POS 4206: Political Psychology

Syllabus

Instructor Contact

Professor	Mark Schafer
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Course Information

Course Name	Political Psychology
Course ID & Section	POS 4206-1
Credit Hours	3
Semester/Year	Spring 2019
Location	CB1 318

Course Description

UCF Catalog Description:

The psychological analysis of political behavior, with emphasis on the individual rather than the political system; includes political attitudes and communication, leadership, and personality influences on politics.

Course Overview:

It seems that whenever we talk about international relations (IR) 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 President Bush's decision-making group. All of these are examples of times when we think psychology mattered in the making of foreign policy decisions. 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 process that takes place behind closed doors in an administration?

In fact, some of the main fields in IR, such as realism, neorealism and rational-actor models, have largely ignored psychological variables altogether and have focused instead on the more parsimonious explanations that look 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 irrelevant that the leader of Iraq in 2003 was Saddam Hussein and not someone else? Does not 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. 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 developed and used. The class 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: 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 theory, lectures, readings, class discussions and empirical evidence.

Prerequisite or Corequisite: ENC 1102 or POS 2041

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

There are two broad sets of objectives for this class. The first is for you to gain knowledge about political psychology and foreign policy decision-making processes in international relations. The second objective is for you to further develop your academic skills in several areas: reading, writing, speaking, and thinking critically.

Required Readings

There are three books required for the course (in addition to current events, noted below). They are as follows:

1. Stoessinger, John G. 2010. *Why Nations Go To War* (11th Edition; but the 9th and 10th editions will work as well). Boston: Wadsworth Publishing.

2. Huddy, Leonie, David O. Sears, and Jack S. Levy (eds). 2013. *Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*. (You MUST use the 2013 edition; the 2003 edition is totally different.) Oxford: Oxford University Press.

3. Doyle, Roddy. 1999. *A Star Called Henry*. New York: Penguin.

4. International news stories, accessed through yahoo.com.

Course Requirements

Midterm February 15	25%
Term Paper April 12	35%
Miscellaneous assignments and quizzes	10%
Final Exam Mon. April 29, 10:00 am to noon	30%

The two **exams** will be a mixture of essay and multiple choice questions.

The **research paper** will be a political psychology topic of your own choosing with my approval. The most common topic will be a psycho-biography of a prominent global leader. I am certainly open to other ideas (and am particularly impressed if someone undertakes a quantitative/statistical project). The length of the paper should be about 10 pages (approximate word count: 3000; max word count: 3250), double-spaced, normal fonts and margins; include page numbers, final word count, citations, and complete, formal bibliography.

You may also receive an additional bonus to your overall grade, up to 5%, based on your participation in class discussions (see note below).

Class discussion is a central component of this class. Students should come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings and current international events. Class participation can take several forms such as commenting on a topic or asking or answering a question. Based on participation in class discussions, you may earn up to 5% bonus added to your final score in the course. Here's the system I use to keep track of class participation: any time you contribute to class discussion, write down a brief version of what you said on a piece of paper with your name on it and turn it in to me after class**.** That allows me to keep track of how often everyone participates in class.

Evaluation and Grading

90% or Higher	A
80% to 89.99%	B
70% to 79.99%	C
60% to 69.99%	D
Below 60%	F

Missed Assignments/Make-Ups/Exam policies

Papers and assignments must be completed on time. Emailed papers will not be accepted unless previously arranged with me due to dire circumstances. Exams and quizzes may not be rescheduled or postponed. ***Exceptions will be allowed only under extreme, documented circumstances***. Under such circumstances, you are required to notify me (or, if I am unavailable, the Department of Political Science) prior to the date or as soon as possible if prior notice is impossible.

Late papers are generally not accepted. If I accept a late paper because of circumstances, I will make substantial reductions in the paper grade for every day it is late, up to a maximum of 75% reduction.

No one may start any exam once the first exam has been turned in and the student has left the room.

