

## **POU44321. TOPICS IN POLITICAL PSYCHOLOGY**

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**Office Hours:** Fridays, 1-3pm, online. Please email to set up an appointment at least one day before.

**Seminars:** Thursdays, 4-6p pm. Online / Llyod LB11

### **Module description**

This is a semester-long module that aims to introduce students to selected concepts and approaches in political psychology. Political psychology is a relatively young field of study, which seeks to understand the psychological underpinnings of political attitudes and behavior. This module will introduce you to some of the major topics in the psychological study of politics. By surveying key readings of the field and recent empirical findings, students will gain a thorough understanding of some of the most prominent theories explaining the origins of political attitudes and behavior and the application of these theories to some of the most pressing issues in world politics.

### **Learning aims**

The module aims to introduce students to selected concepts and approaches in political psychology. By surveying key readings of the field and recent empirical findings, students will gain a thorough understanding of some of the most prominent theories explaining the origins of political attitudes and behavior and the application of these theories to some of the most pressing issues in world politics.

### **Learning outcomes**

On successful completion of this module students will be able to:

- explain, interpret, and discuss the implications of the major dispositional and situational approaches in political psychology,
- discuss the psychological mechanisms underlying attitude formation and polarization,
- explain the psychological correlates of group dynamics including obedience, ethnocentrism, xenophobia, and prejudice,

- construct arguments concerning the psychological mechanisms underlying recent debates about citizen preferences in modern democracies.

## **Course organization**

This is a seminar course, which relies heavily on active student participation. I generally open the class meetings by providing some background on the topic, connecting it to the broader literature, making clarifications about the concepts, theories, and methods and then open up the floor for discussion. It is therefore essential that students attend class having done the week's readings and ready to discuss them.

The module is organized as a face-to-face, but in line with public health advice, we will need to hold some sessions online.

During online weeks, we may have some synchronous sessions (including posting on Blackboard discussion boards, doing peer review activities, etc.) followed by live discussion on zoom/Collaborate Ultra to prevent "zoom fatigue."

The Blackboard will present detailed information of each week's class organization. Please keep in mind the following rules for our sessions.

During online weeks:

- In case there are issues potentially affecting your participation or learning in online environments, please send me an email and let me know. You do not need to explain the details, but just let me know so that I can try to make the necessary arrangements if possible.
- Make sure to turn off your microphone and camera during the instructor's presentation.
- If you have any questions for me, you may post them in the chat box during my presentations.
- Please make sure to turn on your microphone during breakout sessions. You are strongly encouraged but not required to turn on your camera during these sessions.
- If you have interruptions in your internet connection, please send me an email to let me know as soon as you can.
- I will record and post only the parts where I do the presentation for those people who might have had difficulty following the session due to internet problems, but I will never record the discussion sessions.
- ❖ The materials and content presented within the sessions are intended solely for use in a context of teaching and learning at Trinity.
- ❖ Any session recorded for subsequent review is made available solely for the purpose of enhancing student learning.

- ❖ Students should not edit or modify the recordings in any way, nor disseminate them fully or partially for use outside of a context of teaching and learning at Trinity.

During face-to-face weeks:

- If you have permission to attend the classes fully online due to underlying illness, please email and let me know. Sometimes it takes a while for LENS reports to be communicated to instructors, so please do not assume that I am aware of your condition.
- If you need to self-isolate because you are diagnosed, have symptoms, or because you are a close contact of someone, just send me an email to let me know.
- If you feel unwell and/or suspect that you might have Covid-19, please send me an email as soon as you can and do not come to sessions.
- If you feel unsafe due to having to travel in crowded trains or buses, please let me know of your situation.
- I will make the necessary accommodations for students who are unable to come to sessions (including the necessary arrangements for them to get participation points.) Please do not feel pressured to come to face-to-face sessions in case you have health issues or concerns about your health and safety.
- I will either present live or record the sections where I do the presentation, but I will never streamline or record the discussion sessions.
- If you feel like you start showing symptoms during class, please feel free to leave class immediately. Do not feel obliged to make an explanation at the moment. You can send me an email later if you want to.
- ❖ Please make sure that you wear your mask during all times.
- ❖ I intend to wear a mask during face-to-face teaching. In case you have hearing problems and rely on lip-reading, please inform me in advance.

