# POS 4206 - POLITICAL PSYCHOLOGY

**Section:** 0001

*College of Sciences*

School of Politics, Security, and Intl Affairs

## Course Information

**Term:** Fall 2024
**Class Meeting Days:** TR
**Class Meeting Time:** 12:00 - 13:20
**Class Meeting Location:** CB1 O122
**Modality:** P
**Credit Hours:** 3.00

## Instructor Information

Dr. Alexander Jensen
**Title:** Assistant Professor
**Office Location:** Howard Phillips Hall 305E
**Office Hours:**
Mondays from 3:30-5:00pm, Tuesdays (after class) from 1:30 to 3:00pm
**Email:** alexander.jensen@ucf.edu

## Teaching Assistants

Mr. David Hardcastle - david.hardcastle@ucf.edu

## Course Description

POS 4206 COS-POLS 3(3,0)Political Psychology: PR: ENC 1102 or POS 2041 or C.I. 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. Occasional.

This course explores the psychological foundations of individuals' political behaviors; looking at how our thoughts, feelings, and opinions about politics are formed, expressed, and shape our attitudes and actions. We will begin the semester by looking at how the field of political psychology grew out of the nexus of social psychology and political science, focusing on the "big questions" scholars of political psychology are interested in and how they have gone about answering these questions. From there, we will take a deep dive into different areas of the subfield - spanning topics like political socialization, cognition and affect, personality and emotions, group attachment and polarization, among others. Week to week, we will read and discuss many classic studies of political psychology and compare/contrast them alongside scholars' more recent findings in the field. In doing so, we will consider the ways in which these findings and conclusions from the past fit with our contemporary social landscape. What's more, we will address the real world career opportunities that are available for students with experience in the realm of political psychology/behavioral social science.

## Student Learning Outcomes

After successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify and explain major theories of social/political psychological decision-making.
- Apply lessons from class to historical and contemporary political issues, as well as personal experiences.
- Understand the real-world career opportunities that are available to students leveraging skills from behavioral social science/political psychology.
- Realize improved research, critical thinking, argumentation, and writing skills through class assignments.

## Grading Scale

| Letter Grade | Percentage |
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| A | 94-100% |
| A- | 90-93% |
| B+ | 87-89% |
| B | 84-86% |
| B- | 80-83% |
| C+ | 77-79% |
| C | 74-76% |
| C- | 70-73% |
| D+ | 67-69% |
| D | 64-66% |
| D- | 61-63% |
| F | 0-60% |

## Policies for Course Grade

### Policy on Late Assignments

Students are expected to submit their papers (letter of introduction, 4 journal reflections, and research paper) by the assigned due dates. Sometimes, however, life gets in our way. I am a reasonable man and I understand that sometimes life throws wrenches at us that prevent us from meeting the deadlines that were originally set. If you encounter a situation where you find yourself unable to turn an assignment in by the deadline, please email me as soon as possible so that we discuss an appropriate course of action. For those who communicate ahead of deadlines with legitimate extenuating circumstances, I may consider small extensions. However, if you do not communicate ahead of time or do not have a legitimate excuse as to why a deadline will be missed, your assignment is considered late. I will only accept late assignments for 10 calendar days past the original deadline, and late papers will receive a deduction of 10% for each day the paper is late.

### Attendance

As noted in the Class Participation grade section, it is expected that any student enrolling in the course is committed to attending every class session, completing course tasks,

and engaging in course discussions. Excused absences apply to when a student experiences an emergency (e.g., hospitalization, family death, religious observance, military service, emergency medical provider visit)—any students in this category should contact the instructor as soon as possible to talk about opportunities to catch up on material. However, if a student chooses to miss class for a work obligation, a previously scheduled appointment, non-University affiliated travel, or other reasons, that absence is not considered excused, and the student should borrow notes from classmates or book an Office Hours appointment to ensure they do not fall behind.

