

**POLS 307 (30163)
Fall Semester, 2009**

POLITICAL PSYCHOLOGY

Dr. Graber

Politics deals with relations among people; therefore it is inevitably linked with psychology which probes how humans think, feel, and behave in various settings. Political psychologists employ diverse theories and research tools to explain why political elites and mass publics think and act as they do and how these thoughts and actions shape the course of politics.

We will begin our study of Political Psychology with an overview that maps out the terrain that political psychology covers. To explore that terrain, we will concentrate on several major areas. These include the reasoning processes that come into play when human beings try to make sense of their political world and make decisions. We will study the many emotions that are an inseparable part of human reasoning. Reasoning and feeling are affected by differences in personalities and cultural environments. Therefore we will focus on the political impact of leaders' personality traits and on various cultural factors that influence people's behaviors. We will conclude by discussing the ugly consequences of prejudices and hatreds that lead to socially damaging behaviors and policies designed to diminish inter-group conflicts, acts of brutality and wars.

The books listed below are required reading for this course; please buy them.

1. Daniel Chirot, & Clark McCauley, Why Not Kill Them All? Princeton University Press, 2006.
2. Stanley A. Renshon and John Duckitt, eds. Political Psychology: Cultural and Crosscultural Foundations. New York: New York University Press, 2000.
3. David O. Sears, Leonie Huddy, and Robert Jervis, eds. Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology. Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Required readings also include two chapters from Kristen Renwick Monroe, ed. Political Psychology. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2002. Copies will be posted on Blackboard.

EXAMINATIONS AND REPORTS

Examinations will be based on lectures and assigned readings. Since lecture topics differ from readings, regular class attendance is essential to pass the course. Three open-book examinations will test what you have learned in the course. They will take place on September 24th, October 29th and December 3rd and will count for 60 percent of your grade. Class attendance and participation will count for 10 percent of your grade.

Your report, which will be described in detail in class, counts for 30 percent of your grade. It should analyze a contemporary or historical situation from a political psychology perspective (e.g. political leader profiles, ethnic cleansing, symbolic racism, political attitude formation, gay rights issues, etc.) A brief outline of your report that indicates how you will present it in class is due on or before October 27th. The report should be 3000 to 4000 words in length. It must be submitted no later than the start of class on November 3rd. Plan on submitting your report before the deadline because **LATE REPORTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.** There are NO exceptions to that rule.

Tentative Time Schedule and Reading Assignments

Readings are listed on a weekly basis. Please complete them by the listed due date so that you can contribute effectively to class discussions. Lectures will be based on the assumption that you are familiar with the information presented in the required readings.

<u>Due Date</u>	<u>Topic and Assignment</u>
Aug. 25	1. Introduction to the field of political psychology; theories and assumptions Read: Sears ch. 1, 3, 5
Sept. 1	2. Political learning, cognitive styles, impression formation Read: Sears ch. 11, 12, 18
Sept. 8	3. Political identity and collective action Read: Sears ch. 15, 19
Sept. 15	4. Feelings and political behavior; emotions in international conflicts Read: Sears ch. 6, 9, 10
Sept. 22	5. Measuring human reactions Read: Monroe ch. 15, 16; Sears, ch. 13 <u>Exam</u> : Sept. 24 th
Sept. 29	6. The etiology of political decision-making Read: Sears ch. 2, 7, 14
Oct. 6	7. Personality and politics; blending political and psychological concerns Read: Sears ch. 4, 8, 21
Oct. 13	8. The foundations of cross-cultural political psychology Read: Renshon ch. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Oct. 20	9. The dilemmas of multiculturalism; dealing with minorities, racism Read: Renshon ch. 6, 14, 15, 16
Oct. 27	10. Prejudice, diversity, and social dominance theories Read: Sears ch. 16, 17 & <u>submit annotated report outline</u> <u>Exam</u> : October 29 th
Nov. 3	11. <u>SUBMIT REPORT</u> . Psychological insights drawn from political events: Presentation of selected reports
Nov. 10	12. Psychological insights drawn from political events: presentation of selected reports Read: Renshon ch. 10, 11, 12, 13
Nov. 17	13. Modern genocides and ethnic cleansings Read: Chirot Introduction, ch. 1, 3
Nov. 24	14. The psychological foundations of holocausts and terrorism Read: Chirot ch. 2; Sears ch. 20
Dec. 1	15. Strategies for conflict resolution: Successes and failures Read: Chirot ch. 4; Renshon ch. 7, 8, 9 <u>Exam</u> : Dec. 3 rd

Instructor's Office: 1110 BSB (312-996-3108); dgraber@uic.edu. Office hours by appointment. Make-ups for missed exams will be given at the time set aside for the final examination: Wednesday, December 9th, 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.