Academic Honesty

As reflected in the UCF creed, integrity and scholarship are core values that should guide our conduct and decisions as members of the UCF community. Plagiarism and cheating contradict these values, and so are very serious academic offenses. Penalties can include a failing grade in an assignment or in the course, or suspension or expulsion from the university. All work you submit must be your own scholarly and creative effort. UCF's Golden Rule defines plagiarism as follows: **whereby another's work is used or appropriated without any indication of the source, thereby attempting to convey the impression that such work is the student's own.** I may require an electronic version of any paper submitted for this class.

Disability Statement

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. This syllabus can be made available in alternate formats upon request. Students with disabilities who need accommodations in this course must register with Student Disability Services, Ferrell Commons Room 132, phone (407) 823-2371; TTY/TDD-only phone (407) 823-2116.

Campus Safety Statement

Emergencies on campus are rare, but if one should arise during class, everyone needs to work together. Students should be aware of their surroundings and familiar with some basic safety and security concepts.

- In case of an emergency, dial 911 for assistance.
- Every UCF classroom contains an emergency procedure guide posted on a wall near the door. Students should make a note of the guide's physical location and review the online version at http://emergency.ucf.edu/emergency_guide.html.

- Students should know the evacuation routes from each of their classrooms and have a plan for finding safety in case of an emergency.
- If there is a medical emergency during class, students may need to access a first-aid kit or AED (Automated External Defibrillator). To learn where those are located, see http://www.ehs.ucf.edu/workplacesafety.html (click on link from menu on left).
- To stay informed about emergency situations, students can sign up to receive UCF text alerts by going to ucf.edu and logging in. Click on "Student Self Service" located on the left side of the screen in the toolbar, scroll down to the blue "Personal Information" heading on the Student Center screen, click on "UCF Alert", fill out the information, including e-mail address, cell phone number, and cell phone provider, click "Apply" to save the changes, and then click "OK."
- Students with special needs related to emergency situations should speak with their instructors outside of class.
- To learn about how to manage an active-shooter situation on campus or elsewhere, consider viewing this video.

Third-party Notes

Third parties may be selling class notes and other materials from this class without my authorization. Please be aware that such class materials may contain errors, which could affect your performance or grade. Use these materials at your own risk.

Deployed Active Military Duty

Students who are deployed active duty military and/or National Guard personnel and require accommodation should contact their instructors as soon as possible after the semester begins and/or after they receive notification of deployment to make related arrangements.

Additional Policies

I welcome and encourage questions, comments and discussion either in or out of the classroom. I love teaching and I love what I teach, so remember my door is open!

I cannot respond to grade inquiries by email.

Laptops, tablets, etc. are not permitted in this class once the class period has started.

Cell phones, pagers, and other such things that might go off and make noise are not permitted in class.

Course Calendar

Week of January 7: Read Chapter 1 in *Political Psychology*, and the Preface and Introduction in *Why Nations Go To War*, and.

Week of January 14: Read Chapters 1 and 2 in *Why Nations Go To War*, and Part I in *A Star Called Henry.*

Week of January 23: Read Chapters 3 and 4 in *Why Nations Go To War*.

Week of January 28: Read Chapters 5, 7, and 8 in *Why Nations Go To War*.

Week of February 4: Read Chapters 9 and 10 in *Why Nations Go To War*.

Week of February 11: read Part II in *A Star Called Henry*; review and prepare for Midterm exam.

****Midterm: Friday, February 15****

Week of February 18: Read Chapter 3 in *Political Psychology*.

Week of February 25: Read Chapter 14 in *Political Psychology*.

Weeks of March 4 and March 18: Read Chapter 19 in *Political Psychology*. Additional lectures on *personality*.

Week of March 25: Reach Chapter 17 in *Political Psychology*. Additional lectures on *cognition*.

Week of April 1: Read Chapter 10 in *Political Psychology*. Read Part III in *A Star Called Henry*.

April 8-22: Read Chapter 16 in *Political Psychology* and finish reading *A Star Called Henry*; review and prepare for Final exam.

****Research Paper Due Friday April 12****

****Final Exam: Monday April 29, 10:00 am to noon****