### A Note on Course Readings

Beyond the two texts that I've assigned for the course - Hetherington and Weiler's *Prius or Pickup?* (2018) & Lodge and Taber's *The Rational Voter* (2013) - all other course readings will be posted as PDFs in our course's Webcourses (Canvas) site. Please ensure that you have read the assigned texts before class. Plan to prepare for our discussions in class by taking notes as you are reading and jotting down questions you have as they arise. This will not only increase the quality of our discussions in class, it will make submitting your journal reflections all that much easier.

### Contacting Professor Jensen

Beyond contacting me in class or at office hours, feel free to send me your written questions anytime via email at alexander.jensen@ucf.edu  I strive to reply promptly to your emails, but sometimes situations will arise where I don't have the chance to get back to you on the same day. I ask that you give me 24 hours before following up during the week and 48 hours before following up on weekends. If you do not receive a response from me during those timeframes, please send a polite follow-up - I would never intentionally ignore your messages!

### Prof. Jensen's AI Policy

Students may not use ChatGPT or any equivalent AI to generate any part of the assignments submitted in this class - doing so is considered plagiarism. We will discuss responsible AI usage in class.

## Course Accessibility

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing access and inclusion for all persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities who need access to course content due to course design limitations should contact the professor as soon as possible. Students should also connect with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) (Ferrell Commons 185, sas@ucf.edu, phone 407-823-2371). For students connected with SAS, a Course Accessibility Letter may be created and sent to professors, which informs faculty of potential course access and accommodations that might be necessary and reasonable. Determining reasonable access and accommodations requires consideration of the course design, course learning objectives and the individual academic and course barriers experienced by the student. Further conversation with SAS, faculty and the student may be warranted to ensure an accessible course experience.

## Academic Integrity

Students should familiarize themselves with UCF's Rules of Conduct at Student Conduct and Integrity Office. According to Section 1, "Academic Misconduct," students are prohibited from engaging in:

a. Academic misconduct is defined as any submitted work or behavior that obstructs the instructor of record's ability to accurately assess the student's understanding or completion of the course materials or degree requirements (e.g., assignment, quiz, and/or exam). Examples of academic misconduct include but are not limited to: plagiarism, unauthorized assistance to complete an academic exercise; unauthorized communication with others during an examination, course assignment, or project; falsifying or misrepresenting academic work; providing misleading information to create a personal advantage to complete course/degree requirements; or multiple submission(s) of academic work without permission of the instructor of record.

b. Any student who knowingly helps another violate academic behavior standards is also in violation of the standards.

c. Commercial Use of Academic Material. Selling of course material to another person and/or uploading course material to a third-party vendor without authorization or without the express written permission of the University and the instructor of record. Course materials include but are not limited to class notes, the instructor of record's

slide deck, tests, quizzes, labs, instruction sheets, homework, study guides, and handouts.

d. Soliciting assistance with academic coursework and/or degree requirements. The solicitation of assistance with an assignment, lab, quiz, test, paper, etc., without authorization of the instructor of record or designee is prohibited. This includes but is not limited to asking for answers to a quiz, trading answers, or offering to pay another to complete an assignment. It is considered Academic Misconduct to solicit assistance with academic coursework and/or degree requirements, even if the solicitation did not yield actual assistance (for example, if there was no response to the solicitation).

**Responses to Academic Dishonesty, Plagiarism, or Cheating**

Students should also familiarize themselves with the procedures for academic misconduct in UCF's student handbook, *The Golden Rule*. UCF faculty members have a responsibility for students' education and the value of a UCF degree, and so seek to prevent unethical behavior and respond to academic misconduct when necessary. Penalties for violating rules, policies, and instructions within this course can range from a zero on the exercise to an "F" letter grade in the course. In addition, an Academic Misconduct report could be filed with the Office of Student Conduct, which could lead to disciplinary warning, disciplinary probation, or deferred suspension or separation from the University through suspension, dismissal, or expulsion with the addition of a "Z" designation on one's transcript.

