

POLITICAL PSYCHOLOGY - PSCI 445
Spring 2020
Tu - Th 2:00 – 3:20, 204 LA (Liberal Arts Building)
Draft Syllabus 1/14/20

Professor Christopher Muste

Office: LA 416 (Liberal Arts Building 416)

e-mail: christopher.muste@umontana.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday 3:30-5:00 & Thursday 12:30-1:30, and by appointment

Phone: 406-243-4829

Political Science Department: 301 Liberal Arts; phone 406-243-5202

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course explores why humans think, feel, and act the way they do, in the realm of politics broadly defined. In political science we often use psychological concepts and theories to analyze politics, yet we typically use these ideas unsystematically and at times uncritically. As a result we don't understand many political phenomena as well as we should, and debates within political science about why events happen and how to analyze them are difficult or impossible to resolve. This course examines core psychological concepts as used in political science in order to reduce analytic confusion, and to clarify how psychological concepts can be used analytically to better understand politics.

While studying any aspect of politics in some way requires us to think about human psychology, in this course we focus on psychological explanations of politics: explanations about the individual (e.g., personality, learning, cognition, emotion) – and individuals' environments (e.g. information, social influences, group dynamics). The course is roughly divided into two sections. The first half of the course explores a range of concepts and theories with some applications of the theories. The second half of the course uses the concepts and theories to explore in greater detail some of the more politically important questions about political leaders, individuals, social groups, and societies as a whole. By the end of the course students should be able to apply the major psychological concepts and theories in evaluating human political thinking and behavior.

READINGS: There are no textbooks for this course. All readings will be available on Moodle, and are listed individually in the "Course Topics and Readings" section below. Depending on your interests and how the course progresses, I may change some topics and readings to reflect political events and your interests. Students should also be regular and critically aware consumers of news coverage, which provides a constant source of raw material for analyzing human thought and action. See note below on The News.

GRADES AND REQUIREMENTS: The course readings are varied, often complex and theoretical, using concepts unfamiliar to most political science students, so it's important to be engaged with the material by keeping up with the readings, attending class and thoughtfully participating in discussion. Our discussions and lectures will sometimes cover material not in the course readings, and all lecture and reading material may be covered on the exams. As a result, keeping up with the readings will enhance your enjoyment and learning in the course, so there will be several unannounced written "reading reflections" on the current readings (aka "quizzes") during the semester. **These pop quizzes / reading reflections are 5% of the course grade** and cannot be made up if missed -- so read thoroughly, take notes as you read, and prepare questions to discuss!

Class participation is also an important part of the course and course grade. One of the most important forms of class participation is asking good questions (in addition to contributing your own insights and your answers to others' questions, including mine). If you have questions about the readings, lectures, or discussions (e.g., an interesting, baffling, or unclear point in a reading) you should ask them; preparing questions about the readings (and trying to answer them yourself) will help you get the most out of them. **Frequent and intelligent participation in class discussion is 5% of the course grade.** Another crucial part of discussion is respecting others in class and their perspectives. This is especially important as we explore the sometimes intellectually and emotionally challenging topics and material in this course.

There will be one or two short papers based on various topics and exercises (some out of class). **Each short paper will be 5% of the course grade.** If only one paper is assigned, it will be worth 10% of the course grade. Note: this is subject to change – I will notify the class within the first two weeks of any change

There will be two exams: a midterm and a final. The final will be comprehensive but weighted toward the material in the second half of the course. Both exams will have material from both lectures and readings.

There will be a focused research paper of 6-8 pages in length that will provide you an opportunity to do an original research project, applying psychological theories and concepts to a topic of your choosing related to current or past political events. The specific requirements of the paper will be provided later in the semester.

GRADES: Grades will be calculated according to the following percentages:

A = 93-100	B+ = 87-89.9	C+ = 77-79.9	D+ = 67-69.9	below 60=F
A- = 90-92.9	B = 83-86.9	C = 73-76.9	D = 63-66.9	
	B- = 80-82.9	C- = 70-72.9	D- = 60-62.9	

Short papers (5% each, 2-4 papers)	10%
Participation in discussion	5%
Written Reading Reflections	5%
Midterm exam	25%
Research paper (6-8 pages)	25%
Final exam	30% of course grade

(If fewer than two short papers are assigned the percentage weight of the paper and/or exams in the overall course grade will be increased).

The short papers, midterm and final exams, and the research paper must be completed and turned in on time in order to pass this course.

PSCI 400:

Undergraduate students taking the 1-credit PSC 400 Advanced Writing course will write a two-page research proposal and complete a draft of the research paper, both of which I will provide comments on. Based on the draft comments students will revise the paper into final form (due one week after the draft is returned). The final version of the paper will be 9-10 pages instead of 6-8, and graded on writing clarity and organization, as well as content. First drafts will be due one week before the paper is due for the rest of the class.