### **Office hours and contact with students**

I will respond to your e-mails within 48 hours on weekdays during the teaching weeks and 24 hours (again, on weekdays) during the exam period. If you send an email during the weekend, do not expect to receive an immediate reply.

In case you have any questions about course content, readings, or class discussions, you can raise them during office hours.

Please note that I will not be able to answer substantive questions concerning course content via e-mail. In case you have such questions, please set up an appointment for office hours or raise them during class meetings. Please bear in mind that I will not cover the lecture material for you during office hours, as office hours are not intended to replace lectures.

Office hours for this term are going to be online, between 1 and 3 pm on Fridays. Please email at least 24 hours in advance to make up an appointment for office hours and I will send you the link.

In case the office hours clash with your other modules or responsibilities, please let me know and we can try to make an appointment for a different day and time.

### **Assessment details**

5% Response papers and seminar participation

35% Mid-term essay

60% Final essay

***Response papers and participation.*** 5% of your final mark comes from response papers and active participation in seminar discussions.

Response papers will be submitted through the Blackboard system; under the assignment tab of the corresponding week. The due dates and times for the response papers are:

- Tuesdays, 6pm of each week

Each week (with the exception of weeks 1, 7, and 12) I will post a discussion question for the response paper. These questions generally ask you to critically evaluate the required readings assigned for the week. You do not need to incorporate material from optional readings. Unless otherwise noted, response papers must be around 400 words (plus/minus 10%) and must respond to the prompt that is provided. Response papers should not be mere summaries of the material but should be critical assessment of the readings. Response papers will be graded on a P/F basis (1 points=Pass, 0 points=Fail). However to be able to get the 1 point for the Pass grade, student must also attend the corresponding seminar. In case you are unable to attend the seminar for the week that you wrote a response paper for, you have to make sure that you come to the next one. In total, you must submit 4 response papers and attend at least 4 seminars per term.

I will assign the P/F grade based on whether the response paper responds to the discussion question directly and whether it engages in a critical discussion of the assigned material. Needless to say, all response papers submitted must be student's own work, and they must abide by the plagiarism policy of our university (please see below).

For the participation component, I will take note of your attendance in discussion sessions. At the end of each session, I will also ask all students to submit a short summary of the discussion points.

In line with the Department of Political Science policy, the maximum grade you can receive for response papers and participation is capped at 80. Below is the grading table for response papers and participation points.

4 response papers and 4 participation (all P): 80 / 100

3 response papers and 3 participation (all P): 60 / 100

2 response papers and 2 participation (all P): 40 / 100

1 response paper and 1 participation (all P): 20 / 100

Note that it is not possible to get more than 80 points for the response paper and the participation component per term by submitting more papers or attending more classes. However, students can submit an additional response paper in case they received an F for a response paper.

Please note that late submissions for response papers will not be accepted. In case you are unable to submit your response paper on time, you will need to make sure you submit another one in the upcoming weeks. As stated above, in case you are unable to attend a seminar, you should contact me as soon as possible. Each student is responsible for keeping track of their participation and response paper grades.

**Mid-term essay (blog post).** I will ask you to write a blog post (Min: 1,700/Max: 2,000 words), which will count towards 35% of your final mark. The deadline for this assignment is:

- 17 November 2020, 6pm

Blog posts are popular tools that enable scientists to communicate their research, ideas, and arguments to a public audience in an accessible manner. Blog posts present an argument and/or analyze an event or topic critically with a less formal language and a more flexible structure and in a more personal manner, if you choose to do so. You will of course be asked to build your arguments on scientific evidence and findings, include citations and analysis of evidence.

