

Instructor: Michael Meffert

Office: SBS N-737

Office Hours: Wednesday 11-12 and by appointment

Phone: 632-7681

E-mail: mmeffert@datalab2.sbs.sunysb.edu

WWW: <http://www.sinc.sunysb.edu/Stu/mmeffert/POL346.html>

Time: MW 1:30-5:10

Place: SBS S-328

Course Description

Why do people behave the way they do in politics? Political psychology, the application of psychological theories to political phenomena, helps to answer this question. This course will focus on individual political behavior from a predominantly social psychological perspective and analyze how people process and organize information and how they make political judgements. Other psychological approaches will be discussed as well when appropriate.

The course is divided in two major sections. The first section approaches the topic from a political science perspective and analyzes how psychological theories inform central concerns of political science, in particular political sophistication, socialization, and behavior as well as racial and gender attitudes. The overriding theme of the second section is persuasion and social influence which will be covered from different angles, including persuasion processes, mass media effects, obedience to authority, and a look at elite decision making. The course will be held as a mixture of lecture and discussion, making student participation an important component.

Prerequisites

POL 101 or 102 or 103 or 105; POL 201 or any other course satisfying the major's methodology requirement.

Required Readings

- Dalton, Russell J. 1996. *Citizen Politics: Public Opinion and Political Parties in Advanced Western Democracies*. 2nd. ed. Chatham, NJ: Chatham House.
- Pratkanis, Anthony, and Elliot Aronson. 1991. *Age of Propaganda: The Everyday Use and Abuse of Persuasion*. New York: W. H. Freeman.
- Course Reader.

The textbooks are available at the university bookstore and at Stony Books across 25A near the railroad station. The course reader with additional journal articles and book chapters will be made available at the cost of copying in the first session and in the department office.

Examinations, Papers, Grading

The final grade of the course will be a weighted average based on the following elements:

- 2 exams: 45%
- 2 reaction papers: 25%
- 1 presentation: 15%
- participation: 15%

Exams - The exams cover the material from the readings *and* the lecture preceding each exam; the final is not cumulative. They will ask for short definitions and short answers. Note that there will be no makeup exams, and an unexcused failure to take an exam will be counted as an F (see also section on participation).

Reaction Papers - You will write two reaction papers during the term, one in each half of the course. You can choose any chapter or article from the assigned readings (except the one you do as a presentation), write a short summary, *and* provide some critical, positive or negative, comments or ideas. Each paper should have a length of about 2 typed, double-spaced pages.

Presentation - You will choose one article or book chapter from the presentation list which covers some of the assigned readings and some additional material. Generally, one student presents one article. A number of more difficult empirical articles from academic journals can and should be presented by two students who share the presentation. You are expected to (1) present a short summary of the reading in class, (2) offer some critical remarks or discuss it in light of related concepts, and (3) raise some questions for class discussion. The presentation itself should take about 5-10 minutes. The grade will be based on the quality and form of presentation.

Participation - You are expected to read and prepare the assigned readings before each class meeting in order to be able to understand and follow the lecture (which assumes your familiarity with the material) and to participate in class discussions. The grade will be based on your substantive contribution in class (comments and questions) but also on your attendance.

Your are expected to attend class regularly, and if necessary, attendance will be assessed by an occasional roll call. Any absence from class requires notification *before* the class meeting (in person, by phone, or by e-mail). Otherwise, your participation grade will suffer. Unexpected emergencies like accidents will have to be documented in adequate written form.

Important Note - If you have a physical, psychological, medical, or learning disability that may impact on your ability to carry out assigned course work, I would urge that you contact the staff in the Disabled Student Services office (DSS), Room 133, Humanities (phone: 632-6748/TDD). DSS will review your concerns and determine, with you, what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation of disability is confidential.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: Readings from the two textbooks are abbreviated with Dalton and Pratkanis/Aronson, respectively, and readings from the course reader are listed with full citations.

