

University Honors Seminar 395H | Ideology and Morality

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Fall Semester 2015 | Section 019

Wednesdays 1:30-4:20 | Oldfather Hall Room 538

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Course website: Accessible through <http://my.unl.edu>

INTRODUCTION

In this seminar, we will examine the historical and contemporary influence of political ideology, morality, and values on public life. We will consider questions such as: What is political ideology and where does it come from? How does it guide social and political behavior? What makes something a moral issue? How do people treat moral issues differently from non-moral issues? We will draw on theory and research from multiple disciplines, including social psychology, political psychology, political science, and neuroscience, in our attempt to answer some of these questions.

By the end of the semester, students should have a good understanding of the current state of the literature on ideology and morality. They should be able to describe the content of ideology and moral belief in the United States, and understand the underlying psychological motives that guide people's beliefs. In addition, students will gain an understanding of research methods in this area, and apply this knowledge to the development of their own novel research question in the final paper assignment. In general, this class should help students become better consumers of research, both in an academic setting and in their everyday lives.

ACE (GENERAL EDUCATION) PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS:

By passing this course, you will fulfill ACE Learning Outcome 6: "Use knowledge, theories, methods, and historical perspectives appropriate to the social sciences to understand and evaluate human behavior" or 8: "Explain ethical principles, civics, and stewardship, and their importance to society." Through this course, you will have several opportunities to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve the ACE Learning Outcome(s). Your work will be evaluated by the instructor according to the assignments described in this course syllabus. You may be asked to provide samples of your work for ACE assessment as well.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Haidt, J. (2012). *The righteous mind: Why good people are divided by politics and religion*. [ISBN: 978-0307377906]

Jost, J. T., & Sidanius, J. (Eds.). (2004). *Political psychology: Key readings*. New York, NY: Psychology Press. [ISBN: 978-1841690704]

Additional readings will be posted on the course website (Blackboard).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Reaction Papers (20%). In order to encourage critical analysis of the readings, you will be required to submit brief reaction papers (2 typed, double-spaced pages) before class. Each paper should provide a bit of background or summary of the reading, describe your thoughts about the issue, and then introduce a question or two that would be useful to discuss in class. These questions could focus on something in the readings that was

confusing, a critique of the research, implications, or really anything relevant that the readings bring to mind. Reaction papers are due by noon on the Tuesday before class, and should be submitted on Blackboard (see course schedule for specific deadlines). This will enable me to read through your thoughts and questions prior to our class meeting.

Discussion Leading (10%). Each of you will help lead discussion on one of the readings at one point during the semester. On that day, you will be prepared to summarize the assigned reading, and you will help lead discussion about that reading. I will discuss additional details of this assignment in class.

Final Paper and Presentation (50%). Your final assignment in this class will be to develop your own question related to ideology and morality, conduct a literature review, and answer the question in one of two ways: (option 1) using existing social science research and theory, or (option 2) proposing a new research study that could be conducted to answer the question. During the last few weeks of class, you will give a presentation on your ideas. The final product will be a research proposal that is 10-12 typed, double-spaced pages in length. We will step through the process in class, and I will give you additional guidance along the way. Final papers will be due Monday, December 14, by 3:00pm.

Participation and Attendance (20%). Your participation grade will be based on attendance and active participation in discussion. I will focus on both the quantity and the quality of your contributions when determining participation grades. In other words, the goal should be to contribute often, but also to make sure that any contributions are valuable to the class discussion. Completion of any in-class activities will also count toward your participation grade.

Reaction Papers (20%)	100
Discussion Leading (10%)	50
Final Paper and Presentation (50%)	250
Participation (20%)	100
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Total	500

GRADES

Final grades are based on a possible 500 points and will be based on the distribution and percentages below. In general, I don't round up or assign extra points at the end of the semester. Final grades may be curved up for everyone in the class only if the overall class average is below a B- (< 80%). I will use Blackboard throughout the semester to post grades so that you can keep track of your progress. Incompletes are only given under extreme circumstances, and at the sole discretion of the instructor.

Points (out of 500)	Percentage	Letter Grade	Points (out of 500)	Percentage	Letter Grade
485	97%	A+	335	67%	D+
465	93%	A	315	63%	D
450	90%	A-	300	60%	D-
435	87%	B+	< 300	< 60%	F
415	83%	B			
400	80%	B-			
385	77%	C+			
365	73%	C			
350	70%	C-			

COURSE POLICIES

Deadlines and Completion of Coursework

Late assignments will not be accepted. Should you miss any assignment without an approved excuse, you will receive a zero grade for that exercise. In rare circumstances, an exception may be granted to a student who provides a validated excuse to the instructor *prior to the due date*. If you foresee being unable to turn in an assignment on the assigned date, contact the instructor immediately. Excused absences for University sponsored events (field trips, athletic trips) and medical or personal emergencies *must be documented*.

Attendance, Preparation, and Participation

Regular attendance is required, and unexcused absences will hurt your participation grade. Absences will be excused only for medical/personal emergencies or university sponsored events, documentation of the absence will be required, and you must notify me in advance. Reading assignments are to be completed before class meetings. You should be prepared at all times to discuss the readings and concepts scheduled for each class period. This is genuinely necessary for your success in this course. Your participation grade and, more importantly, the quality of class discussions hinges largely upon your preparation and your informed contributions. This class will be more enjoyable and productive for all of us if everyone comes prepared!