Being found in violation of academic conduct standards could result in a student having to disclose such behavior on a graduate school application, being removed from a leadership position within a student organization, the recipient of scholarships, participation in University activities such as study abroad, internships, etc.

Let's avoid all of this by demonstrating values of honesty, trust, and integrity. No grade is worth compromising your integrity and moving your moral compass. Stay true to doing the right thing: take the zero, not a shortcut.

## Title IX

Title IX prohibits sex discrimination, including sexual misconduct, sexual violence, sexual harassment, and retaliation. If you or someone you know has been harassed or

assaulted, you can find resources available to support the victim, including confidential resources and information concerning reporting options at Let's Be Clear and UCF Cares.

For more information on diversity and inclusion, Title IX, accessibility, or UCF's complaint processes contact:

- Title IX – OIE – Office of Institutional Equity & askanadvocate@ucf.edu
- Disability Accommodation – Student Accessibility Services – Student Accessibility Services & sas@ucf.edu
- Access and Community Engagement (including the Ginsberg Center for Inclusion and Community Engagement, Military and Veteran Student Success, and HSI Initiatives)
- UCF Compliance and Ethics Office – Compliance, Ethics, and Risk Office & complianceandethics@ucf.edu
- The Ombuds Office is a safe place to discuss concerns.

## Reporting an Incident or Issue

If you believe you have experienced abusive or discriminatory behavior by any faculty of staff member, contact the Office of Institutional Equity online or at 407-823-1336. You can also choose to report using the UCF Integrity Line and can report anonymously or as yourself at 1-855-877-6049 or using the online form. UCF cares about you and takes every report seriously. For more information see the Reporting an Incident or Issue Webpage.

## Deployed Active-Duty Military Students

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.

## Campus Safety

At UCF Public Safety and Police, safety is the top priority. Emergencies on campus are rare, but if one should arise, it's important to be familiar with some basic safety and security concepts.

- In an emergency, always dial 911.
- Every UCF classroom has an **Emergency Procedure Guide** posted on a wall near the door, which will show you how to respond to a variety of situations. This guide can also be found online here.
- In the event of an active threat, remember **AVOID, DENY, DEFEND**. Choose the best course of action and act immediately. Watch the video here to learn more.
    - **AVOID**. Pay attention to your surroundings and have an exit plan. Get as much distance and as many barriers between you and the threat as quickly as possible.
    - **DENY.** When avoiding is difficult or impossible, deny the threat access to you and your space. Lockdown by creating barriers, turning the lights off and remaining quiet and out of sight. Make sure your cell phone is silenced, but do not turn it off.
    - **DEFEND.** When you are unable to put distance between yourself and the threat, be prepared to protect yourself. Commit to your actions, be aggressive and do not fight fairly. Do whatever it takes to survive.
- For emergencies on campus, UCF will utilize the UCF Alert system. All UCF students, faculty and staff are automatically enrolled to receive these email and text alerts, however, it's a good idea to frequently ensure your contact information is up to date.

## Financial Aid Accountability

All instructors/faculty are required to document students' academic activity at the beginning of each course. In order to document that you began this course, please complete this activity by the end of the first week of classes or as soon as possible after adding the course. Failure to do so may result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid.

## Class Schedule

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| **WEEK 1** | **<u>COURSE INTRODUCTION</u>**<br><br>***Tuesday, August 20:*** Syllabus, course overview, and opening group activity<br>• *no assigned readings for today*<br><br>***Thursday, August 22:*** Training as interdisciplinary social scientists<br>• Sears, David O. 2006. "Political Psychology" in *Bridging Social Psychology*, ed. Paul Van Lange<br>• Jordan, Christian H., and Mark P. Zanna. 2004. “How to Read a Journal Article in Social Psychology” in *Political Psychology: Key Readings*, eds. John T. Jost and Jim Sidanius |
| **WEEK 2** | **<u>A BRIEF (RE-)EXPLORATION OF METHODS</u>**<br><br>***Tuesday, August 27:*** Observational methods<br>• Iyengar, Shanto, Gaurav Sood, and Yptach Lelkes. 2012. "Affect, Not Ideology: A Social Identity Perspective on Polarization." *Public Opinion Quarterly* |

