

Political Science 150 | Introduction to Biology, Psychology, and Politics

University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Fall Semester 2020 | Section 700 (online)

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Virtual office hours:	Tuesday & Thursday 1:30-4pm CST (schedule at https://calendly.com/ingridjhaas/pols-150-virtual-office-hours)

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS**Course Description**

This course provides an introduction to the central theories, methods, and findings in the application of psychological and biological techniques to politics. New approaches to political science have incorporated ideas about human behavior from a variety of other fields, including (but not limited to) psychology, biology, and neuroscience. The goal of this work is to improve our understanding of how people think about politics, make political decisions, and the extent to which they engage in a variety of political behaviors (e.g., voting, protest). To understand these questions, political scientists and psychologists have drawn on research in a variety of domains, including the study of emotion, personality, and group processes, just to name a few. This course will provide an overview of the interdisciplinary study of politics at the intersection of these fields, focusing on how a basic understanding of human psychology, biology, and neuroscience can inform our thinking about politics.

This is the first course in the Biology, Psychology, and Politics area in the Department of Political Science. It is designed to introduce you to a wide array of research topics at the intersection of psychology, biology, neuroscience, and political science. If you enjoy this class and want to learn more about the intersection of biology, psychology, and politics, you might consider taking the other courses in the sequence (POLS 250, 350, 450).

Course Format

This course usually meets in-person, but due to COVID-19 has been converted to online/remote/asynchronous format. Lecture videos and course materials will be pre-recorded and made available through Canvas, and we will utilize the Yellowdig Engage discussion platform to engage with each other about the course material. All assignments and exams will be completed or submitted through Canvas and can be completed remotely. The class will follow a weekly format such that announcements and lecture materials will be posted by Monday with weekly assignments due Wednesday and discussion posts due by Friday. However, given the unique circumstances surrounding the pandemic you should feel free to reach out to me anytime if you are having trouble sticking to the weekly schedule. I plan to be available through Canvas, email, and (synchronous) virtual office hours on Zoom (see above for contact and scheduling information), and will be present in Yellowdig Discussions on a regular basis (you can also @ me on Yellowdig if you want to make sure I see a post or respond to your question).

Course Goals

1. Gain an understanding of how interdisciplinary research is conducted in the social sciences.
2. Understand situational influences on human behavior and implications for political behavior.

3. Understand human psychology, biology, and neuroscience and implications for political behavior.
4. Analyze important problems in political behavior through the lens of human psychology.

ACE 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." 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 assessments described in this course syllabus. Your work will be collected through Canvas for ACE assessment.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Textbook

Houghton, D. P. (2015). *Political Psychology: Situations, Individuals, and Cases* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge. [ISBN: 978-0415833820]

Electronic textbooks (e-textbooks) for the course are available (for free!) via UNL Libraries here:
<http://ereserves.unl.edu/contents/pols150/pols150.html>

In addition to the textbook, you are encouraged to read the politics section of at least one major national newspaper (e.g., *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*) on a daily basis. Many major newspapers offer student discounts (search for "academic rate" or "student rate").

Additional readings will be available on Canvas.

Technical Requirements

UNL email account (@huskers.unl.edu)
Canvas (recommended browsers are Firefox or Google Chrome)
Yellowdig Engage (available through Canvas)
VidGrid (<https://its.unl.edu/services/unl-academic-video/>)
Zoom (<http://unl.zoom.us>)
Word processor (e.g., Microsoft Word, Pages)
PDF reader (e.g., Adobe, Preview)
Personal computer (desktop or laptop)
High-speed Internet connection (recommended)
Webcam (recommended)

For more information on technology resources available to UNL students, check out UNL IT resources: <https://its.unl.edu/>. You can also contact them at support@nebraska.edu with problems/questions regarding any UNL-supported software (this includes UNL email, Canvas, Yellowdig, VidGrid, Zoom).

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Assessments

Exams (40%). Exams in this course will consist primarily of multiple choice questions, but will also include some short answer and essay questions. Exams will cover material from the readings, lectures,

and discussions, and each exam will cover only that section of the course. Exams will be completed remotely through Canvas and will not be proctored (no webcam or special software required). Each exam will be available for a limited period of time and will be timed such that you will need to complete the exam in one session. Exams are open-book/open-notes, so you can use your own course materials, but must be completed individually. There will be three exams available this semester, but only two exam grades will be counted toward the final grade. This means you can safely miss an exam (e.g., take Exams 1 and 2 and skip Exam 3) or complete all three exams and drop the lowest grade.

