

# PO4770 Political Psychology

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**Office hours:** (MT & HT) Thursdays 10-12 am during teaching weeks, or by appointment

**Lectures:** (MT) Wednesdays 9-10 am @ARTS 4050B; Wednesdays 4-5 pm @REG HSE  
(HT) Fridays 9-10 am @ARTS 5025; Fridays 1-2 pm @ARTS4047

## Module description

Representative democracy assumes engaged and rational citizens who use full information to make decisions on the basis of their self-interests. Modern democracies are also based on the assumption that individuals understand and accept their equal status as citizens and are willing to treat others as such. But to what extent do individuals in modern democracies satisfy these assumptions? How do individuals form their attitudes? Do they have organized belief systems that help them make rational decisions easily? Do individuals form their attitudes and make their choices on the basis of their self-interest? Do they seek out objective information when making decisions? Are individuals in modern democracies ready to treat others equally?

Political psychology is a relatively young field of study, which seeks to understand the psychological underpinnings of political attitudes and behavior. This module will introduce you to some of the major topics in the psychological study of politics by focusing on three broad questions concerning normative assumptions of democratic citizenship: How do individuals form and organize their attitudes? How do they process political information? Are most individuals ready to treat each other equally? Rather than providing yes / no answers to these questions, we will try to analyze the psychological processes underlying such citizen preferences.

In the Michaelmas term, we will first survey the history, major themes, and methods of the discipline, and then will move on to discuss how citizens form and organize their attitudes. Topics covered will include elite-based vs bottom-up approaches to ideology; personality and values, cognitive and symbolic approaches, and biological perspectives. We will then discuss different information processing models, talk about the role of affect and emotions in decision-making, motivated reasoning, media effects, and political networks.

In the Hillary term, we will examine group-based approaches to cooperation and conflict in societies. Conformity, obedience, authoritarianism, realistic conflict and social identity theories, social dominance orientation, system justification theory, ethnocentrism and nationalism, prejudice, political violence, and terrorism, will be among the topics that we will study.

## Learning aims

The module aims to introduce students to the fundamental concepts and prominent approaches in political psychology. Students will gain a thorough understanding of the major theoretical debates and empirical findings in the discipline, and be able to discuss and evaluate the role of psychological factors underlying political attitudes and behaviour.

## Learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module students should be able to:

- Describe the historical development of the field of political psychology.
- Compare and criticise the major approaches in the study of attitude formation and organization.
- Explain and interpret the major information processing models.
- Explain the psychological correlates of group dynamics including obedience, ethnocentrism, xenophobia, and prejudice.
- Construct arguments concerning current political debates about citizen preferences in modern democracies.

## Office hours

In case you have any questions about course content, readings, or class discussions, please come to my office hours on **Thursdays between 10.00 and 12.00**. In case you cannot make it to the office hours, please [e-mail](#) me to set up an appointment. I will try to respond to your e-mails within two days during the teaching weeks and one day during the exam period, but note that I may get back to you a bit later than that if I am travelling to attend academic events such as conferences.

Please note that I will not be able to answer substantive questions concerning course content via e-mail. In case you have such questions, please see me during office hours or raise them during class meetings. Please bear in mind that I will not be able to cover the lecture material for you during office hours, as office hours are not intended to replace lectures. Therefore, try not to miss any classes.

## Course organization

The courses will follow a lecture + seminar format. In general, I will open the class meetings by providing some background about the topic, connect it to the broader literature, and then open the topic up to discussion. On some occasions, I will lecture in between the discussions and provide further explanations. Still, you should not forget that this is a seminar course, and most of the time class meetings will involve in-depth discussions of the week's material. It is therefore important that all students come to class having done the readings. I will present you with leading questions about the material assigned for the next class meeting so that you know what to focus on the readings. (More about readings below.)

Please pay attention to the following during class discussions:

- Please do not interrupt your classmates when they are talking. You can make a brief note about the points you have in mind and raise them after your friend is finished.
- Please make sure to support your points with references to the readings, objective facts, empirical findings, and logical arguments.
- You may find that some of the issues that we will discuss may be controversial and thus stir a lot of emotions. Please make sure to pay the utmost respect to your fellow classmates and instructor when voicing your opinions. Please refrain from using language that is offensive or insulting to any persons or groups.

## Course materials

We will draw on readings from the following books for most of the course. A number of copies have been ordered to the library, and some resources are available as e-books.

