

University of Montana

## ScholarWorks at University of Montana

---

Syllabi

Course Syllabi

---

Fall 9-1-2007

### PSC 483.01: Political Psychology

Christopher P. Muste

*University of Montana - Missoula*, [christopher.muste@umontana.edu](mailto:christopher.muste@umontana.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi>

**Let us know how access to this document benefits you.**

---

#### Recommended Citation

Muste, Christopher P., "PSC 483.01: Political Psychology" (2007). *Syllabi*. 6690.

<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi/6690>

This Syllabus is brought to you for free and open access by the Course Syllabi at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Syllabi by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@mso.umt.edu](mailto:scholarworks@mso.umt.edu).

POLITICAL PSYCHOLOGY - PSC 483, SEC. 01

**Fall 2007**

MWF 3:10 – 4:00, 337 Liberal Arts

Professor Christopher Muste

Office: 416 Liberal Arts

Office Hours: Monday 4-5, Wednesday 4-6, and by appointment

Political Science Department - 350 Liberal Arts; phone 243-5202

Phone: 243-4829

e-mail: [christopher.muste@umontana.edu](mailto:christopher.muste@umontana.edu)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course explores why humans think, feel, and act the way they do, in the realm of politics. While studying any aspect of politics in some way requires us to think about human psychology, in this course we focus on psychological theories about individual personality, learning, cognition, and broader social influences and group dynamics. The course is roughly divided into two sections. The first half of the course explores a wide range of concepts and theories with some illustrations of the theories in operation. The second half of the course uses the concepts and theories to explore in greater detail some of the more politically important questions related to 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 in traditional paper course reserves and on electronic reserves (ERES) at the Mansfield Library, and are listed individually in the “Course Topics and Readings” section below. Depending on the progress of course, I may change some of the readings to reflect the interests of students and political events. The ERES password is

Students should also be regular and critically aware consumers of news coverage, which provides a constant source of raw material for the analysis of human thought and action. For this reason you should keep up with news coverage in a major newspaper on a daily basis. The *New York Times* and *The Washington Post* are two of the best in news coverage and have free websites ([www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com), [www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)). The *Wall Street Journal* is also a good news source, but it has less political news and is only available free on Factiva, through the Mansfield Library website.

**GRADES AND REQUIREMENTS:** This is a small class, so we can emphasize discussion over lectures. In addition, the course material is varied, sometimes complex and theoretical, so keeping up with the reading, daily attendance, and thoughtful participation are essential. Our discussions and lectures will cover material not in the course readings, and vice-versa. All lecture and reading material will potentially be on the exams. To participate in discussion and do well on the exams, you will need to keep up with the assigned reading, and there will be several days during the semester when there will be unannounced quizzes on the current readings. These pop readings quizzes are 5% of the course grade and cannot be made up if you miss one, so it’s a good idea to attend class regularly and keep up with the readings.

Class participation is also part of the course grade. One of the most important forms of class participation is asking questions (in addition to offering your own analysis and answering others’ questions). If you have questions about the readings, lectures, or discussions, you should ask them. Asking good questions and participating frequently and intelligently in class discussions counts 5% toward the course grade. Another crucial part of discussion is respecting others and their perspectives. This is especially important as we explore the sometimes intellectually and emotionally difficult topics in this course. There will be at least two short papers based on various topics and exercises (some out of class). Each short paper will be 5% of the course grade. If more than two papers are assigned the weight of one or both exams

and/or the research paper proportion of the grade will be lowered.

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 research paper of 8-10 pages in length that will provide you an opportunity to do an original research project, applying course 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)	10-20%
Participation in discussion	5%
Reading quizzes	5%
Midterm exam	25%
Research paper (8-10 pages)	25%
Final exam	30% of course grade

(If more than two papers are assigned the weight of one or both exams and/or the research paper proportion of the grade will be lowered).

**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.**

**ACADEMIC HONESTY:**

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 <http://ordway.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/index.cfm/name/StudentConductCode>

The University of Montana Student Conduct Code prohibits plagiarism, which is “representing another person’s words, ideas, data, or materials as one’s own.” This is a serious academic violation that can result in penalties up to suspension or expulsion from the University. **I take academic honesty very seriously, and will do my utmost to prevent, uncover, and penalize any form of cheating in this course.** See the “Plagiarism Warning” on pp. 23-24 in the *University of Montana 2007-2008 Catalog*, and the Student Conduct Code on the UM website listed above. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns about academic honesty.

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY - AGAIN:**

\* 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 <http://ordway.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/index.cfm/name/StudentConductCode>

\* The University of Montana Student Conduct Code prohibits plagiarism, which is “representing another person’s words, ideas, data, or materials as one’s own.” This is a serious academic violation that can result in penalties up to suspension or expulsion from the University. **I take academic honesty very seriously, and will do my utmost to prevent, uncover, and penalize any form of cheating in this course.** See the “Plagiarism Warning” on pp. 23-24 in the *University of Montana 2007-2008 Catalog*, and the Student Conduct Code on the UM website listed above. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns about academic honesty.