Weekly Reflection Papers (20%). This assignment will be completed throughout the semester. You will write (on average) one reflection paper per week for a total of ten papers. Each entry should be 1-2 typed pages (double-spaced) and will focus on relating a course concept to a real-world political example or current event in American politics. These should be submitted on Canvas on a weekly basis, but there will be more opportunities to submit (12) than required submissions (10), meaning that it is fine to miss 2 weeks and still get full credit for this assignment. For each reflection paper, you should submit (1) a 1-2 page Word document or PDF file to the instructor through Canvas Assignments, and (2) a shorter, 1-paragraph summary of your paper on Yellowdig Discussions to share with your classmates. More detailed instructions will be posted on Canvas.

Final Research Paper (20%). The final research paper assignment will require you to use what you learn this semester about interdisciplinary research in biology, psychology, and politics and apply this information to the current political climate. More detailed instructions will be available on Canvas. The final product will be a paper that is approximately 3-5 double-spaced pages. Final papers will be due before Wednesday, November 18, 11:59pm CST, and should be submitted through Canvas.

Yellowdig Discussions (20%). Yellowdig is an online conversation platform for POLS 150. You receive points for participating in Yellowdig conversations, and the points you receive in Yellowdig factor into your final grade. Each week, you can earn up to 1200 points. To get an "A" in Yellowdig, you must have at least 12000 points by the end of the course. If you reach the weekly max by the end of each week, you are guaranteed to get an "A" in Yellowdig. The grading period for Yellowdig will begin on Monday, August 17, 2020, and end on Friday, November 13, 2020. Your Yellowdig grade is worth 20% of your final grade.

You receive points for interacting and engaging with your peers in the following ways:

Writing a Post of at least 40 words (150 points)

Writing a Comment of at least 20 words (75 points)

Receiving a Comment on your Post (50 points)

Receiving a Reaction on your Post or Comment (25 points)

Receiving an Accolade on your Post or Comment (25-75 points)

You are encouraged to reward your peers for producing excellent content by commenting on and reacting to their Posts. In addition, I will reward particularly exemplary Posts and Comments by giving Accolades. To earn as many points as possible, you are strongly encouraged to contribute to our Yellowdig Community early and often. Just keep in mind that, once you reach the weekly max, you cannot earn additional points until the weekly reset deadline (9:00pm on Friday).

Yellowdig passes back your Yellowdig grade to Canvas as a *proportion* that represents your current pace toward getting an "A" in Yellowdig. Therefore, the points you see in Yellowdig might not match the points you see in Canvas. If any of this confuses you, just remember: *if you end every week with a Yellowdig grade of 100%, you are guaranteed to get an "A" in Yellowdig.*

Grades

Final grades for this course will be calculated based on a possible 500 points and using the distribution and percentages below. I don't round up or assign extra points at the end of the semester, so it is your responsibility to earn your desired grade. If you have any questions or concerns about your grade, you should always feel free to talk to me--the earlier in the semester the better! Final grades will be curved up for everyone in the class *only* if the overall class average is below a B- (< 80%). I will use Canvas throughout the semester to post grades so that you can keep track of your progress, and you can also calculate your grade using the point distribution below. Incompletes will be given only under extreme circumstances, and at the sole discretion of the instructor.

Exams	200
Weekly Reflection Papers	100
Final Paper	100
Yellowdig Discussions	100
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Total	500

A+ = 97-100%

A = 93-96.9%

A- = 90-92.9%

B+ = 87-89.9%

B = 83-86.9%

B- = 80-82.9%

C+ = 77-79.9%

C = 73-76.9%

C- = 70-72.9%

D+ = 67-69.9%

D = 63-66.9%

D- = 60-62.9%

F = < 59.9%

COURSE POLICIES

Deadlines and Completion of Coursework

While no in-person or synchronous attendance is required, regular engagement in the course is expected. In general, I do not accept late assignments or give make-up exams without a valid excuse. Should you miss any exam or assignment without approval from me, you will receive a zero grade for that exercise. That said, an exception may be granted to a student who contacts the instructor prior to the assignment due date or exam dates to request an extension. If you foresee being unable to turn in a paper or take an exam on the assigned dates, please contact me through Canvas or email and I will work with you. I realize these are complicated times and students may be dealing with additional constraints on their time and resources, in addition to health concerns, so I would just encourage you to reach out to me if you find you are having trouble keeping up with the course for whatever reason. Your health and safety (and that of the surrounding community) should be the top priority in the midst of a pandemic.