Houghton, David Patrick. 2009. *Political Psychology: Situations, Individuals, and Cases*. New York: Routledge. (hereafter referred as **Houghton**)

Huddy, Leonie, David O. Sears, and Jack S. Levy. 2013. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*. 2d ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (hereafter referred as **Huddy et al.**)

Jost, John T. and Jim Sidanius. 2004. *Political Psychology: Key Readings*. New York and Hove: Psychology Press. (hereafter referred as **Jost & Sidanius**)

Nesbitt-Larking, Paul, Catarina Kinnvall, Tereza Capelos, and Henk Dekker. 2014. *The Palgrave Handbook of Global Political Psychology*. Palgrave MacMillan. (hereafter referred as **Nesbitt-Larking et al.**)

There are also other readings, which are available electronically, through the TCD journal arrangements or on the web. I will also make some readings (such as chapters from books not listed above) available through **Blackboard**.

Some readings may include a lot of concepts and theoretical approaches from psychology that students may find challenging at the beginning of the semester. Many articles also make use of quantitative methods, which might pose some challenges to students who have not taken courses on research methods or statistics. Please do not be put off by the terminology or numbers that you see in the readings! While quantitative methods are becoming increasingly accepted in all fields of political science, this is not a methods course, and I do not expect you to fully understand all details related to the methods parts in the articles. We will do a crash course at the beginning of the semester that will help you with some basics concerning quantitative methods, and particularly experimental methods. The reading schedule below also includes some readings that may help you with your reading for the course.

Rather than trying to understand all details, focus on the research problem at hand, main arguments, and the findings when reading the articles. Make sure that you understand the terms and concepts well, and let me know if you have any questions about them. As mentioned above, I will also present you with questions concerning the readings in advance so that you can be better prepared for class discussions.

We will also watch the following movies and documentaries and discuss them in our class meetings. These DVDs are also available in the library.

The Wave (Die Welle) / Director: Dennis Gansel, (DVD)

Obedience / Produced by Stanley Milgram, (DVD)

Quiet Rage: The Stanford Prison Experiment / film by Philip G. Zimbardo (DVD)

I will also post relevant blog posts, news stories, or videos to the **Blackboard**.

## Assesment

As with most senior sophister courses in our department, assessment for this course will be based on two essays which account for 40% of the overall grade for the course (20% per essay) and an annual exam at the end of the second semester (Hilary Term) which accounts for 60% of the overall grade.

In line with departmental guidelines, all essays:

- must be within the word limit (no longer 2,000 words including notes or footnotes, but excluding bibliography),
- must be submitted in Word or PDF format,
- use double or 1.5 line spacing and leave a margin of at least one inch at the left-hand side,
- must be numbered,
- state the final word count,
- use proper citation and referencing, (You can use the referencing format of your choice as long as it is consistent across the essay.)
- must be submitted via **Blackboard**, which integrates a plagiarism detection software turnitin.

As per Trinity policy, all essays should begin with the essay cover sheet, affirming that the essay is all the student's own work. The cover can be downloaded from the department web site:  
[https://www.tcd.ie/Political\\_Science/undergraduate/](https://www.tcd.ie/Political_Science/undergraduate/)

Please read the department's undergraduate handbook, which contains a lot of useful information about submission of written assignments and guidelines on writing essays:  
[http://www.tcd.ie/Political\\_Science/undergraduate/module-outlines/UndergradHandbook.pdf](http://www.tcd.ie/Political_Science/undergraduate/module-outlines/UndergradHandbook.pdf)

**The first essay** is due no later than 6pm on **24 November 2017**. All students should write an essay discussing the following question:

Converse argues that belief systems of elites should be distinguished from those of the ordinary citizens. Do you agree or disagree? How much evidence is there in favor of Converse's claim? What is the counter-evidence other political psychologists have presented so far? Are there meaningful mass belief systems that serve as important guides to when making decisions in politics?

**The second essay** is due no later than 6pm on **14 March 2018**. Students should pick and write their essays on one of the topics below:

To what extent are authoritarianism and social dominance orientation useful in explaining ethnocentrism and prejudice? Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of both approaches in terms of explaining intergroup dynamics.

In the light of existing theory and research from political psychology, discuss whether it is possible to create a society where there is no systematic prejudice against marginal groups.

