INR 6726
Political Behavior in International Conflict
Spring 2013

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 3:00 to 5:00 pm, Fridays 9:30 to 11:30 am, and by appointment

Course Overview

Catalogue Description: Analysis of the ways in which cognitive and emotional theories of human behavior have been used to explain conflict between nation-state and other non-state actors

It seems that whenever we talk about international relations and global politics we include intuitive applications of political psychology. We talk about such things as Hitler's madness, Stalin's paranoia, Hussein's control orientation, the hatred between Israelis and Palestinians, the single-mindedness of former President Bush's decision-making group. All of these are examples of times when we think psychology mattered in international affairs. And yet the field of political psychology, as an academic discipline, is fairly young. Only for the last 30 years or so has the field developed and taken on the markings of a young science. Why is that the case? Applying psychological concepts to international politics faces many theoretical and empirical challenges that have made progress in the field difficult. How do we define "madness"? How does one measure an enemy image and its effects on policy? How can we study the group decision-making processes that take place behind closed doors in an administration?

In fact, some of the main fields in international relations, such as realism, neorealism and rational-actor models, have chosen to ignore psychological factors altogether, and have focused instead on more parsimonious explanations that look only at such things as power and interests. But these models seem shortsighted because they leave out the effects of individuals, small groups, and the beliefs and feelings of the masses. Can we really believe a model of WWII that does not talk about Hitler's leadership and personality? Is it relevant that the leader of Iraq seven years ago was Saddam Hussein and not someone else? Doesn't the mass fear in Israel have a causal effect on their hard-line policies? It is indeed the case that the simpler models in IR are more parsimonious, but that does not mean they are more accurate and powerful with their explanations.

So, we are left with some difficulties. We think intuitively that psychology matters, yet our progress in studying it has been slow. In many ways, that makes the field of political psychology extremely exciting, especially from the perspective of graduate students and researchers. Because the field is young and wide open, there are many different things to study, many different contributions to make in terms of theory and empirical research, many different methods that can be applied and developed. Up until now there has been about one generation of scholars who have worked in the field of political psychology. Their work has been groundbreaking as they were the first ones to posit clear psychological theories in international relations, establish new methodological approaches, and provide initial -- if limited -- empirical

evidence. In this class we will read and learn about some of those first-generation approaches -- and we will have to appreciate their contributions as giving us critical groundwork for new research. But we will also see the shortcomings in their work and see the limitations. That is in part what makes this field interesting to study today. The work that exists is important but limited. It is not enough for us to simply critique that work -- in some ways that would be too easy. Instead, we must take those contributions for what they are -- the start of an important new field -- and think beyond them. Given the wide-open nature of political psychology, we will spend part of our time talking about the future, new concepts, new approaches, new methods and new opportunities for inquiry. The seminar will be discussion-oriented and, as with all my classes, I expect original, critical thinking from my students. The topic is a great one, because it matters so much, and the discussions should be dynamic, because the field is so open.

We will cover psychological concepts at several different levels of international relations: individuals and their cognitive and personality characteristics, small decision-making groups, and the psychology of masses in intergroup conflicts. In each of these areas there will be lectures, readings, theory, empirical evidence, and class discussions.

Required Readings

There are five books required for the course. They are as follows:

1. Sears, David O., Leonie Huddy, and Robert Jervis (eds). 2003. *Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

2. Post, Jerrold M. (ed.). 2003. *The Psychological Assessment of Political Leaders*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

3. Snyder, R.C., H.W. Bruck, B. Sapin, V.M. Hudson, D.H. Chollet, and J.M. Goldgeier. 2002. *Foreign Policy Decision-Making (Revisited)*. New York: Palgrave.

4. Lobel, Aaron. 2001. *Presidential Judgment: Foreign Policy Decision Making in the White House*. Hollis, NH: Hollis Publishing.

5. Schafer, Mark, and Scott Crichlow. 2010. *Groupthink versus High-Quality Decision Making in International Relations*. New York: Columbia University Press.

(Note: Since I am the co-author on the last book above, I will contribute to the UCF Foundation double the amount of all royalties I receive for this book that are purchased for this course.)