Date (Meeting)	Topic and Readings
5/27 (1)	<i>Introduction</i>
	<i>The Political Perspective: Political Attitudes and Behavior</i>
6/1 (2)	<i>Political Sophistication, Cognitive Schemas, and Political Participation</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dalton, ch. 1-4 (pp. 1-85). • Eulau, Heinz. 1993. "The Root is Man." In <i>Political Psychology: Classic and Contemporary Readings</i>, ed. Neil J. Kressel. New York: Paragon House (pp. 6-11).
6/3 (3)	<i>Socialization, Values, and Ideology: The Development of Core Beliefs</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dalton, ch. 5, 6 (pp. 89-140). • Alwin, Duane F., Ronald L. Cohen, and Theodore M. Newcomb. 1991. "Sociopolitical Orientations over the Life Span." In <i>Political Attitudes Over the Life Span: The Bennington Women after Fifty Years</i>. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press (pp. 3-29).
6/8 (4)	<i>Voting Behavior: Traditional and Cognitive Approaches</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dalton, ch. 7-10, 12 (pp. 143-238, 261-284). • Lodge, Milton, and Patrick Stroh. 1993. "Inside the Mental Voting Booth: An Impression-Driven Process Model of Candidate Evaluation." In <i>Explorations in Political Psychology</i>, ed. Shanto Iyengar and William J. McGuire. Durham: Duke University Press (pp. 225-263).
6/10 (5)	<i>Racial and Gender Attitudes: A Question of Stereotypes</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Huddy, Leonie. 1994. "The Political Significance of Voters' Gender Stereotypes." In <i>Research in Micropolitics: New Directions in Political Psychology</i>, ed. Michael X. Delli Carpini, Leonie Huddy, and Robert Shapiro. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press. • McConahay, John B. 1986. "Modern Racism, Ambivalence, and the Modern Racism Scale." In <i>Prejudice, Discrimination, and Racism</i>, ed. John F. Dovidio and Samuel L. Gaertner. Orlando: Academic Press. • Devine, Patricia G. 1989. "Stereotypes and Prejudice: Their Automatic and Controlled Components." <i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i> 56:5-18.
6/15 (6)	<i>Midterm Exam</i>

<i>The Psychological Perspective: Persuasion Processes</i>	
6/17 (7)	<p><i>Cognitive Models of Persuasion and Attitude Change</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pratkanis/Aronson, ch. 1-15 (pp.1-111). • Petty, Richard E., and Joseph R. Priester. 1994. "Mass Media Attitude Change: Implications of the Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion." In <i>Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research</i>, ed. Jennings Bryant and Dolf Zillmann. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum (pp.91-122).
6/22 (8)	<p><i>Media Effects: Accessibility, Priming, and Framing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pratkanis/Aronson, ch. 16-31 (pp.115-218). • Ansolabehere, Stephen, Roy Behr, and Shanto Iyengar. 1993. "The Evolution of 'Media Effects' Research," and "The Multiple Effects of Television on Public Opinion." In <i>The Media Game: American Politics in the Television Age</i>. New York: Macmillan (pp. 129-156).
6/24 (9)	<p><i>Obedience to Authority: When Legitimate Authority and Illegitimate Actions Collide</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pratkanis/Aronson, ch. 32-37 (pp.221-265). • Sabini, John P., and Maury Silver. 1993. "Destroying the Innocent with a Clear Conscience: A Sociopsychology of the Holocaust." In <i>Political Psychology: Classic and Contemporary Readings</i>, ed. Neil J. Kressel. New York: Paragon House (pp. 192-217). • Kelman, Herbert C., and V. Lee Hamilton. 1993. "Sanctioned Massacres." In <i>Political Psychology: Classic and Contemporary Readings</i>, ed. Neil J. Kressel. New York: Paragon House. (pp. 232-240).
6/29 (10)	<p><i>Elite Decision Making: Group Dynamics and Decision Flaws</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Janis, Irving L. 1993. "Groupthink." In <i>Political Psychology: Classic and Contemporary Readings</i>, ed. Neil J. Kressel. New York: Paragon House (pp. 360-366). • Jervis, Robert. 1993. "The Drunkard's Search." In <i>Explorations in Political Psychology</i>, ed. Shanto Iyengar and William J. McGuire. Durham: Duke University Press (pp. 338-360).
7/1 (11)	<p><i>Final Exam</i></p>

Presentation List

Note: The number in square brackets represents the number of students who can present each reading.