### **CLASS COURTESY:**

In order to have a pleasant and effective learning environment in class, 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 before class begins. If you have a question or comment about the material, please raise your hand so we can all discuss it, instead of talking to your neighbor. We’ll all benefit if we just keep in mind the reason we’re in the room together.

### **DROP POLICY AND INCOMPLETES:**

You can drop classes on Cyberbear until September 17. From September 18 until October 8 you can drop using a drop slip signed by me. After October 8, you must go through the more formal and difficult “late drop” petition process. I will sign late drop petitions for only one week after the midterm exams are graded, and not thereafter except under extraordinary circumstances.

Incompletes will only be permitted when all the conditions set forth in the official University policy are met – the Incompletes policy is on page 23 of the *University of Montana 2007-2008 Catalog*.

### **DSS STUDENTS:**

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

### **EMAIL AND BLACKBOARD**

In order to obtain course materials and access your grades and other important course information, you will need to sign into the Blackboard website that has been created for this course. Information on how to access your account is at:

<http://umonline.umt.edu/StudentInfo/welcome.htm>

Blackboard uses your official UM email account, so you should check it frequently. I may also send e-mails to your official UM e-mail account. If you use another email account, go into Cyberbear to have your official UM email forwarded to your preferred email account.

### **GRADUATE STUDENTS**

Graduate students taking this course must complete additional graduate-level readings for each course topic as specified by the instructor, and

must complete a 20-25 page research paper consisting of a research design and hypothesis, original coding and analysis of multiple criteria of news content, extensive literature review, and an analysis that synthesizes the three components.

## TOPICS AND READINGS

### **I. Psychological Explanations of Human Behavior - Who Are We?**

Sears, Huddy & Jervis, 2003. "The Psychologies Underlying Political Psychology." In *Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*, pp. 3-16.

Cottam et al. 2004. "An Introduction to Political Psychology." In *Introduction to Political Psychology*, pp.1-9.

Kinder, Donald, and Thomas Palfrey. 1992. "On Behalf of an Experimental Political Science." In *Experimental Foundations of Political Science*, pp. 1-33.

*Alternative / Supplemental Reading:*

McGuire, "The Poly-Psy Relationship: Three Phases of a Long Affair" in *Explorations in Political Psychology*, eds. Iyengar & McGuire

### **II. Personality-based Approaches to Leadership and Ideology**

Greenstein, Fred I. 1987. "Objections to the Study of Personality and Politics," chapter 2 in Greenstein, *Personality & Politics*.

Winter, David G. 2005. "Things I've learned about personality from studying political leaders at a distance." *Journal of Personality*, 73: 557-584.

Sanford, Nevitt. 1971. "The Approach of the Authoritarian Personality" (excerpt, pp. 304-325). In *A Sourcebook for the Study of Personality and Politics*. Fred I. Greenstein and Michael Lerner, eds.

Bray, Robert M., and Audrey M. Noble. 1978. "Authoritarianism and Decisions of Mock Juries: Evidence of Jury Bias and Group Polarization." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (36): 1424-1430.

McClosky, Herbert, and Dennis Chong. 1985. "Similarities and Differences Between Left-Wing and Right-Wing Radicals." *British Journal of Political Science* 15:329-362.

### **III. Learning and Politics**

Bandura, Albert. 1977. "Theoretical Perspective" and "Origins of Behavior." Chapters 1 and 2 in Bandura, *Social Learning Theory*.

McClosky, Herbert, John Zaller, and Dennis Chong. 1985. "Social Learning and the Acquisition of Political Norms." Chapter 8 in McClosky and Chong, eds., *The American Ethos*.

Hershey, Marjorie Randon, and Darrell West. 1984. "Pro-Life Groups Act in 1980: The Importance of Observational Learning." Chapter 7 in *Running for Office*.

#### **IV. Human Cognition: Can We Be Rational?**

- Abelson, Robert. 1959. "Modes of Resolution of Belief Dilemmas." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 3: 343-352.
- Ross, Lee. 1977. "The Intuitive Psychologist and His Shortcomings: Distortions in the Attribution Process." In *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, v.10, ed. Leonard Berkowitz.
- Simon, Herbert. 1985. Human nature in politics: "The Dialogue of Psychology with Political Science." *American Political Science Review* 79: 293-304.
- Tversky, Amos, and Daniel Kahneman. 1974. "Judgment under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases." *Science*, 185: 1124-1131.

#### *Supplemental Reading:*

- Quattrone, George A., and Amos Tversky. 1988. "Contrasting Rational and Psychological Analyses of Political Choice." *American Political Science Review* 82: 719-736.