## Academic integrity

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity free from fraud and deception. Academic dishonesty, including, but not limited to, cheating on an exam or assignment, plagiarizing, representing someone else's work as your own, submitting work previously used without the informing and taking the consent of the instructor, fabricating of information or citations, etc. will not be tolerated. Plagiarism will lead to automatic failure and the matter will be reported to the student's

tutor and the dean of the faculty; severe penalties are likely to ensue, including possible exclusion from the exam or even the College, in accordance with College policy.

Please read pp. 45-47 of the College Calendar for University's plagiarism policy:

<https://www.tcd.ie/calendar/undergraduate-studies/general-regulations-and-information.pdf>

General guidelines for students on avoiding plagiarism could be found in the Library's online tutorial:

<https://www.tcd.ie/library/support/plagiarism/story.html>

### **Late essays**

All late work, unless excused **in advance** by the module lecturer, or justified by medical certificate or tutor's note, will be penalised at a rate of 5 marks per day. Under no circumstances will work be accepted after the set work has been marked and handed back to other students, or after the end of the second lecture term.

Make sure to save and back-up your work, as these type of excuses will count as acceptable excuses for late work!

### **Disability policy**

Students with a disability are encouraged to register with the Disability Service (<https://www.tcd.ie/disability/>) to seek supports where the disability could affect their ability to participate fully in all aspects of the course.

## **Lecture and reading schedule**

### **Michaelmas term**

#### **Week 1: Introduction**

Houghton, chapter 2.

McGuire, William. 1993. The Poly-Psy Relationship: Three Phases of a Long Affair. (Jost and Sidanius, Reading 1)

Optional: Chong, Dennis. Degrees of Rationality in Politics. (Huddy et al., chapter 4)

#### **Week 2: Methods in Political Psychology**

Capelos, Teresa. 2014. Experiments: Insights and Power in the Study of Causality. (Nesbitt-Larking et al., chapter 7)

Jordan, Christian H., and Mark P. Zanna. 2005. How to Read a Journal Article in Social Psychology. (Jost and Sidanius, pp. 467-476) Also available online at [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/242614343\\_How\\_to\\_Read\\_a\\_Journal\\_Article\\_in\\_Social\\_Psychology](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/242614343_How_to_Read_a_Journal_Article_in_Social_Psychology)

ICPSR. nd. How to Read (and Understand) a Social Science Journal Article. Available at: [http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/files/instructors/How\\_to\\_Read\\_a\\_Journal\\_Article.pdf](http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/files/instructors/How_to_Read_a_Journal_Article.pdf)

EGAP. nd. 10 Things to Know about Reading Regression Table. Available at <http://egap.org/methods-guides/10-things-know-about-reading-regression-table>

Optional: McDermott, Rose. 2002. Experimental Methodology in Political Science. *Political Analysis* 10(4): 325-342.

### ***How do individuals form and organize their attitudes?***

#### **Week 3: Structure and consistency in attitudes: The top-down approach**

Recommended: Clawson, Rosalee A., and Zoe M. Oxley. 2012. *Public Opinion: Democratic Ideals, Democratic Practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: CQ Press, 2nd edition, chapter 5. (Available as e-book in the Library)

Converse, Philip E. 1960. The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics. (Jost and Sidanius, Reading 10)

McElroy, Gail. 2017. Party Competition in Ireland: The Emergence of a Left-Right Dimension? In M. Marsh, D.M. Farrell, and G. McElroy (eds.) *A Conservative Revolution? Electoral Change in Twenty-First-Century Ireland*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, pp. 61-82. (Blackboard)

#### **Week 4: Structure and consistency in attitudes: Bottom-up approaches – Personality and values; genetic influences on attitudes**

Gerber, Alan S., Gregory A. Huber, David Doherty, and Conor M. Dowling. 2011. The Big Five Personality Traits in the Political Arena. *Annual Review of Political Science* 14: 265-287.

Piurko, Yuval, Shalom H. Schwartz, and Eldad Davidov. 2011. Basic Personal Values and the Meaning of Left-Right Political Orientations in 20 Countries. *Political Psychology* 32(4): 537-561.

Alford, John R. and John R. Hibbing. 2010. The Ultimate Source of Political Opinions: Genes and the Environment. In B. Norrander and C. Wilcox (eds.) *Understanding Public Opinion*, Third Edition. Washington, DC: CQ Press, pp. 43-56. (Blackboard)

#### **Week 5: Structure and consistency in attitudes: Bottom-up approaches – Motivated cognition and group-based approaches**

Jost, John T., Jack Glaser, Arie W. Kruglanski, Frank J. Sulloway. 2003. Political Conservatism as Motivated Social Cognition. *Psychological Bulletin*, 129(3): 339-375.