There will also be several articles required throughout the semester. (These are marked with an asterisk (*) in the course calendar below.) I provide full citations for these below, so that you can find them on your own; I will also have a copy of each available in the Department's office at least one week in advance if you prefer to make your copies there. In addition, you are required to read AP international stories found at yahoo.com.

Course Objectives

1. Learn about foreign policy decision making and political psychology in international relations, particularly in terms of theory, methods and empirical findings.
2. Increase understanding of international politics.
3. Develop research techniques.
4. Produce an original research project.
5. Further develop academic skills: reading, writing, speaking, and especially critical thinking.

Course Requirements

1. Three short paper assignments.....30%

2. Research paper 50%

3. Class participation 20%

(I reserve the right to adjust these weightings, specifically to include an exam or quizzes, if it appears that students are not keeping up with the readings and participating in class discussion at an appropriate level.)

Course Calendar

January 8: Overview of Foreign Policy Decision Making
1. Read Chapter 1 in *Foreign Policy Decision-Making (Revisited)*.

January 15: Foreign Policy Decision Making, Continued
1. Finish reading *Foreign Policy Decision-Making (Revisited)*.

January 22: Overview of Political Psychology
*1. Greenstein, Fred I. 1969. *Personality and Politics: Problems of Evidence, Inference and Conceptualization* (Chapters 1 and 6). Chicago: Markham.
2. Sears: Chapter 1.
3. Post: Preface, Chapters 1 and 2, and pages 63-65.

January 29: Qualitative Approaches, Methods, and Applications
*1. Greenstein, Fred I. 2002. "The Qualitative Study of Presidential Personality." In *Political Leadership for the New Century*, L.O. Valenty and O. Feldman (eds.), pp. 3-8. Westport, CT: Praeger.
2. Post: Chapters 3, 4, and 5.
3. Post: pages 271-273, Chapters 11 and 15.

February 5: Quantitative Approaches and Methods
1. Post: Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.
First short paper due: Qualitative profile of a political actor.

February 12: Quantitative Applications

1. Post Chapters 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, and 18.

February 19: Socialization, Communication, and Attitudes
1. Sears: Chapters 3, 11, and 14.
Second short paper due: Quantitative profile of a political actor.

February 26: Personality: Motives, Traits, and Characteristics
*1. Barner-Barry, C. and R. Rosenwein. 1985. "A Primer on Psychoanalytic Theory." In *Psychological Perspectives on Politics*, C. Barner-Barry and R. Rosenwein (eds.), pp. 302-304.
2. Sears: Chapter 4.
*3. Preston, Thomas and Margaret G. Hermann. 2004. "Presidential Leadership Style and the Foreign Policy Advisory Process." In *The Domestic Sources of American Foreign Policy: Insights and Evidence (4th ed.)*, Eugene R. Wittkopf and James M. McCormick (eds.), Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, pp. 363-380.
4. Post: Chapter 19.
Third short paper due: Discussion of the dependent variable in your own research paper.

March 12: Cognition: Images, Information Processing, and Operational Codes
1. Sears: Chapters 8, 9, and 13.
*2. Robison, Sam. 2006. "George W. Bush and the Vulcans: Leader-Advisor Relations and America's Response to the 9/11 Attacks." In *Beliefs and Leadership in World Politics*, Mark Schafer and Stephen G. Walker, (eds.), New York: Palgrave.

March 19: Mass Psychological Phenomena in International Conflicts
*1. Bloom, William. 1990. *Personal Identity, National Identity and International Relations* (chapter 2). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
2. Sears: Chapters 10, 16, and 20.

March 26: Group Decision Making
Read chapters 1-5 in Schafer and Crichlow.

April 2: Working day for your final research papers. No in-class session. Work on your own or in small research groups to make progress on your final papers.

April 9: Group Decision Making (continued)
1. Read chapters 6-9 in Schafer and Crichlow.
2. Read all of Lobel.

April 16: Research presentations in class. (Note: Final papers are due in my office by noon on Friday, April 19.)