with a question, I generally do not respond to email after 5pm during the week and over the weekend.

**Academic Honor Principle**

As a Dartmouth student, you have agreed to abide by the College’s [Academic Honor Principle](https://students.dartmouth.edu/community-standards/policy/academic-honor-principle). In this class, you will be writing original essays and papers, which means you should be aware of the proper citation practices. Ignorance about what constitutes plagiarism will not excuse a violation. Please make use of available campus [resources](https://writing-speech.dartmouth.edu/learning/materials/sources-and-citations-dartmouth) to educate yourself on the proper use of outside sources. If you are confused about how to attribute sources, please speak with me or make use of the [Peer Writing Center at Dartmouth](https://writing-speech.dartmouth.edu/learning/rwit).

**Student Accessibility Needs**

Students requesting disability-related accommodations and services for this course are encouraged to schedule a phone/Zoom meeting with me as early in the term as possible. This conversation will help to establish what supports are built into the course. In order for accommodations to be authorized, students are required to consult with Student Accessibility Services (student.accessibility.services@dartmouth.edu; 603-646-9900) and to request an accommodation email be sent to me. We will then work together with SAS if accommodations need to be modified based on the learning environment. If students have questions about whether they are eligible for accommodations, they should contact the SAS office. All inquiries and discussions will remain confidential.

**Religious Observances**

If you have a religious observance that conflicts with your participation in the course, please meet with me before the end of the second week of the term to discuss appropriate accommodations.

**Diversity & Inclusion**

If you have a name and/or set of pronouns that differ from those that appear in your official college records, please let me know. As a participant in course discussions, you should also honor the identities and diversity of your classmates.

**Mental Health & Wellness**

There are a number of resources available to you on campus to support your wellness, including your [undergraduate dean](https://students.dartmouth.edu/undergraduate-deans/), the College [Counseling Center](https://students.dartmouth.edu/health-service/counseling/about), and the [Student Wellness Center](https://students.dartmouth.edu/wellness-center/). I encourage you to use these resources to take care of yourself throughout the term, and to come speak to me if you experience any difficulties.