#### **V. Emotion, Attitudes, and Behavior**

- Fishbein, Martin, and Icek Ajzen. 1975. "Introduction". In *Belief, Attitude, Intention, and Behavior: an Introduction to Theory and Research*, pp. 1-18.
- Marcus on *The Sentimental Citizen*, pp. 79-132 - Enthusiasm, Anxiety, Loathing (chs 5-7)
- Fischle, Mark. 2000. "Mass Response to the Lewinsky Scandal: Motivated Reasoning or Bayesian Updating?" *Political Psychology* 21: 135-59.

### **MIDTERM EXAM: MONDAY, OCTOBER 15 (TENTATIVE DATE)**

#### **VI. Perceiving Others**

- Gladwell, Malcolm. 2005. "The Warren Harding Error: Why We Fall for Tall, Dark, and Handsome Men." Chapter 3 in *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking*.
- Brown, Rupert. 2000. "Thinking About Groups." Chapter 7 in *Group Process*.
- \*\*\* IAT test readings and practice. <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/demo/>
- Kahn, Kim Fridkin. 1996. "Introduction," "The Impact of Coverage Differences and Sex Stereotypes," and "Conclusions and Implications." Chapters 1,5, and 10 in *The Political Consequences of Being a Woman*.

#### **VII. Group Influence**

- Brown, Rupert. 2000. "Social Identity and Intergroup Relations." Chapter 8 in *Group Process*.
- Rothbart, Myron, and Oliver P. John. 1993. "Intergroup Relations and Stereotype Change: A Social-Cognitive Analysis and Some Longitudinal Findings." Chapter 2 in Sniderman, et al., *Prejudice, Politics, and the American Dilemma*.
- Milgram, Stanley. 1974. *Obedience to Authority* (selected frightening chapters).

### **VIII. Obedience and Morality - a “Continuum of Destruction”?**

- Milgram, Stanley. 1974. *Obedience to Authority* (more selected frightening chapters).
- Sabini, John P., and Maury Silver. 1993. “Destroying the Innocent with a Clear Conscience: A Sociopsychology of the Holocaust.” Ch. 14 in Kressel, *Political Psychology: Classic and Contemporary Readings*.
- Kelman, Herbert C., and V. Lee Hamilton. 1993. “Sanctioned Massacres” Ch. 14 in Kressel, *Political Psychology: Classic and Contemporary Readings*.
- Post, Jerrold. 2005. “When Hatred is Bred in the Bone: Psycho-cultural Foundations of Contemporary Terrorism.” *Political Psychology* 26: 615-636.
- Monroe, Kristen Renwick 1996. Chapters 1 and 9 in *The Heart of Altruism: Perceptions of a Common Humanity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

### **IX. Collective Action and Protest**

- Chong, Dennis. 1991. *Collective Action and the Civil Rights Movement*, selected chapters (1-3).
- Gurr, Ted. 1972. “Psychological Factors in Civil Violence.” In Fierabend, Ivo, et al., *Anger, Violence, and Politics*.
- Sears, David O. 1994. “Urban Rioting in Los Angeles: a Comparison of 1965 with 1992.” In *The Los Angeles Riots: Lessons for the Urban Future*, ed. Mark Baldassare.

### **X. Decisionmaking and Leadership**

- Jervis, Robert. 1993. “The Drunkard’s Search.” Chapter 12 in *Explorations in Political Psychology*.
- Janis, Irving. 1972. *Victims of Groupthink*, chapters 1, 2 and 8.

### **XI. Political Tolerance**

- Weissberg, Robert. 1990. “Political Tolerance: A Case Study in Public Opinion and Democratic Theory.” *Research in Micropolitics* 3: 119-142.
- Mueller, John. 1988. “Trends in Political Tolerance.” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 52:1-25.
- Sullivan, John L, and George E. Marcus. “A Note on Trends in Political Tolerance.” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 52:26-32.
- Kuklinski, James H., et al. 1993. “Thinking about Political Tolerance, More or Less, with More or Less Information.” Chapter 11 in *Reconsidering the Democratic Public.*, eds. George E. Marcus and Russell L. Hanson.

### **RESEARCH PAPER: DUE MONDAY, DECEMBER 3 IN CLASS.**

### **XII. Political Deliberation**

- Gastil, John. 2005. *The Deliberative Democracy Handbook: Strategies for Effective Civic Engagement in the Twenty-First Century*, selected chapters.
- Sanders, Lynn. 1997. “Against Deliberation.” *Political Theory* 25: 347-373.
- Mutz, Diana. 2006. *Hearing the Other Side: Deliberative versus Participatory Democracy*, selected chapters.

**FINAL EXAM: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 13, 1:10 – 3:10 PM**