ACADEMIC HONESTY AND PLAGIARISM:

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University.

All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at <https://www.umt.edu/student-affairs/community-standards/default.php>

The University of Montana Student Conduct Code prohibits plagiarism, which is “representing another person’s words, ideas, data, or materials as one’s own” and other forms of academic misconduct. These are serious academic violations that can result in penalties up to suspension or expulsion from the University.

I take academic honesty very seriously, and do my utmost to prevent, uncover, and penalize any form of dishonesty. Read Section V, “Academic Conduct” on pp. 5-6 of the Student Conduct Code above. Please contact me with any questions or concerns about academic honesty.

CLASS COURTESY:

In order to enjoy class and have a pleasant and effective learning environment, we need to observe a few basic courtesies. This is a small campus, so it is possible to get to the classroom on time from all other campus buildings; arriving late or leaving early disrupts the class and disturbs other students and the instructor. **Please turn off all cell phones and all other electronic devices before class begins.** Please do not read a newspaper or other non-course material, eat during class, or use text messaging, web browsers, or similar communications. You may take class notes using a computer but do not use it for other purposes. If you have a question or comment about the material, please raise your hand instead of discussing it with your neighbor. We'll all benefit if we remember we're in the room together to learn.

DROP POLICY AND INCOMPLETES:

You can drop on Cyberbear through February 3rd; then from February 4th - March 24th requires a form or e-request approved by me. Starting March 25, you must go through the more formal, difficult "late drop" petition process. I will sign late drop petitions through April 26th, and after that only if necessitated by accident, illness, or family/personal emergency as is UM policy:

<https://www.umt.edu/registrar/students/dropadd.php> - NOTE that the last day to drop or change the credit option is 5 pm the last day of classes, May 1st.

Incompletes will only be permitted when all the conditions set forth in the official University policy are met – this policy and other formal policies are at <http://catalog.umt.edu/academics/policies-procedures/>

DSS STUDENTS:

Qualified students with disabilities will receive appropriate accommodations in this course. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations on exams, papers, notes or other course requirements should contact me as soon as possible, and must contact the DSS office to arrange for, and provide me with a copy of, your DSS letter of accommodations as soon as you can. The DSS office is in Lommasson Center 154.

E-MAIL AND MOODLE:

Every registered UM student has an official UM e-mail account, and students registered for this course have a Moodle course account. I may use your official UM e-mail to send you important announcements, and I will post course readings, exam and paper grades on Moodle. At <https://umt.teamdynamix.com/TDClient/Home/> there are instructions on how to access your UM e-mail and Moodle accounts.

GRADUATE STUDENTS - Graduate students taking this course must complete supplemental graduate-level readings for each course topic as specified by the instructor, six reading analyses, and complete a 20-25 page research paper consisting of a research design with a well-defined research question, theory, hypothesis, literature review, data collection and analysis, and an analysis that synthesizes the five components. If you are a grad student, please contact me during the first week of class so we can discuss course requirements and options.

THE NEWS

Political events and media accounts of those events often use concepts or theories from political psychology. You should be a regular and critically aware consumer of media coverage, which means you should follow the news coverage in a major newspaper or other rich sources on a daily basis. The *New York Times* and *The Washington Post* are two of the best in factual news coverage. The *Wall Street Journal* has less political news coverage but it is also very good, but is more expensive and is only available free on Factiva, through the Mansfield Library website. Other news sources can provide a useful contrast with and supplement to newspaper reading, although most television and radio sources, for example the three major broadcast TV networks, CNN and Fox News generally provide more superficial coverage of political issues and events.

TOPICS AND READINGS

January 14 - Course Introduction

January 16 - 23: Psychological Explanations of Human Behavior - Who Are We?

January 28 – February 4: Personality-based Approaches to Leadership, Authority, & Ideology

February 6-11: Learning and Politics

February 13 - 20: Human Cognition, Choice, and Rationality

February 25 – March 3: Emotion, Attitudes, and Behavior

MIDTERM EXAM: THURSDAY, MARCH 5 (TENTATIVE DATE)

March 10 - 12: Perceiving Others

MARCH 16 -- 20: NO CLASS DUE TO SPRING BREAK!

March 24 - 31: Group Influence

April 14 - 16: Collective Action and Protest

April 21 - 23: Decisionmaking and Leadership

RESEARCH PAPER: DUE THURSDAY, APRIL 23 IN CLASS.

April 28 - 30: Political Tolerance and Deliberation

FINAL EXAM: WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 1:10 – 3:10 PM