

The Psychology of Politics, Public Opinion and Attitudes Formation

Carolin Rapp
Assistant Professor

Spring 2020

E-mail: cara@ifs.ku.dk

Office Hours: Thursdays 13:15-14:15

Office: 18.2.22

Web: www.carolinrapp.com

Class Hours: Thursdays 09:00-12:00

Class Room: CSS 22-0-19

Course Description

At the core of this course lies the question of what political scientists can learn from psychological theories and research approaches to explain attitude formation and individual behavior in the political arena. It will integrate several general themes of psychological research – e.g. personality, emotions, cognition, and evolution – to the general study of political behaviors and phenomena. These general themes will guide a detailed understanding of several specific topics in politics, including the ‘framing’ of political issues, the development and expression of prejudice, the occurrence of wars, and the shaping of ideology and of party preferences. We thereby focus on both the general public and political elites.

To address these issues, the course engages with advanced methodological issues and questions, such as survey experiments and questions of measuring psychological traits. This is necessary to build a bridge between the application of political psychological theories and solutions to real-world problems in contemporary workplaces.

Required Materials

- All course material is available on <https://absalon.ku.dk/courses/38198>
 - Make sure that you regularly check your KU email for announcements, deadlines, etc.
- Most of the texts from the syllabus are available on Absalon. If a text is not in the literature folder, it is available through the library
- All slides will be uploaded to Absalon after the seminar

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO)

Knowledge

1. Students will enlarge their knowledge of the broader and more specific theories guiding research in political psychology

2. Students will be able to understand and critically reflect different concepts in the broad research area of political psychology
3. Students will be able to critically reflect methods and measures, in particular, survey methods used in quantitative research

Skills

1. Students will gain the ability transfer scientific knowledge to political and social examples
2. Students will gain the ability to analyse specific cases and evaluate the empirical, concrete, and complex challenges within the field of political psychology
3. Students will be able to design a survey question addressing topics of political psychology
4. Students will gain the ability to critically reflect the readings and to elaborate fruitful discussion out of the weekly readings

Competencies

1. Students will be able to quickly present new knowledge and to guide a discussion/activity
2. Students will be able to differentiate between concepts, theories, and methods and to critically assess their added value for both research and society
3. Students will be able to independently find a research topic and to conduct an empirical study to answer their research question

Course Structure

ECTS

In this course you receive 15 ECTS. One ECTS is equivalent to 25 to 30 hours of work. This yields 375 to 450 hours of work. An exemplary distribution of the ECTS is listed below.

Presence in seminar	14*4h	56 hours
Reading of texts	41 texts, 1-2 hours per text	41-82 hours
Weekly hand-in	approx. 1 hour	12-14 hours
Preparation of presentation	once	20 hours
Preparation of research design	once	15 hours
Peer-feedback	once	2 hours
Final paper	hopefully once	200 hours

Basic Course Literature

Most of the readings are based on scientific articles. The following books cover the background knowledge:

- Huddy, Leonie, David O. Sears, and Jack S. Levy. The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Stenner, Karen. 2005. The Authoritarian Dynamic. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Druckman, James N., Donald P. Green, James H. Kuklinski, and Arthur Lupia. 2011. Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Assessments

Exam Requirements

To pass the final exams, each student has to:

1. hand-in a short paper, i.e. 1-2 pages max., about **each** of the weekly readings (see Assignments in Absalon)
2. each one has to hand this in each week - you are only allowed to miss it once.
 - Questions that should be addressed:
 - (a) What is **your** most important take-away from the paper?
 - (b) What would you **criticise** about the paper?
 - (c) What are your **muddiest points** about the papers?
 - (d) Add one potential discussion question!.
 - Deadline: **Wednesdays 12:00**
 - Comments will be discussed at the beginning of each seminar
3. Research design hand-in - this should cover the basic ideas for your final assignment, i.e. research question, theory, concepts, and methods
 - feedback in form of peer-review
 - Deadline research design: **May 11**
 - Deadline feedback: **May 14**
4. Short *impulse* presentation
 - group presentation of 5-10 minutes about a **self-selected** paper that fits the topic of the week
 - main points of the paper should be presented
 - presentation should initiate a critical discussion, i.e. discussion question at the end **or** development of a group activity (padlet, debate etc.)
 - information about the presentation and the selected text should be sent to me beforehand (latest Wednesday 14:00 before the seminar)
 - you are welcome to come by my office or ask me during the breaks if you need help or feedback

Final Exam

Written assignment (seminar paper)

- we start working on this during the seminar as the deadline is at the end of the semester
- you can write alone or in groups

Criteria for exam assessment

The assessment is aligned with the intended learning outcomes (ILOs).

Course Policies

Will be collectively decided on in the first session of the course and made available through a google docs document.

Course schedule

The schedule is tentative and subject to change.

Session 1 – February 6: Introduction to Political Psychology

There are no assigned readings for today. During today's class, we will review the syllabus, introduce ourselves, and discuss our expectations for this course. In addition, we will identify key themes and approaches within the study of political psychology. We will conclude by noting where this course fits in the larger field of political psychology.