Communication

I will communicate with students through Canvas, so please make sure that you check Canvas on a regular basis and set up your Canvas notifications to receive emails about any course announcements or updates. You should plan to use your official @huskers.unl.edu email address for class. In general, I will plan to send weekly announcements on Monday mornings, so as not to flood your inbox with updates. But, you should feel free to contact me anytime with questions. The best way to contact me is by sending a message through Canvas, or email me directly with "POLS 150" in the subject line. I will do my best to respond to emails within 24 hours Monday-Friday. You are also welcome to stop by my Virtual Office Hours on Zoom (make an appointment at <https://calendly.com/ingridjhaas/pols-150-virtual-office-hours>) or email me with your availability to meet if my regular meeting times (TR 1:30-4pm CST) don't work for you. I will also be present on Yellowdig Discussions, but may not read every single message that gets posted, so feel free to @ me if you want to draw my attention to a specific post or have a question you'd like me to answer.

Plagiarism-Checking Software

Writing assignments in this course will be submitted online through Canvas and run through plagiarism-checking software (Turnitin). This software compares your work against previous papers and Internet sources to detect text copied from other authors. Further information about Turnitin can be found at <https://its.unl.edu/services/turnitin/> or www.turnitin.com.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Recording of Class-Related Activity

I invite all of you to join me in actively creating and contributing to a positive, productive, and respectful classroom culture. Each student contributes to an environment that shapes the learning process. Any work and/or communication that you are privy to as a member of this course should be treated as the intellectual property of the speaker/creator, and is not to be shared outside the context of this course.

Students may not make or distribute screen captures, audio/video recordings of, or livestream, any class-related activity, including lectures and presentations, without express prior written consent from me or an approved accommodation from Services for Students with Disabilities. If you have (or think you may have) a disability such that you need to record or tape class-related activities, you should contact Services for Students with Disabilities. If you have an accommodation to record class-related activities, those recordings may not be shared with any other student, whether in this course or not, or with any other person or on any other platform. Failure to follow this policy on recording or distributing class-related activities may subject you to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct.

Academic Honesty Policy

Academic honesty is essential to the existence and integrity of an academic institution. The responsibility for maintaining that integrity is shared by all members of the academic community. The University's Student Code of Conduct (<https://studentconduct.unl.edu/student-code-conduct>) addresses academic dishonesty. Students who commit acts of academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary action and are granted due process and the right to appeal any decision.

Diversity and Inclusion

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln does not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, national origin, sex (including pregnancy), religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, veteran status, marital status, and/or political affiliation.

Trespass Policy (Regents' Policy 6.4.7)

The areas of University academic, research, public service, and administrative buildings of the University used for classrooms, laboratories, faculty and staff offices, and the areas of University student residence buildings used for student living quarters are not open to the general public. Any person not authorized to be or remain in any such building area will be deemed to be trespassing on University property and may be cited and subject to prosecution for criminal trespass in violation of Neb. Rev. Stat., § 28-520 or § 28-521.

Face Coverings Syllabus Statement

As of July 17, 2020, and until further notice, all University of Nebraska–Lincoln (UNL) faculty, staff, students, and visitors (including contractors, service providers, and others) are required to use a facial covering at all times when indoors except under specific conditions outlined in the COVID 19 face covering policy found at: <https://covid19.unl.edu/face-covering-policy>. This statement is meant to clarify classroom policies for face coverings:

To protect the health and well-being of the University and wider community, UNL has implemented a policy requiring all people, including students, faculty, and staff, to wear a face covering that covers the mouth and nose while on campus. The classroom is a community, and as a community, we seek to maintain the health and safety of all members by wearing face coverings when in the classroom. Failure to comply with this policy is interpreted as a disruption of the classroom and may be a violation of UNL's Student Code of Conduct.

