

Political Science 350 | Issues in Biology, Psychology, and Politics
 University of Nebraska-Lincoln
 Spring Semester 2021 | Section 700 (online distance)

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Virtual office hours:	Monday & Wednesday 9-11am CST (schedule at https://calendly.com/ingridjhaas/pols-350-virtual-office-hours)

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to increase your understanding of the role of emotion in politics. Contrary to classic theories of political science suggesting that decisions are made on the basis of rational cost-benefit analysis, recent work in the field of political psychology has shown that political decisions are not immune from the influence of emotion. Rather, that political decisions are subject to the same emotional and affective processes that guide all human behavior. We will discuss the interplay and relative influence of cognition and emotion as well as classic and contemporary theories of emotion. We will explore recent research on the impact of emotion on political attitudes and opinions, political behavior, political campaigns, and political advertising, and discuss current theories of the role that emotions play in politics. Finally, we will consider the implications—what does this mean for candidates who are trying to get elected? Citizens who are trying to engage in political discourse? This course looks primarily at the impact of emotion at the individual level (how emotions influence individual thoughts about politics), but we will also talk a bit about emotion and politics at the group level (how emotion leads to shifts in American public opinion). To accomplish these goals, we will draw on theory and research from political science and several other disciplines, including psychology, neuroscience, and philosophy.

Course Format

This course usually meets in-person, but due to COVID-19 has been converted to online distance (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. Understand the relative influence of emotion and cognition on human decision making.
2. Analyze contemporary American politics through the lens of emotion and politics research.

3. Apply emotion and politics research to real-world political issues, making recommendations for how this research can be leveraged to effect positive change.

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

Textbooks

Marcus, G. E. (2012). *Political psychology: Neuroscience, genetics, and politics*. New York: Oxford University Press. [ISBN: 978-0195370645]

Neuman, W. R., Marcus, G. E., Crigler, A. N., & MacKuen, M. (2007). *The affect effect: Dynamics of emotion in political thinking and behavior*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. [ISBN: 978-0226574424]

Westen, D. (2008). *The political brain: The role of emotion in deciding the fate of the nation*. New York: Public Affairs. [ISBN: 978-1586485733]

Electronic textbooks (e-textbooks) for the course are available (for free!) via UNL Libraries here: <http://ereserves.unl.edu/contents/pols350/pols350.html> (Note: The Affect Effect is available as an ebook and chapters from the other two textbooks will be made available on a weekly basis.)

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

Midterm Exam (20%). There will be a midterm exam in this course. The exam will test your knowledge of the course material and ability to think critically about the topics we cover and will contain primarily short answer and essay questions. The exam will be completed remotely through Canvas and will not be proctored (no webcam or special software required). The 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. The exam will be open-book/open-notes, so you can use your own course materials, but must be completed individually.

Weekly Reaction Papers (30%). In order to encourage critical analysis of the readings, you will be required to submit brief reaction papers approximately once a week for a total of ten papers. Each paper should be approximately 2 typed pages (double-spaced) and provide a bit of background or summary of the reading, describe your thoughts about the issue, and then introduce a question for class discussion. 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. Papers will be submitted through Canvas on a weekly basis, but there will be more opportunities to submit (11) than required submissions (10), meaning that it is fine to miss a week and still get full credit for this assignment. For each reaction paper, you should submit (1) a 2 page Word document or PDF file to the instructor through Canvas for grading, and (2) a shorter, 1 paragraph summary of your paper and discussion question on Yellowdig Discussions for your classmates to read and respond to. More detailed instructions will be posted on Canvas.

Final Presentation (10%). At the end of the semester, you will give a virtual presentation designed to help you synthesize what you've learned this semester and apply it to the 2020 U.S. Presidential election. Students will present their ideas during the second to last week of class by recording video presentations to share with the instructor and their classmates (through Canvas and Yellowdig). This assignment will serve as the basis for your final paper assignment, which will develop these ideas in greater detail. Details of the assignment will be posted on Canvas.

Final Research Paper (20%). The final paper assignment will require you to use what you have learned about emotion and politics and apply this information to the 2020 U.S. Presidential election. Details of the assignment will be posted on Canvas. The final product will be a paper that is 5-7 double-spaced pages. Final papers will be due Wednesday, 4/28, by 11:59pm CST, and should be submitted on Canvas.

Yellowdig Discussions (20%). Yellowdig is an online conversation platform for POLS 350. 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, January 25, 2021, and end on Friday, April 23, 2021. 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 CST 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.

Midterm Exam	100
Weekly Reaction Papers	150
Final Presentation	50
Final Research Paper	100
Yellowdig Discussions	100

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 350" in the subject line. I will do my best to respond to emails within 24 hours Monday-Friday during normal business hours. You are also welcome to stop by my Virtual Office Hours on Zoom (make an appointment at <https://calendly.com/ingridjhaas/pols-350-virtual-office-hours>) or email me with your availability to meet if my regular meeting times (MW 9-11am 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 350 | (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 questions and 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 in class.