Socialization, Values, and Ideology

- [1] Alwin, Duane F., Ronald L. Cohen, and Theodore M. Newcomb. 1991. "Newcomb's Bennington Studies: The Impressionable Years." In *Political Attitudes Over the Life Span: The Bennington Women after Fifty Years*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press (pp. 30-52).
- [1] Alwin, Duane F., Ronald L. Cohen, and Theodore M. Newcomb. 1991. "Social Change and the Stability of Individuals: A Review and Interpretation." In *Political Attitudes Over the Life Span: The Bennington Women after Fifty Years*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press (pp. 253-281).
- [2] Layman, Geoffrey C. and Edward G. Carmines. 1997. "Cultural Conflict in American Politics: Religious Traditionalism, Postmaterialism, and U.S. Political Behavior." *Journal of Politics* 59:751-77.

Voting Behavior

- [2] Brians, Craig L., and Martin P. Wattenberg. 1996. "Campaign Issue Knowledge and Salience: Comparing Reception from TV Commercials, TV News, and Newspapers." *American Journal of Political Science* 40:172-193.
- [2] Hetherington, Marc J. 1996. "The Media's Role in Forming Voters' National Economic Evaluations in 1992." *American Journal of Political Science* 40:372-395.

Racial and Gender Attitudes: A Question of Stereotypes

- [2] Plutzer, Eric and John F. Zipp. 1996. "Identity Politics, Partisanship, and Voting for Women Candidates." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 60:30-57.
- [2] Kinder, Donald R. and Lynn M. Sanders. 1990. "Mimicking Political Debate with Survey Questions: The Case of White Opinion on Affirmative Action." *Social Cognition* 8:73-103.

Persuasion and Attitude Change

- [1] Pratkanis, Anthony, and Elliot Aronson. 1991. "The Rationalizing Animal." In *Age of Propaganda: The Everyday Use and Abuse of Persuasion*. New York: W. H. Freeman (pp. 32-39).
- [1] Pratkanis, Anthony, and Elliot Aronson. 1991. "Protagoras' Ideal: One-Sided versus Two-Sided Debate." In *Age of Propaganda: The Everyday Use and Abuse of Persuasion*. New York: W. H. Freeman (pp. 149-157).

Media Effects

- [1] Bennett, W. Lance. 1996. "The Public: Prisoners of the News?" In *News: The Politics of Illusion*. 3rd ed. White Plains, NY: Longman (pp. 167-192).
- [2] Vallone, Robert P., Lee Ross, and Mark R. Lepper. 1985. "The Hostile Media Phenomenon: Biased Perception and Perceptions of Media Bias in Coverage of the Beirut Massacre." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 49:577-585.
- [1] Pratkanis, Anthony, and Elliot Aronson. 1991. "What Is News?" In *Age of Propaganda: The Everyday Use and Abuse of Persuasion*. New York: W. H. Freeman (pp. 223-232).

Obedience

- [1] Lifton, Robert Jay. 1993. "The Nazi Doctors." In *Political Psychology: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, ed. Neil J. Kressel. New York: Paragon House. (pp. 218-231).
- [1] Pratkanis, Anthony, and Elliot Aronson. 1991. "Propaganda in the Third Reich: A Case for Uncertainty." In *Age of Propaganda: The Everyday Use and Abuse of Persuasion*. New York: W. H. Freeman (pp. 249-258).

Elite Decision Making

- [1] Cohen, Bernard C. 1993. "The Public's Impact on Foreign Policy." In *Political Psychology: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, ed. Neil J. Kressel. New York: Paragon House (pp. 409-416).
- [1] Stein, Janice Gross. 1993. "Building Politics in Psychology: The Misperception of Threat." In *Political Psychology: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, ed. Neil J. Kressel. New York: Paragon House (pp. 367-392).
- [1] Stern, Eric K. 1997. "Probing the Plausibility of Newgroup Syndrome: Kennedy and the Bay of Pigs." In *Beyond Groupthink: Political Group Dynamics and Foreign Policy-Making*, ed. Paul t' Hart, Eric K. Stern, and Bengt Sundelius. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press (pp. 153-189).
- [1] Hoyt, Paul D., and Jean A. Garrison. 1997. "Political Manipulation within the Small Group: Foreign Policy Advisers in the Carter Administration." In *Beyond Groupthink: Political Group Dynamics and Foreign Policy-Making*, ed. Paul t' Hart, Eric K. Stern, and Bengt Sundelius. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press (pp. 249-274).