Individuals who have health or medical reasons for not wearing face coverings should work with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (for students) or the Office of Faculty/Staff Disability Services (for faculty and staff) to establish accommodations to address the health concern. Students who prefer not to wear a face covering should work with their advisor to arrange a fully online course schedule that does not require their presence on campus.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Services for Students with Disabilities (<https://www.unl.edu/ssd/home>)

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options privately. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). If you are eligible for services and register with their office, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so they can be implemented in a timely manner. SSD contact information: 117 Louise Pound Hall; 402-472-3787.

Writing Center (<https://www.unl.edu/writing/home>)

The Writing Center can provide you with meaningful support as you write for this class as well as every course in which you enroll. Trained undergraduate and graduate peer consultants are available to talk with you about all forms of communication. You are welcome to bring in everything from lab reports, presentations, and research papers to cover letters, application essays, and graduate theses and dissertations. Writing Center Consultants can work with you at any stage of the writing process, from brainstorming and organizing your ideas through polishing a final draft.

In 2020-21, there are two ways you can connect with a Consultant: Online (a real-time, video conversation) and eTutoring (email feedback). To learn more about these options and view video tutorials, please visit our Online Writing Services Page (<https://www.unl.edu/writing/online-writing-center-services>). You can sign up any time by visiting unl.mywconline.com. For more information about the Writing Center, please visit unl.edu/writing.

Academic Support Services

You can schedule free appointments for individual academic coaching with First-Year Experience and Transition Program staff through MyPLAN. You can also take advantage of study stops--which provide individual and group study with learning consultants in a variety of disciplines--and free group workshops on topics such as time management, goal setting, test preparation, and reading strategies. See success.unl.edu for schedules and more information.

Counseling and Psychological Services

UNL offers a variety of options to students to aid them in dealing with stress and adversity. Counseling and Psychological & Services (CAPS; <https://caps.unl.edu>) is a multidisciplinary team of psychologists and counselors that works collaboratively with Nebraska students to help them explore their feelings and thoughts and learn helpful ways to improve their mental, psychological and emotional well-being when issues arise. CAPS can be reached by calling 402-472-7450. Big Red Resilience & Well-Being (BRRWB; <https://resilience.unl.edu/home>) provides one-on-one well-being coaching to any student who wants to enhance their well-being. Trained well-being coaches help students create and be grateful for positive experiences, practice resilience and self-compassion, and find support as they need it. BRRWB can be reached by calling 402-472-8770.

POLS 150 | (TENTATIVE) COURSE SCHEDULE

Topics, readings, and assessments are listed below on the course schedule. All due dates are in Central Standard Time (CST). In general, the course will follow a weekly schedule such that I recommend reading, watching, and reviewing course material on Monday/Tuesday, submitting weekly assignments on Wednesday, and responding to discussion posts on Thursday/Friday. Please note that this schedule represents a tentative plan and is subject to change at the instructor's discretion. Any changes will be announced on Canvas.

Note: All reading assignments come from the Houghton *Political Psychology* textbook unless otherwise noted. Any additional readings will be posted on Canvas.

WEEK	DATES	TOPIC	READING	ASSESSMENTS
1	8/17-8/21	Syllabus and Course Introduction	Syllabus and Course Schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Information Survey • Introduce Yourself on Yellowdig
2	8/24-8/28	Introduction to, History of, and Research Methods in Political Psychology	H Ch. 1-2 McGuire (1993) Marcus (2012) Ch. 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection Paper 1 (due W 8/26 11:59pm) • Yellowdig Discussions (due F 8/28 9pm)
SECTION 1: THE SITUATION				
3	8/31-9/4	Behaviorism and Free Will	H Ch. 3 Cave (2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection Paper 2 (due W 9/2 11:59pm) • Yellowdig Discussions (due F 9/4 9pm)
4	9/7-9/11	Conformity, Compliance, and Obedience	H Ch. 4 Kelman & Hamilton (1989) Ch. 1,2,8,9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection Paper 3 (due W 9/9 11:59pm) • Yellowdig Discussions (due F 9/11 9pm)
5	9/14-9/18	The Power of the Situation	H Ch. 5 Zimbardo (2007) Ch. 10,14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection Paper 4 (due W 9/16 11:59pm) • Yellowdig Discussions (due F 9/18 9pm) • Exam 1 (available on 9/17-9/18)
SECTION 2: THE PERSON				
6	9/21-9/25	Personality and Political Ideology	H Ch. 7 H Ch. 8 pp. 113-127 Haidt (2012) Ch. 1,5,7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection Paper 5 (due W 9/23 11:59pm) • Yellowdig Discussions (due F 9/25 9pm)
7	9/28-10/2	Political Cognition	H Ch. 9 Taber & Young (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection Paper 6 (due W 9/30 11:59pm) • Yellowdig Discussions (due F 10/2 9pm)
8	10/5-10/9	Attitudes and Emotion	Katz (1960) Sweeney & Gruber (1984) H Ch. 10 Westen (2007) Ch. 1-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection Paper 7 (due W 10/7 11:59pm) • Yellowdig Discussions (due 10/9 9pm)