Please note--reading assignments are labeled as follows:

- **Marcus:** Marcus, G. E. (2012). *Political psychology: Neuroscience, genetics, and politics*. New York: Oxford University Press. [ISBN: 978-0195370645]
- **TAE:** Neuman, W. R., Marcus, G. E., Crigler, A. N., & MacKuen, M. (2007). *The affect effect: Dynamics of emotion in political thinking and behavior*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. [ISBN: 978-0226574424]
- **Westen:** Westen, D. (2008). *The political brain: The role of emotion in deciding the fate of the nation*. New York: Public Affairs. [ISBN: 978-1586485733]

WEEK	DATES	TOPIC	READING	ASSESSMENTS
1	1/25-1/29	Syllabus and Course Introduction The Political Brain	Syllabus and Course Schedule Westen Ch. 1-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Information Survey • Introduce Yourself on Yellowdig
SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION TO EMOTION AND POLITICS				
2	2/1-2/5	Introduction to Political Psychology The Political Brain (continued)	Marcus Ch. 1,3 Westen Ch. 4-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaction Paper 1 (due W 2/3 11:59pm) • Yellowdig Discussions (due F 2/5 9pm)
3	2/8-2/12	Research Methods in Political Psychology The Political Brain (continued)	Marcus Ch. 2 Westen Ch. 7-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaction Paper 2 (due W 2/10 11:59pm) • Yellowdig Discussions (due F 2/12 9pm)
4	2/15-2/19	Neuroscience and Emotion The Political Brain (continued)	Marcus Ch. 4 Westen Ch. 9-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaction Paper 3 (due W 2/17 11:59pm) • Yellowdig Discussions (due F 2/19 9pm)
5	2/22-2/26	Mind, Brain, & Consciousness The Political Brain (continued)	Marcus Ch. 5-6 Lang (2013) Westen Ch. 11-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaction Paper 4 (due W 2/24 11:59pm) • Yellowdig Discussions (due F 2/26 9pm)
6	3/1-3/5	Personality and Person Perception The Political Brain (continued)	Marcus Ch. 7-8 Todorov et al. (2005) Westen Ch. 13-15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaction Paper 5 (due W 3/3 11:59pm) • Yellowdig Discussions (due F 3/5 9pm) • Midterm Exam (available on 3/4-3/5)
SECTION 2: CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH AND THEORY				
7	3/8-3/12	Political Cognition and Political Neuroscience	TAE Ch. 3-4 Spezio et al. (2008) Haas (2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaction Paper 6 (due W 3/10 11:59pm) • Yellowdig Discussions (due F 3/12 9pm)
8	3/15-3/19	The Primacy of Affect	TAE Ch. 5 Taber & Lodge (2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaction Paper 7 (due W 3/17 11:59pm) • Yellowdig Discussions (due F 3/19 9pm)

WEEK	DATES	TOPIC	READING	ASSESSMENTS
9	3/22-3/26	Affective Intelligence Theory	TAE Ch. 6-8 MacKuen et al. (2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaction Paper 8 (due W 3/24 11:59pm) • Yellowdig Discussions (due F 3/26 9pm)
10	3/29-4/2	Negative Emotions: Fear, Anxiety, Anger, & Disgust	TAE Ch. 9 Clifford & Jerit (2018) Suhay & Erisen (2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaction Paper 9 (due W 3/31 11:59pm) • Yellowdig Discussions (due F 4/2 9pm)
11	4/5-4/9	Positive Emotions: Enthusiasm and Hope	TAE Ch. 10 Kosmidis & Theocharis (2020) Phoenix (in press)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaction Paper 10 (due W 4/7 11:59pm) • Yellowdig Discussions (due F 4/9 9pm)
12	4/12-4/16	Political Campaigns	TAE Ch. 15 Carey (2012) Marantz (2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaction Paper 11 (due W 4/14 11:59pm) • Yellowdig Discussions (due F 4/16 9pm)
13	4/19-4/23	Final Presentations		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Presentations (due M 4/19 – R 4/22) • Yellowdig Discussions (due F 4/23 9pm)
14	4/26-4/30	Final Paper		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Research Paper (due W 4/28 11:59pm)

Reading List

- Carey, B. (2012, November 12). Academic 'dream team' helped Obama's effort. *The New York Times*.
- Clifford, S., & Jerit, J. (2018). Disgust, anxiety, and political learning in the face of threat. *American Journal of Political Science*, 62, 266-279.
- 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.
- Theocharis, Y., & Kosmidis, S. (2020). Can Social Media Incivility Induce Enthusiasm? *Public Opinion Quarterly*. doi: 10.1093/poq/nfaa014
- Lang, J. (2013, January/February). Awakening. *The Atlantic*.
- MacKuen, M., Wolak, J., Keele, L., & Marcus, G. E. (2010). Civic engagements: Resolute partisanship or reflective deliberation. *American Journal of Political Science*, 54, 440-458.
- Marantz, A. (2020, March 2). The man behind Trumps Facebook juggernaut. *The New Yorker*.
- Marcus, G. E. (2012). *Political psychology: Neuroscience, genetics, and politics*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Neuman, W. R., Marcus, G. E., Crigler, A., & MacKuen, M. (Eds.). (2007). *The affect effect: Dynamics of emotion in political thinking and behavior*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Phoenix, D. (in press). Black hope floats: Racial emotion regulation and the effects of hope on Black political participation. *Journal of Social and Political Psychology*.
- Spezio, M. L., Rangel, A., Alvarez, R. M., O'Doherty, J. P., Mattes, K., Todorov, A., et al. (2008). A neural basis for the effect of candidate appearance on election outcomes. *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*, 3(4), 344-352.
- Suhay, E., & Erisen, C. (2018). The Role of Anger in the Biased Assimilation of Political Information. *Political Psychology*. doi: 10.1111/pops.12463
- Taber, C. S., & Lodge, M. (2006). Motivated skepticism in the evaluation of political beliefs. *American Journal of Political Science*, 50, 755-769.
- Todorov, A., Mandisodza, A. N., Goren, A., & Hall, C. C. (2005). Inferences of competence from faces predict election outcomes. *Science*, 308, 1623-1626.
- Westen, D. (2007). *The political brain: The role of emotion in deciding the fate of the nation*. New York: Public Affairs.