Blogs will encourage you to work on your digital communication skills by integrating visual content to support your arguments.

You will choose your own topic for the blog post, and submit it for review by me. I will provide further guidelines and specific instructions later, but here are some examples that could help you get a sense of the expected output:

- [The rise of American authoritarianism](#)
- [Coronavirus responses highlight how humans are hardwired...](#)
- [Extreme weather news may not change climate change skeptics' minds](#)

Some practical guidelines from Dr. Amy Erica Smith [on writing blog posts](#) (ignore #3).

**Final essay.** You will pick and write an essay on one of the following topics. The final essay will be 3,000 words and will be submitted on:

- 8 January 2021, 6pm

The essay should have a clearly stated argument (a highly original one for a first class grade), discuss the evidence that supports your argument and discuss and refute the counter-arguments and counter-evidence. It is also essential that your essay is well-organized, efficiently structured, and shows evidence of a good and accurate grasp of the material. I will provide a grading rubric along with more detailed instructions throughout the semester. These will also be posted on Blackboard.

- In light of existing research in political psychology, is it possible to create a society in which there is no systematic prejudice against minorities or marginal groups?
- Which political psychology approach or approaches best explains the recent rise of anti-immigrant and populist sentiments in the West?
- Does motivated reasoning provide a sufficient explanation for belief in fake news and misinformation?
- How well does social identity theory explain how political conflicts between groups emerge and are sustained?

Before submitting any works, please read the [department's undergraduate handbook](#), which contains a lot of useful information about submission of written assignments and guidelines on writing essays.

Also please read the University's [plagiarism policy](#) to make sure that you are familiar with different types of plagiarism and avoid such situations in your submissions. Also see the links under Academic Integrity below for more resources.

**Late work for essay submissions.** All late work, unless excused in advance by the module lecturer, or justified by medical certificate or tutor's note, will be penalised at a rate of 5 marks per day. Under no circumstances will work be accepted after the set work has been marked and handed back to other students, or after the end of the second lecture term.

Make sure to save and back-up your work. Computer crashes or failure to back up your work will count as acceptable excuses for late work!

## Course materials

All reading materials indicated in the syllabus will be available on Blackboard. I will also post additional materials on Blackboard.

## Academic integrity

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity free from fraud and deception. Academic dishonesty, including, but not limited to, cheating on an exam or assignment, plagiarizing, representing someone else's work as your own, submitting work previously used without the informing and taking the consent of the instructor, fabricating of information or citations, etc. will not be tolerated. Plagiarism will lead to automatic failure and the matter will be reported to the student's tutor and the dean of the faculty; severe penalties are likely to ensue, including possible exclusion from the exam or even the College, in accordance with College policy.

- Please read pp. 45-47 of the [College Calendar](#) for University's plagiarism policy.
- General guidelines for students on avoiding plagiarism could be found in the [Library's online tutorial](#).
- The Library also has a [web page](#) with extensive resources about avoiding plagiarism and best practices about citations and referencing.

## Disability policy

Students with a disability are encouraged to register with the [Disability Service](#) to seek supports where the disability could affect their ability to participate fully in all aspects of the course.

## Seminar Schedule and Readings

*Below is a list of required readings. There will be additional material on Blackboard (readings, videos, links to blog posts etc.) for students who would like to read more about the topic. You are not required to incorporate material from optional readings to your response papers although you are welcome to do so.*

### Week 1: Introduction. An overview of the field and methods

Stone, Susanna, Kate M. Johnson, Erica Beall, Peter Meindl, Benjamin Smith and Jesse Graham. 2014. Overview: Political Psychology. *WIREs Cognitive Science* 5:373-385. doi: 10.1002/wcs.1293.