WEEK	DATES	TOPIC	READING	ASSESSMENTS
9	10/12-10/16	Biopolitics and Political Neuroscience	H Ch. 11 pp. 162-184 Hibbing et al. (2014) Ch. 5,7 Haas (2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflection Paper 8 (due W 10/14 11:59pm) Yellowdig Discussions (due F 10/16 9pm) Exam 2 (available on 10/15-10/16)
SECTION 3: UNDERSTANDING POLITICS AS PEOPLE IN SITUATIONS				
10	10/19-10/23	Political Communication	H Ch. 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflection Paper 9 (due W 10/21 11:59pm) Yellowdig Discussions (due F 10/23 9pm)
11	10/26-10/30	Racism and Political Intolerance	H Ch. 15 Sidanius & Pratto (1999) Ch. 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflection Paper 10 (due W 10/28 11:59pm) Yellowdig Discussions (due F 10/30 9pm)
12	11/2-11/6	Voting Behavior (Presidential Election)	H Ch. 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflection Paper 11 (due W 11/4 11:59pm) Yellowdig Discussions (due F 11/6 9pm)
13	11/9-11/13	Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict	H Ch. 14 Tajfel & Turner (1986)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflection Paper 12 (due W 11/11 11:59pm) Yellowdig Discussions (due F 11/13 9pm) Exam 3 (available on 11/12-11/13)
14	11/16-11/20			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Research Paper (due W 11/18 11:59pm)

Reading List

- Cave, S. (2016 June). There's no such thing as free will. *The Atlantic*.
- Haas, I. J. (2016). Political neuroscience. In J. R. Absher & J. Cloutier (Eds.), *Neuroimaging Personality, Social Cognition, and Character: Traits and Mental States in the Brain* (pp. 355-370). Cambridge, MA: Academic Press.
- Haidt, J. (2012). *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion*: Pantheon.
- Hibbing, J. R., Smith, K. B., & Alford, J. R. (2014). *Predisposed: Liberals, Conservatives, and the Biology of Political Differences*. Routledge.
- Katz, D. (1960). The functional approach to the study of attitudes. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 24, 163-204.
- Kelman, H. C., & Hamilton, V. L. (1989). *Crimes of Obedience: Towards a Social Psychology of Authority And Responsibility*. Yale University Press.
- Marcus, G. (2012). *Political Psychology: Neuroscience, Genetics, and Politics*. Oxford University Press.
- McGuire, W. J. (1993). The poly-psychology relationship: Three phases of a long affair. In S. Iyengar & W. J. McGuire (Eds.), *Explorations in Political Psychology* (pp. 9-35). Duke University Press.
- Sidanius, J., & Pratto, F. (1999). *Social Dominance: An Intergroup Theory of Social Hierarchy and Oppression*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Sweeney, P. D., & Gruber, K. L. (1984). Selective exposure: Voter information preferences and the Watergate affair. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 46, 1208-1221.
- Taber, C. S., & Young, E. (2013). Political information processing. In L. Huddy, D. O. Sears & J. S. Levy (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1986). The social identity theory of intergroup behavior. In S. Worchel & W. Austin (Eds.), *Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (pp. 7-24). Chicago: Nelson.
- Westen, D. (2007). *The Political Brain: The Role of Emotion in Deciding the Fate of the Nation*. New York: Public Affairs.
- Zimbardo, P. G. (2007). *The Lucifer Effect: Understanding how Good People Turn Evil*. Random House.