Conover, Pamela and Stanley Feldman. 1981. The Origins and Meaning of Liberal/ Conservative Self-Identifications. (Jost and Sidanius, Reading 11)

Optional: Feldman, Stanley. 2013. Political Ideology. (Hudy et al., chapter 19)

## ***How do individuals process political information?***

### **Week 6: Memory-based models of information-processing**

Zaller, John and Stanley Feldman. 1992. A Simple Theory of the Survey Response: Answering Questions vs. Revealing Preferences. *American Journal of Political Science* 36(3):579-616.

Basinger, Scott, and Howard Lavine. 2005. Ambivalence, Information, and Electoral Choice. *American Political Science Review* 99(2):169-184 .

### **Week 7: Reading week, no class**

### **Week 8: Alternatives to memory-based models: Online information-processing and affective models**

Lodge, Milton, Marco Steenbergen, and Shawn Brau. 1995. The Responsive Voter: Campaign Information and the Dynamics of Candidate Evaluation. *American Political Science Review* 89(2): 309-326.

Lavine, Howard. 2002. On-line versus Memory-based Process Models of Political Evaluation. In K.R. Monroe (ed.) *Political Psychology*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc, pp. 225-248. (Blackboard)

Redlawsk, David P., Andrew J. Civettini, and Richard Lau. 2007. Affective Intelligence and Voting: Information Processing and Learning in a Campaign. In G. E. Marcus, W. R. Neuman, and M. MacKuen (ed.) *The Affect Effect: Dynamics of Emotion in Political Thinking and Behavior*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 152-179. (Blackboard)

### **Week 9: Motivated reasoning**

Redlawsk, David. 2004. Motivated Reasoning and Voter Decision Making: Affect and Evaluation. Paper prepared for the Annual Meeting of the International Society of Political Psychology, July 15-18, 2004, Lund, Sweden. Available at <http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~redlawsk/papers/Motivated%20Reasoning%20Voting.pdf>

Kahan, Dan M. 2013. Ideology, Motivated Reasoning, and Cognitive Reflection. *Judgment and Decision Making* 8(4): 407-424.

Kahan, Dan, Asheley Landrum, Katie Carpenter, Laura Helft, Kathleen Hall Jamieson. 2017. Science Curiosity and Political Information Processing. *Advances in Political Psychology* 38(S1): 179-199.

### **Week 10: Media effects**

Iyengar, Shanto, Mark D. Peters, and Donald Kinder. 1982. Experimental Consequences of the 'not-so-minimal' Consequences of Television News Programs. (Jost and Sidanius, Reading 7)

Krosnick, Jon, and Donald Kinder. 1990. Altering the Foundations of Support for the President through Priming. (Jost and Sidanius, Reading 8)

Nelson , Thomas E. , Rosalee A. Clawson, and Zoe M. Oxley.1997. Media Framing of a Civil Liberties Conflict and its Effect on Tolerance. *American Political Science Review*, 91(3): 567-583.

Optional: Valentino, Nick, and Yioryos Nardis. 2013. Political Communication. (Hudy et al., chapter 18)

### **Week 11: Political networks and political behavior**

Huckfeldt, Robert, Jeanette Morehouse Mendez, and Tracy Osborn. 2004. Disagreement, Ambivalence, and Engagement: The Political Consequences of Heterogeneous Networks. *Political Psychology* 25(1): 65-95.

Mutz, Diana C. 2002. The Consequences of Cross-cutting Networks for Political Participation. *American Journal of Political Science* 46(4): 838-855

Sokhey, Anand E., and Scott D. McClurg. 2012. Social Networks and Correct Voting. *The Journal of Politics* 74(3): 751-764.

### **Week 12: Essay feedback and semester review**

I will be out of country to attend a workshop this week. We will either have a make-up class or have an online session. Details will be announced in Blackboard.