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| | ***Thursday, August 29:*** Experimental methods<br><br>• Mason, Lilliana. 2018. Chapter 1 of *Uncivil Agreement* |
| **WEEK 3** | **<u>THE STATE OF THE SUBFIELD</u>**<br><br>***Tuesday, September 3:*** What questions have political psychologists been asking?<br><br>• Huddy, Leonie, David Sears, Jack Levy, and Jen Jerit. 2023. - OHB Ch. 1 - Introduction: Theoretical Foundations of Political Psychology<br><br>**<u>BACK TO OUR ROOTS: ORIGINS OF POLITICAL BEHAVIOR</u>**<br><br>***Thursday, September 5:*** Biopolitics<br><br>• Hetherington, Marc, and Johnathan Weiler. 2018. Introduction and Ch. 1 of *Prius or Pickup?*<br>• Alford, John, Carolyn Funk, and John Hibbing. 2005. "Are Political Orientations Genetically Transmitted?" *American Journal of Political Science* |
| **WEEK 4** | ***Tuesday, September 10:*** Political socialization |

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| | • Jennings, Kent, Laura Stoker, and Jake Bowers. 2009. "Politics Across Generations: Family Transmission Reexamined." *Journal of Politics*<br>• Jakubowski, Jakub. 2021. "Political Socialization in Meme Times." *Review of Education, Pedagogy and Cultural Studies.*<br><br>***Thursday, September 12:*** Personality and worldview<br><br>• Hetherington and Weiler. 2018. Chapters 2-3 of *Prius or Pickup?* |
| **WEEK 5** | **<u>POLITICAL REASONING</u>**<br><br>***Tuesday, September 17:*** An epitaph for a monument to rational choice<br><br>• Dahl, Robert. 1961. "The Behavioral Approach in Political Science: Epitaph for a Monument to a Successful Protest."<br>• Chong, Dennis. 2023. "Rational Choice as an Empirical and Normative Model of Political Behavior" in *Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology* eds. Leonie Huddy et al.<br><br>***Thursday, September 19:*** Motivated reasoning and affect<br><br>• Taber, Charles and Milton Lodge. 2006. "Motivated Skepticism in the Evaluation of Political Beliefs." *American Journal of Political Science*<br>• Marcus, George, Nicholas Valentino, Pavlos Vasilopoulos, Martial Foucault. 2019. "Applying the Theory of Affective |

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| | Intelligence to Support for Authoritarian Policies and Parties." *Advances in Political Psychology* |
| **WEEK 6** | ***Tuesday, September 24:*** Affective polarization<br>• Hetherington and Weiler. 2018. Chapters 4-5 of *Prius or Pickup?*<br><br>***Thursday, September 26:*** Affective polarization (continued)<br>• Hetherington and Weiler. 2018. Chapters 6, 7, and Conclusion |
| **WEEK 7** | ***Tuesday, October 1:*** Political compromise<br>• Wolak, Jennifer. 2022. "The Social Foundations of Public Support for Political Compromise." *The Forum*<br>• *The Science of Politics* podcast episode: “U.S. Politics: The Hyper-Involved vs. The Disengaged.” (Krupnikov and Ryan) from 1/26/2022 - available on Spotify and SoundCloud<br><br>***Thursday, October 3:*** MIDTERM EXAM<br>• You will take the midterm exam in class today. Remember to pick up a Green Book at the school store for the exam! |
| **WEEK 8** | ***Tuesday, October 8:*** Hot cognition |

