Objectives:

This course examines the role psychology plays in the political attitudes, opinions, and behavior of the mass public. In this course we will examine the foundations of individual decision making in democratic political systems. You will engage with the fundamental theories of political psychology, evaluate competing explanations for variations in political attitudes and behavior, and take a close look at specific applications of political psychology:

- How do individuals acquire their political beliefs?
- What shapes opinions and behavior?
- Why are some people “left” and others “right”?
- How much can we trust public opinion?

By the end of this course, you will have an understanding of how psychological theories help explain what goes on in the political world, at the level of both the ordinary citizen and political leaders. You also will be exposed to original research conducted by political scientists and psychologists. Thus another goal of this course is to develop your appreciation for scientific thought and the research process more generally.

You are welcome - even encouraged! - to disagree with the answers proposed by the assigned readings. If this is the case, you should be able to formulate an evidence-based counter-argument that convinces your colleagues to reject alternative explanations. This analytical exercise will help you prepare for a career in settings where there are no clear-cut answers, such as consulting, research, finance, public policy, or law.

Office Hours: Tue 13:00-16:00 in Clark B 348. I am also available after class, or by appointment. During office hours I am available for any and all questions students might have. Please make use of this opportunity. We can discuss your questions about the course material, the class, or your progress so far. Since I am new in town: I’m also happy to hear about your favorite things to do in Fort Collins and Colorado.
Assignments:

**Participation (10%)** Preparing for the classes and engaging in discussion is a requirement for this course, which is why this grade evaluates the frequency and quality of contributions. I will not take attendance; if you miss class, I trust that you have legitimate reasons to do so. However, frequent absences might reduce your ability to engage in class discussion, which in turn will affect your participation grade.

**Quizzes (20%)** Ahead of several classes, a short online multiple choice quiz will gauge your comprehension of the readings. Quizzes are forward-looking: they cover the readings assigned for the next class session and are due at the beginning of said class (9:30 am). Late quizzes will be accepted up until September 15. Students who join the course late should go back and complete missed quizzes in order to receive credit. There will be a total of 18 quizzes and I will drop the 3 lowest scores. Since I am dropping the 3 lowest scores, there will be no make-up quizzes.

**Response paper (15%)** Students will have to write one (one page, single spaced, approx. 500 words) response paper. In this response paper I want you to critically engage with the Literature. There are multiple ways in which you can write this response paper. You can, for example, compare two readings with each other (maybe they are conflicting, make sure to always check the additional readings section) or you can compare or contrast the content of two sections. Please do not just reproduce the arguments. I am not looking for summaries but want to see that you critically evaluate different academic arguments and then argue for a side. Response papers are due before the class. Hint: Since you have to really engage with the literature to write the response paper the day you submit the paper is also a great day to score some participation points!

**In-Class Midterm Exam (25%)** An in-class exam on October 13th will cover material from the readings, lectures, and class discussions up until that point. The exam will consist of a combination of short answers and short essay questions. To help you prepare for the exam, there will be a review session on October 11th.

**Take-Home Final Exam (30%)** The final exam will be assigned on the last class day (December 8) at 1pm and will cover material from the readings, lectures, and class discussions corresponding to the second half of the class. The exam will consist of 10 essay questions. It can be completed at your own pace and can be submitted anytime up until the end of the assigned final period (Monday, December 12 at 9 pm). Please submit it on Canvas as a PDF. To help you prepare for the exam, there will be a review session on December 8.
Important Dates:

- Review Session .................................. 2022-10-11
- Midterm .......................................... 2022-10-13
- Review Session ................................. 2022-12-08
- Take Home ....................................... 2022-12-12

Note: Depending on progress of the class these dates are subject to change. Updated deadlines will be announced in the class lecture and on Canvas.

Main References: There is no required textbook to purchase for this course. All readings in this class will made available on Canvas. We will read cutting-edge research published in academic journals and books. The articles are selected based on their topic, impact, accessibility, and relevance to the class. We will usually read and discuss one academic article or book chapter per class session. Additional academic articles and book chapters are listed in the syllabus. You can read those if you want to learn more about a specific topic. In case you are looking for introductory text books that help you understand the material I can recommend the following books. Purchasing or reading these books is not necessary for this class.


Class Policy:

- Attendance Regular attendance is essential for your academic success. While I don’t take attendance your participation grade and likely all other grades will suffer if you miss too many sessions.
- Communication The most reliable way to get in touch with me is via email. You should expect a response within 48 business hours.
- Academic Honesty and Integrity This course will adhere to the CSU Academic Integrity Policy as found on the Student’ Responsibilities page of the CSU General Catalog and in the Student Conduct Code. At a minimum, violations will result in a grading penalty in this course and a report to the Office of Student Resolution Center. Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation.
- Accommodations Your experience in this class is important to me. If you require any accommodation, let me know ahead of time what would be helpful so that we can
plan together for you to succeed. You do not need to share private information with me, but you must provide verifiable documentation to the Office of Student Case Management or Student Disability Center. For religious accommodations, please complete the Religious Accommodation Request Form. Please provide verifiable documentation to them (not to me!) ahead of time and ensure that they forward me this information at least one week prior to the assignment for which accommodations are required. I cannot make adjustments after the fact.