Jordan, Christian H., and Mark P. Zanna. 2005. How to Read a Journal Article in Social Psychology. (Jost and Sidanius, pp. 467-476) [Link](#)

Psychologists Use Descriptive, Correlational, and Experimental Research Designs to Understand Behavior. Excerpt from Chapter 2 of *Introduction to Psychology*. Open Source. [Link](#)

EGAP. nd. 10 Things to Know about Reading Regression Table. [Link](#)

## **Week 2. Personality and political attitudes-The Big Five model**

Young, Dannagal G. 2020. How Your Personality Shapes Your Politics. TED-X Talk. [Link](#)

Take the BBC Future's 'What's your secret nationality?' test. [Link](#)

Gerber, Alan S., Gregory A. Huber, David Doherty, Conor M. Dowling, and Shang E. Ha. 2010. Personality and Political Attitudes: Relationships across Issue Domains and Political Contexts. *American Political Science Review* 104(1): 111-133.

Bakker, Bert N., Matthijs Rooduijn, and Gijs Schumacher. 2016. The Psychological Roots of Populist Voting: Evidence from the United States, the Netherlands and Germany. *European Journal of Political Research* 55: 302–320.

## **Week 3. Identity basis of political attitudes**

Huddy, Leonie and Alexa Bankert. 2017. Political Partisanship as a Social Identity. *The Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*. DOI: 10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.250

Huddy, Leonie, Alexa Bankert, and Caitlin Davies. 2018. Expressive Versus Instrumental Partisanship in Multiparty European Systems. *Advances in Political Psychology* 39 (S1): 173-199.

Czaja, Erica, Jane Junn, and Tali Mendelberg. 2016. Race, Ethnicity, and the Group Bases of Public Opinion. In Adam J. Berinsky (ed.) *New Directions in Public Opinion*. Second Edition. Routledge, pp. 104-123.

## **Week 4. From group identity to political polarization**

Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge University Press, Chapters 6 and 12.

Sohlberg, Jacob. 2017. The Effect of Elite Polarization: A Comparative Perspective on How Party Elites Influence Attitudes and Behavior on Climate Change in the European Union. *Sustainability* 9(39): 6-18.



Mason, Lilliana. 2016. A Cross-Cutting Calm: How Social Sorting Drives Affective Polarization. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 80(S1): 351–377.

Federico, Christopher. 2020. When Do Psychological Differences Predict Political Differences? Engagement and the Psychological Bases of Political Polarization. Forthcoming in Jan-Willem van Prooijen (ed.). *Political Polarization (Current Issues in Social Psychology)*. Routledge. <https://psyarxiv.com/awjb3/>

### **Week 5. Motivated reasoning**

Resnick, Brian. 2019. 9 Essential Lessons from Psychology to Understand the Trump Era. *Vox*. [Link](#)

Rogers, Paul. 2017. Why It is So Hard to Admit You're Wrong. *NY Times*. [Link](#)

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

Nyhan, Brendan and Jason Reifler. 2010. When Corrections Fail: The Persistence of Political Misperceptions. *Political Behavior* 32(2): 303-330.

### **Week 6. Susceptibility to fake news, misinformation, and conspiracy theories**

Van Bavel, Jay J., Elizabeth Harris, Philip Parnamets, Steve Rathje, Kimberly C. Doell, and Joshua Tucker. 2020. Political Psychology in the Digital (Mis)information Age. Pre-print. <https://psyarxiv.com/u5yts/>

Pennycook, Gordon and David G. Rand. 2019. Lazy, not Biased: Susceptibility to Partisan Fake News is Better Explained by Lack of Reasoning than by Motivated Reasoning. *Cognition* 188: 39-50.

Scheufele, Dietram A. and Nicole M. Krausea. 2019. Science Audiences, Misinformation, and Fake News. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 116(16): 7662-7669.

Vosoughi, Soroush, Deb Roy, and Sinan Aral. 2018. The Spread of True and False News Online. *Science* 359 (6830): 1146-1151.