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| | • Lodge, Milton, and Charles Taber. 2013. Preface and Chapters 1-2 of *The Rational Voter*<br><br>***Thursday, October 10:*** Hot cognition (continued)<br><br>• Lodge, Milton, and Charles Taber. 2013. Chapters 3-5 of *The Rational Voter* |
| **WEEK 9** | ***Tuesday, October 15:*** Contagion and motivated reasoning redux<br><br>• Lodge, Milton, and Charles Taber. 2013. Chapters 6-8 of *The Rational Voter*<br><br>***Thursday, October 17:*** Comparing approaches<br><br>• Lodge, Milton, and Charles Taber. 2013. Chapter 9 (conclusion) of *The Rational Voter* |
| **WEEK 10** | **<u>SOCIAL GROUPS</u>**<br><br>***Tuesday, October 22:*** Social groups and political psychology (pt. 1 - race and politics)<br><br>• Tesler, Michael. 2012. "The Spillover of Racialization into Health Care: How President Obama Polarized Public Opinion by Racial Attitudes and Race." *American Journal of Political Science* |

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| | • *The Science of Politics* podcast episode: “Why Latinos Moved Toward Trump (and Why Most Are Still Democrats).” (Sanchez & Castro) from 12/2/2020 - available on Spotify and SoundCloud<br>• Chan, Nathan, et al. 2021. “New Directions in the Study of Asian American Politics, Part II: Political Behavior.” *PS: Political Science and Politics*<br><br>***Thursday, October 24:*** Paper proposal workshop<br><br>• Bring 3 printed copies of your paper proposal to class today |
| **WEEK 11** | ***Tuesday, October 29:*** Social groups and political psychology (pt. 2 - religion, place, and politics)<br><br>• Cramer, Katherine. 2012. “Putting Inequality in Its Place: Rural Consciousness and the Power of Perspective.” *American Political Science Review*<br>• Bloom, Pazit, Gizem Arikan, and Allon Vishkin. 2021. "Religion and Democratic Commitment: A Unifying Motivational Framework." *Political Psychology*<br><br>***Thursday, October 31:*** Social groups and political psychology (pt. 3 - gender and politics)<br><br>• Barnes, Tiffany, Emily Beaulieu, and Gregory Saxton. 2020. "Sex and Corruption: How Sexism Shapes Voters’ Responses to Scandal." *Politics, Groups, and Identities*<br>• Jensen, Alex. 2024. "The Effects of Invoking "Toxic Masculinity" in the Wake of Political Scandal." *Working paper.* |

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| **WEEK 12** | **PERSUASION, PRESSURE, PROCESS, & THREAT**<br><br>***Tuesday, November 5:*** Persuasion and politics<br><br>• Gibson, James L. 1998. “A Sober Second Thought: An Experiment in Persuading Russians to Tolerate.” *American Journal of Political Science*<br><br>***Thursday, November 7:*** Election 2024 debrief |
| **WEEK 13** | ***Tuesday, November 12:*** Pressure and political decision-making<br><br>• Gerber, Alan S., Donald P. Green, and Christopher W. Larimer. 2008. “Social Pressure and Voter Turnout: Evidence from a Large-Scale Field Experiment.” *American Political Science Review*<br><br>***Thursday, November 14:*** Process preferences<br><br>• Hibbing, John, and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse. 2001. "Process Preferences and American Politics: What the People Want Government to Be." *American Political Science Review* |
| **WEEK 14** | ***Tuesday, November 19:*** Political decision-making under threat<br><br>• Hetherington, Marc, and Elizabeth Suhay. 2011. "Authoritarianism, Threat, and Americans' Support for the War on Terror." *American Journal of Political Science.* |

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| | ***Thursday, November 21:*** Term paper workshop<br>• Arrive with 3 copies of your latest draft of the term paper |
| **WEEK 15** | ***Tuesday, November 26:*** Review & last day of class<br>***Thursday, November 28:*** NO CLASS (THANKSGIVING) |
| **FINAL** | December 5 - 10:00am to 12:50pm per the University's final exam schedule |