- **Late Assignments** I will accept no late assignments. Exceptions are granted only if the Office of Student Case Management is able to provide documentation of a health emergency or other life emergency. If you experience an emergency, please contact Student Case Management, which will then contact me.

- **Grievances** If you are unhappy with your grade on an assignment, please wait 48 hours after the assignment is returned before contacting me. This provides the opportunity to let the initial emotions subside and think more clearly about the issue at hand. After 48 hours, you can contact me with a written explanation of why you feel your grade should be different. “I worked hard” is not a good explanation; I can only grade the quality of the work that you give to me! Based on this petition, I will decide whether to re-grade your assignment. However, be advised that your grade may move upwards or downwards.

- The material in the class can be challenging and difficult at first. It is hence of utmost importance that you follow the seminar closely, prepare for the class, and always contribute to an open and engaging class environment. I strongly encourage students to ask questions. If you don’t understand something or are stuck on a problem you are usually not alone.

- The goal of this class is the personal and intellectual growth of all students attending. Every student is expected to participate in the generation of an environment that facilitates this growth. Woolley, Kaitlin, and Ayelet Fishbach. 2022. “Motivating personal growth by seeking discomfort.” *Psychological Science*, 33.4: 510-523.

**Movie:** *Behind the curve*, a documentary about the Flat Earth movement that highlights the importance of a rigorous scientific approach with falsifiable hypotheses.

**Additional Resources and Policies** Check out this link for policies relevant to your courses and resources to help with various challenges you may encounter: [https://col.st/2FA2g](https://col.st/2FA2g). This includes information about technical support, universal design for learning/accommodation of needs, undocumented student support, etc.
## Grading Policy

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Tentative Course Outline:

Week 01:

Welcome and how to thrive in this class .......................... 2022-08-23
Introduction to Political Psychology .............................. 2022-08-25


Additional Readings:


Week 02:

Sources of Political Behavior: Biological ........................... 2022-08-30


Sources of Political Behavior: Social ................................. 2022-09-01


Additional Readings:

1. Charney, Evan. 2008. “Genes and Ideologies.” Perspectives on Politics, 6: 299-319 (see also the following debate with Hannagan Hatemi)


Week 03:

Sources of Political Behavior: Psychological 1 ................. 2022-09-06


Sources of Political Behavior: Psychological 2 ................. 2022-09-08


Additional Readings:


Week 04:

Belief Systems 1 ................................................. 2022-09-13


Belief Systems 2 ................................................. 2022-09-15


Additional Readings:


**Week 05:**

**Ideology 1** ....................................................... 2022-09-20


**Ideology 2** ....................................................... 2022-09-22


**Additional Readings** :


Week 06:

Knowledge & Heuristics 1 ................................. 2022-09-27


Knowledge & Heuristics 2 ................................. 2022-09-29


Additional Readings:


Week 07:

Emotion 1 ...................................................... 2022-10-04


Emotion 2 ...................................................... 2022-10-06


Additional Readings:


Week 08:

Review Session ............................................. 2022-10-11
Midterm ............................................................ 2022-10-13
Week 09:

Media Effects 1 ................................................. 2022-10-18


Media Effects 2 .................................................. 2022-10-12


Additional Readings:


Week 10:

Implicit Attitudes 1 .............................. 2022-10-25


Implicit Attitudes 2 .............................. 2022-10-27


Additional Readings:


Week 11:

Groups 1 ................................................................. 2022-11-01


Groups 2 ................................................................. 2022-11-03


Additional Readings :


Week 12:

Racial Attitudes 1 .......................... 2022-11-08

1. White, Ismail. 2007. “When Race Matters and When it
Doesn’t: Racial Group Differences in Response to Racial Cues.”

Racial Attitudes 2 .......................... 2022-11-10

1. Glaser, James, M. 2002. “White Voters, Black Schools:
Structuring Racial Choices with a Checklist Ballot.” American

Additional Readings :

“Cues that Matter: How Political Ads Prime Racial Attitudes
During Campaigns.” American Political Science Review, 96(1):
75-90.

2. Berinsky, Adam J., Vincent L. Hutchings, Tali Mendelberg, Lee
Black Candidates More Likely to be Disadvantaged by Sex
Week 13:

Campaigns & Partisanship 1 ................................. 2022-11-15


Campaigns & Partisanship 2 ................................. 2022-11-17


Additional Readings:


Week 14:

No class .................................................. 2022-11-22

No class .................................................. 2022-11-24
Week 15:

Methodological Questions 1 .............................. 2022-11-29


Methodological Questions 2 .............................. 2022-12-01


Additional Readings:

Week 16:

Student Choice! .................................................. 2022-12-06

Review Session .................................................. 2022-12-08