## **Hillary term**

### ***Are individuals ready to treat each other equally? Why / why not?***

#### **Week 1: Intergroup relations and conflict – An introduction**

Take some tests on the Project Implicit web page: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/ireland/>

Kinder, Donald R. and Kam, Cindy D. 2009. *Us Against Them: Ethnocentric Foundations of American Opinion*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Chapter 1. (Blackboard)

Kinder, Donald. 2013. Prejudice and Politics. (Huddy et al., chapter 25)

Darley, John. 1992. Social Organization for the Production of Evil. (Jost and Sidanius, Reading 21)

#### **Week 2: Conformity and obedience**

Watch: Obedience / Produced by Stanley Milgram, (DVD)

Watch: Quiet Rage: The Stanford Prison Experiment / film by Philip G. Zimbardo (DVD)

Houghton, chapters 4 and 5.



### **Week 3: Authoritarianism and threat**

Brown, Roger. 1965. The Authoritarian Personality and the Organization of Attitudes. (Jost and Sidanius, Reading 2)

Altemeyer, Bob. 1998. The Other Authoritarian Personality. (Jost and Sidanius, Reading 4)

Feldman, Stanley. 2003. Enforcing Conformity: A Theory of Authoritarianism. *Political Psychology* 24(1): 41-74.

Nisbet-Larking et al., chapter 18.

### **Week 4: Social dominance orientation**

Sidanius, Jim and Felicia Pratto. 1999. Social Dominance Theory: A New Synthesis. (Jost and Sidanius, Reading 18)

Duckitt, John. 2001. A Dual-Process Cognitive-Motivational Theory of Ideology and Prejudice. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* 33: 41-113.

### **Week 5: Intergroup conflict: Realistic threat perspective**

Sherif, Muzafer. 1967. *Group Conflict and Co-operation: Their Social Psychology*. London and New York: Taylor and Francis, Chapters 4 and 5. (Library, available as e-book)

Mayda, Anna Maria. 2004. Who Is Against Immigration?: A Cross-Country Investigation of Individual Attitudes toward Immigrants. IZA Discussion paper series, No. 1115. Available online at <https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/20350/1/dp1115.pdf>

Hainmueller, Jens, and Michael J. Hiscox. 2010. Attitudes toward Highly-skilled and Low-skilled Immigration: Evidence from a Survey Experiment. *American Political Science Review* 104(1):61-84.

### **Week 6: Intergroup conflict: Social identity perspective**

Tajfel, Henri and John C. Turner. 1981. The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior. (Jost and Sidanius, Chapter 16)

Sniderman, Paul M., Louk Hagendoorn, and Markus Prior. 2004. Predisposing Factors and Situational Triggers: Exclusionary Reactions to Immigrant Minorities. *American Political Science Review* 98(1): 35-49.

Nisbett-Larking et al., chapter 19.

### **Week 7: Reading week, no class**

### **Week 8: Contrasting intergroup approaches to social conflict**

Watch: The Wave (Die Welle) / Director: Dennis Gansel, (DVD)

Tom Turner. 2010. Why are Irish Attitudes to Immigrants among the Most Liberal in Europe? *European Societies* 12(1): 25-44.

### **Week 9: System justification and collective political action**

Jost, John T., Mahzarin R. Banaji, and Brian A. Nosek. 2004. A Decade of System Justification Theory: Accumulated Evidence of Conscious and Unconscious Bolstering of the Status Quo. *Political Psychology* 25(6): 881-919.

Jost, John T., Vagelis Chaikalis-Petritsis, Dominic Abrams, Jim Sidanius, Jojanneke van der Toorn, Christopher Bratt. 2012. Why Men (and Women) Do and Don't Rebel: Effects of System Justification on Willingness to Protest. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 38(2): 197-208.

### **Week 10: Psychology of political violence**

Eckstein, Harry. 1980. Theoretical Approaches to Explaining Collective Political Violence. (Jost and Sidanius, Reading 23)

Jeremy Ginges, Scott Atran. 2009. What Motivates Participation in Violent Political Action: Selective Incentives or Parochial Altruism?. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 1167: 115-123.

Holly A. McGregor, et al. 1998. Terror Management and Aggression: Evidence That Mortality Salience Motivates Aggression against Worldview-Threatening Others. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 74(3): 590-605.

Ginges, Jeremt, Scott Atran, Sonya Sachdeva, and Douglas Medin. 2011. Psychology out of the Laboratory: The Challenge of Violent Extremism. *American Psychologist* 66(6): 507-519.

### **Weeks 11 and 12: Review and conclusions**

Krosnick, Jon A., and Kathleen M. McGraw. 2002. Psychological Political Science versus Political Psychology True to Its Name: A Plea for Balance. In Kristen R. Monroe (ed.) *Political Psychology*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Chapter 4. (Blackboard)