### **Week 7. Reading week**

## **Week 8. Explicit and implicit prejudice**

Take a few tests on the [Project Implicit web page](#).

Holland, Kitty. 2020. Traveller Poverty, Work, and Discrimination Focus of EU Report. *The Irish Times*. [Link](#)

Bridges, Khiara M. Implicit Bias and Racial Disparities in Health Care. *Human Rights Magazine* 43(3). [Online](#)

Barron, Kai, Ruth Ditlmann, Stefan Gehrig, and Sebastian Schweighofer-Kodritsch. 2020. Explicit and Implicit Belief-based Gender Discrimination: A Hiring Experiment. *WZB Discussion Paper*. [Link](#)

Dovidio, J. F., Kawakami, K., Smoak, N., & Gaertner, S. L. (2008). The Nature of Contemporary Racial Prejudice: Insight from Implicit and Explicit Measures of Attitudes. In R. E. Petty, R. H. Fazio, & P. Briñol (Eds.), *Attitudes: Insights from the New Implicit Measures*. Psychology Press, pp. 165-192.

## **Week 9. Predispositional explanations for prejudice**

Altemeyer, Bob. 1996. *The Authoritarian Specter*. Cambridge, MA, US: Harvard University Press, Chapter 1.

Feldman, Stanley. 2003. Enforcing Conformity: A Theory of Authoritarianism. *Political Psychology* 24(1): 41-74.

Duckitt, John. 2001. A Dual-Process Cognitive-Motivational Theory of Ideology and Prejudice. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* 33: 41-113.

Duckitt, John. 2006. Differential Effects of Right Wing Authoritarianism and Social Dominance Orientation on Outgroup Attitudes and Their Mediation by Threat From and Competitiveness to Outgroups. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 32 (5): 684-696.

## **Week 10. Situational explanations for prejudice**

(SKIM) Sherif, Muzafer. 1967. *Group Conflict and Co-operation: Their Social Psychology*. London and New York: Taylor and Francis, Chapters 4 and 5.

(SKIM) Tajfel, Henri and John C. Turner. 1981. The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior. (Jost and Sidanius, Chapter 16)

McGinnity, Frances, and Gillian Kingston. 2017. An Irish Welcome? Changing Irish Attitudes to Immigrants and Immigration: The Role of Recession and Immigration. *The Economic and Social Review* 48(3): 253-279.

Crosbie, Judith. 2018. Irish Anti-Immigrant Attitudes Growing, Report shows. *The Irish Times*. [Link](#)

Hainmueller, Jens, and Michael J. Hiscox. 2010. Attitudes toward Highly-skilled and Low-skilled Immigration: Evidence from a Survey Experiment. *American Political Science Review* 104(1):61-84.

Valentino, Nicholas, et al. 2019. Economic and Cultural Drivers of Immigrant Support Worldwide. *British Journal of Political Science* 49(4): 1201-1226.

### **Week 11. Cultural and Economic Drivers of Anti-Immigrant and Populist Sentiments**

Colantone, Italo and Piero Stanig. 2018. Global Competition and Brexit. *American Political Science Review* 112(2): 201-218.

Kaufman, Eric. 2016. It's NOT the economy, stupid: Brexit as a story of personal values. *LSE Blogs*, 7 July. [Link](#)

Kaufman, Eric. 2016. Trump and Brexit: why it's again NOT the economy, stupid. *LSE Blogs*, 9 November. [Link](#)

Hooghe, Marc, and Ruth Dassonneville. 2018. Explaining the Trump Vote: The Effect of Racist Resentment and Anti-Immigrant Sentiments. *PS: Political Science & Politics* 51(3): 528-534.

Rhodes-Purdy, Matthew, Rachel Navarre, and Stephen M. Utych. 2020. Populist psychology: economics, culture, and emotions. *The Journal of Politics*. Forthcoming.

### **Week 12: Revision and essay discussion**