1 OVERVIEW
Course Description
This course focuses on research that explores the psychological processes of individual decision makers. This research focuses on political attitudes and decisions, but also includes more general research on attitude formation and information processing. The first goal of the course is to understand the distinct set of theoretic approaches and substantive foci of political psychology. We will study theoretic approaches including rational choice, personality, information-processing and cognition, social learning, and group identity. We will see how these approaches are applied to a range of substantive topics including authoritarianism, political socialization, political ideologies, racial attitudes, and political participation.

In addition to these substantive considerations, a second goal of the course is to understand the methods that scholars use to study political psychology. While we will consider readings that trace the development of the field over time, the emphasis will be on recent quantitative work. We will try to understand how the methodologies common to political psychology inform both the questions researchers ask and the answers they receive.

The third goal of the course will be to increase students’ overall level of professionalism. We will accomplish this goal, in part, by periodic discussions of a variety of relevant topics for carrying out and presenting political science research—in both written and oral form. The final paper and presentation, discussed below, is designed to compliment this emphasis.

Required Books

2 GRades
Students’ grades for the course are comprised of the following components:

PARTICIPATION (20%): Each weekly meeting will be spent discussing and critically evaluating the assigned readings. At the beginning of the meeting, I will ask each student to provide a brief comment or question that will serve to help orient our discussion of the week’s material. After this open-ended discussion, the remainder of the class will be spent evaluating each assigned reading in greater depth. Students’ participation grades hinge on their contribution to each discussion. Students will earn a B grade for the week if they demonstrate their familiarity with the readings, a B+/A- grade if they demonstrate an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of these readings, and an A if they demonstrate an understanding of how these
readings build upon, reinforce, or contradict material from earlier in the course.

RESPONSE MEMOS (40%): Students must write four response memos over the course of the semester, each worth 10% of your final grade. Students who choose to write an optional fifth memo will have their lowest score dropped from their final grade. Student can each use their own discretion to choose which weeks to provide responses. Each memo should respond to several of the corresponding week’s readings, but should not summarize these readings. Rather, each memo should posit a novel argument which may include one or more of the following: identifying a problem with the current literature on the topic; providing plausible alternative explanations to observed results; criticizing the methodologies used and proposing other strategies of research; criticizing how a theoretical construct has been defined or measured; identifying overlooked implications of a set of findings; suggesting new question or hypotheses for research; or identifying similarities and contrasts with previous readings. The essential component of these papers is your own argument.

All memos are due by 4pm on the Tuesday before the relevant class. These papers must be submitted to me by email in pdf format. The document title must use the 'PP-lastname-M#.pdf’ format (e.g., my third memo would be named “PP-Pietryka-M3.pdf”). The body of each memo must not exceed one single spaced page, with 12-point serif font and one-inch margins. References should use APSA style with the reference list on a separate page. Include your name and date on the first line of the memo but do not include a title page.

FINAL PAPER (30%) Students must write a final paper that includes the introduction, theory, and research design of an original research project. Students do not need to collect nor analyze data for the project. Students should visit me during office hours early in the semester for guidance on picking a suitable topic. As the semester progresses, students should seek guidance from me and their peers about their theory and research design. More details will be available as the semester progresses. My hope is that students with interest in pursuing political psychology in their own research will be able to carry out these experimental designs later in their graduate careers.

FINAL PAPER PRESENTATION (10%): In one of the last two meetings of the course, each student will present their theory and research design from their final paper. Presentations should be 10-15 minutes and must include slides.

The final letter grade will be assigned according to the standard table:

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3 POLICIES
University Attendance Policy
Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.

Academic Honor Policy
The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students’ academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to “…be honest and truthful and …[to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University.” (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at http://fda.fsu.edu/Academics/Academic-Honor-Policy.)
Americans With Disabilities Act
Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should (1) register with and provide docu-
mentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; and (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating
the need for accommodation and what type. Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide
classroom accommodation to a student until appropriate verification from the Student Disability Resource
Center has been provided. This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format
upon request. For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact:
Student Disability Resource Center, 874 Traditions Way, 108 Student Services Building, Florida State Uni-
versity, Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167, 850-644-9566 (voice), 850-644-8504 (TDD), sdrc@admin.fsu.edu,
http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/

Syllabus Change Policy
Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this
syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.

4 SCHEDULE

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL PSYCHOLOGY
- Pol. Psych. Handbook, chapter 1
- Experiments Handbook, chapters 2-3
- Leif D. Nelson, Joseph Simmons, and Uri Simonsohn. Psychology’s Renaissance. Annual Review of
  Psychology, 69(1):null, 2018

WEEK 2: RATIONALITY, SELF-INTEREST, AND ALTRUISM
- Experiments Handbook, chapter 5

WEEK 3: PERSONALITY AND TRAITS

  - Paper: [https://matthewpietryka.files.wordpress.com/2017/12/pietryka_macintosh_171214.pdf](https://matthewpietryka.files.wordpress.com/2017/12/pietryka_macintosh_171214.pdf)
  - Supporting Information: [https://matthewpietryka.files.wordpress.com/2017/12/si-pietryka_macintosh_171214.pdf](https://matthewpietryka.files.wordpress.com/2017/12/si-pietryka_macintosh_171214.pdf)

**WEEK 4: AUTHORITARIANISM**


**WEEK 5: IDEOLOGY AND MASS BELIEF SYSTEMS**


• For this meeting, I'll assume you are already familiar with Converse (1964). If you are familiar already, you do not need to read it again. If you have yet to read it, make sure to at least skim it: Philip Converse. The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Politics. *Ideology and Discontent*, pages 206–261, 1964


**WEEK 6: IMPRESSIONS AND INFORMATION PROCESSING**


• Experiments Handbook, chapter 13


• Reid Hastie and Bernadette Park. The Relationship between Memory and Judgment Depends on Whether the Task is Memory-Based or On-Line. *Psychological Review*, 93:258–268, 1986


WEEK 7: HOT COGNITION: AFFECT, EMOTION, AND MOTIVATIONS


• George E. Marcus and Michael B. MacKuen. Anxiety, Enthusiasm and the Vote: The Emotional Underpinnings of Learning and Involvement During Presidential Campaigns. *American Political Science Review*, 87:672–685, 1993


• Thomas Wood and Ethan Porter. The Elusive Backfire Effect: Mass Attitudes’ Steadfast Factual Adherence. SSRN Scholarly Paper ID 2819073, Social Science Research Network, Rochester, NY, December 2017

WEEK 8: ATTITUDE STRENGTH AND AMBIVALENCE


WEEK 9: PERSUASION AND ATTITUDE CHANGE


• Experiments Handbook, chapter 10


WEEK 10: UNCERTAINTY AND HEURISTICS


WEEK 11: DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION

- Experiments Handbook, chapter 19

WEEK 12: SOCIALIZATION

WEEK 13: GROUP IDENTITY AND CONFORMITY

- Solomon E. Asch and H. Guetzkow. Effects of group pressure upon the modification and distortion of judgments. *Groups, leadership, and men*, pages 222–236, 1951

WEEK 14: STEREOTYPING AND PREJUDICE

- Experiments Handbook, chapter 22

WEEK 15: IMPLICIT ATTITUDES