Communication

The best way to reach me is through email. I check it often (more often than I check voicemail) and will do my best to respond to your questions within 24 hours. You are also welcome and encouraged to stop by my office during office hours, or make an appointment to meet with me at another time. I will send announcements electronically, so please check your email and the course website often.

Academic Misconduct Warning

All work must be your own. Plagiarism and all other forms of cheating outlined by the University's Student Code of Conduct (Section 4.2) will not be tolerated in this class. Cheating or plagiarism will be reported through official university channels, and the consequences will be severe. The minimum punishment is usually failure in the course. No one exam or assignment is ever worth this penalty. To avoid missing out on a good college GPA, or even your degree, keep your eyes on your own test and write your own papers.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the instructor for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, students must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 132 Canfield Administration, 472-3787 voice or TTY.

UHON 395H | Ideology and Morality (Tentative) Course Schedule

Due dates for assignments and exams, as well as required readings, are listed below. Readings should be completed prior to class. Please note that this schedule represents a tentative plan and is subject to change at the instructor's discretion. Any changes will be announced in class.

Note: J&S = Jost & Sidanius Political Psychology book

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC	READING	ASSIGNMENTS
1	W 8/26	Course Overview		
INTRODUCTION AND METHODS				
2	W 9/2	History and Discipline of Political Psychology	J&S Introduction, Reading 1, & Appendix (pp. 467-476)	Reaction Paper 1 due by noon 9/1
PERSONALITY AND POLITICS				
3	W 9/9	Authoritarianism and Mass Politics	J&S Reading 2, Reading 3, & Reading 4	Reaction Paper 2 due by noon 9/8
IDEOLOGY AND PUBLIC OPINION				
4	W 9/16	Does Ideology Exist?	J&S Reading 10 & Reading 11 Jost (2006)	Reaction Paper 3 due by noon 9/15
5	W 9/23	Cognitive-Motivational Styles and Ideological Functioning	J&S Reading 12 & Reading 13 Jost et al. (2003)	Reaction Paper 4 due by noon 9/22
SOCIAL GROUPS, PREJUDICE, AND DIVERSITY				
6	W 9/30	Social Identity and Political Ideology	J&S Reading 16 Brewer (2001)	Reaction Paper 5 due by noon 9/29
7	W 10/7	Social Dominance and System Justification	J&S Reading 17 & Reading 18 Johnson & Fujita (2012)	Reaction Paper 6 due by noon 10/6
8	W 10/14	Enduring Problems of Racial Prejudice	J&S Reading 19 & Reading 20 Valentino et al. (2002)	Reaction Paper 7 due by noon 10/13
CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE				
9	W 10/21	Evil, Violence, and Terrorism	J&S Reading 21 & Reading 22 Kruglanski et al. (2009)	Reaction Paper 8 due by noon 10/20
IDEOLOGY AND MORALITY				
10	W 10/28	Introduction to Morality: Moral Dilemmas, Moralization, Conviction, Emotion, and Flexibility	Greene (2001) Rozin (1999) Skitka (2010) Van Bavel et al. (2012)	Reaction Paper 9 due by noon 10/27
11	W 11/4	Moral Intuitions vs. Moral Reasoning	Haidt Ch. 1-4	Reaction Paper 10 due by noon 11/3; Final Paper topic due
12	W 11/11	Moral Foundations	Haidt Ch. 5-8	Reaction Paper 11 due by noon 11/10
13	W 11/18	Implications for Group Interactions	Haidt Ch. 9-12	Reaction Paper 12 due by noon 11/17; Literature Review due
FINAL PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS				
14	W 11/25	No class (Thanksgiving Break)		
15	W 12/2	Student Presentations		PowerPoint presentation due
16	W 12/9	Student Presentations		PowerPoint presentation due
***	M 12/14	Final Paper due by 3:00pm		

REFERENCES

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- Greene, J. D., Sommerville, R. B., Nystrom, L. E., Darley, J. M., & Cohen, J. D. (2001). An fMRI investigation of emotional engagement in moral judgment. *Science*, 293, 2105-2108.
- Johnson, I. R., & Fujita, K. (2012). Change we can believe in: using perceptions of changeability to promote system-change motives over system-justification motives in information search. *Psychological Science*, 23(2), 133-140. doi: 10.1177/0956797611423670
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- Kruglanski, A. W., & Fishman, S. (2009). Psychological factors in terrorism and counterterrorism: Individual, group, and organizational levels of analysis. *Social Issues and Policy Review*, 3, 1-44.
- Rozin, P. (1999). The process of moralization. *Psychological Science*, 10, 218-221.
- Skitka, L. J. (2010). The psychology of moral conviction. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 4, 267-281.
- Valentino, N. A., Hutchings, V. L., & White, I. K. (2002). Cues that matter: How political ads prime racial attitudes during campaigns. *American Political Science Review*, 96, 75-90.
- Van Bavel, J. J., Packer, D. J., Haas, I. J., & Cunningham, W. A. (2012). The importance of moral construal: Moral versus non-moral construal elicits faster, more extreme, universal evaluations of the same actions. *PLoS One*, 7(11), e48693. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0048693