Session 2 – February 13: Genetics and Evolutionary Psychology

- Funk, Carolyn L. 2013. Genetic Foundations of Political Behavior. In L. Huddy, D.O. Sears, and J.S. Levy, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Alford, John R., Carolyn L. Funk, and John R. Hibbing. 2005. Are Political Orientations Genetically Transmitted? *American Political Science Review* 99: 153-167.
- Fowler, James H. and Darren Schreiber. 2008. Biology, politics, and the emerging science of Human Nature". *Science* 322 : pp. 912-914.
- Klemmensen, Robert, Peter K Hatemi, Sara Binzer Hobolt, Inge Petersen, Axel Skytthe and Asbjørn S Nørgaard. (2012). The genetics of political participation, civic duty, and political efficacy across cultures: Denmark and the United States. *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 24(3): 409-427

Session 3 – February 20: Personality: Authoritarianism, Social Dominance Orientation, and the Big Five

- Stenner, Karen. 2005. *The Authoritarian Dynamic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 2-4, and 9.
- Pratto, Felicia, Jim Sidanius, Lisa M. Stallworth, and Bertram F. Malle. 1994. Social Dominance Orientation: A Personality Variable Predicting Social and Political Attitudes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 67(4): 741-763.
- Mondak, Jeffrey J. 2010. *Personality and the Foundations of Political Behavior*. Chapter 2: The Big Five Approach, pg. 24-65.

No seminar on February 27 → moved to February 28

Session 4 – February 28: Emotions (13:00-17:00)

- Brader, Ted, and Marcus, George E. 2013. "Emotion and Political Psychology." In *Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*. 2013. Leonie Huddy, David O. Sears, and Jack Levy (Eds.). New York: Oxford University Press. 2nd. Edition. (pp. 165-204).
- Leonie Huddy, Stanley Feldman, Charles Taber, and Gallya Lahav. Threat, anxiety, and support of antiterrorism policies. *American journal of political science*, 49(3):593-608, 2005.
- Valentino, Nicholas A., Ted Brader, Eric W. Groenendyk, Krysha Gregorowicz, and Vincent L. Hutchings. 2011. "Election Night's Alright for Fighting: The Role of Emotions in Political Participation." *Journal of Politics* 73 (1): 156-170.

- Albertson, Bethany, and Shana Kushner Gadarian. 2015. *Anxious Politics. Democratic Citizenship in a Threatening World*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1 “Anxiety in Democratic Life”.

Session 5 – March 5: The personality of political leaders

- Nørgaard, A. S., and Klemmensen, R. (2018). The personalities of Danish MPs: Trait-and aspect-level differences. *Journal of personality*.
- Nai, Alessandro, and Ferran Martínez i Coma. 2019. “The Personality of Populists: Provocateurs, Charismatic Leaders, or Drunken Dinner Guests?” *West European Politics* 42 (7): 1337-67.
- Brummer, Klaus. 2016. “Fiasco Prime Ministers’: Leaders’ Beliefs and Personality Traits as Possible Causes for Policy Fiascos.” *Journal of European Public Policy* 23 (5): 702-17.
- <https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/beautiful-minds/taking-sex-differences-in-personality-serious>

Session 6 – March 12: The psychology of followership and leader preferences

- Laustsen, L. 2016. “Choosing the Right Candidate: Observational and Experimental Evidence that Conservatives and Liberals Prefer Powerful and Warm Candidate Personalities, Respectively.” *Political Behavior* (online first): pp. 1-26 (26 pages).
- Antonakis, J. and O. Dalgas. (2009). “Predicting Elections: Child’s Play!”. *Science*, 323.
- Todorov, Alexander, Anesu N. Mandisodza, Amir Goren, and Crystal C. Hall. 2005. “Inferences of Competence from Faces Predict Election Outcomes”. *Science* 308, 1623-1626.
- Petersen, Michael B., and Lasse Laustsen. 2020. “Dominant Leaders and the Political Psychology of Followership.” *Current Opinion in Psychology* 33:136-41.

Session 7 – March 19: National identification, Patriotism, and Nationalism

- Osborne, Danny, Petar Milojev, and Chris G. Sibley. 2017. “Authoritarianism and National Identity: Examining the Longitudinal Effects of SDO and RWA on Nationalism and Patriotism.” *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 31 (7):
- Zmigrod, Leor, Peter J. Rentfrow, and Trevor W. Robbins. 2018. “Cognitive Underpinnings of Nationalistic Ideology in the Context of Brexit.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 115 (19): E4532-E4540.
- Huddy, Leonie, and Nadia Khatib. 2007. “American Patriotism, National Identity, and Political Involvement.” *American Journal of Political Science* 51 (1): 63-77.
- Kimmelmeier, Markus, and David G. Winter. 2008. “Sowing Patriotism, but Reaping Nationalism? Consequences of Exposure to the American Flag.” *Political Psychology* 29 (6): 859-79.

Session 8 – March 26: Ethnocentrism, bigotry, and prejudice

- Posner, Daniel N. 2004. The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi. *American Political Science Review* 98 (4): pp. 529–545.
- Arkes, Hal R. and Philip E. Tetlock. 2004. Attributions of Implicit Prejudice, or ‘Would Jesse Jackson ‘Fail’ the Implicit Association Test’. *Psychological Inquiry* 15 (4): pp. 257–278.
- Tajfel, Henri. 1969. Cognitive aspects of prejudice. *Journal of Social Issues*, 25: pp. 79–97
- Kam, C. D., and Kinder, D. R. (2012). Ethnocentrism as a Short-Term Force in the 2008 American Presidential Election. *American Journal of Political Science*, 56(2), 326-340

Session 9 – April 02: Cognitive Psychology and Implicit Attitudes

- <https://soundcloud.com/lsepodcasts/thinking-fast-and-slow-daniel>
- Petersen, Michael B., and Lene Aarøe. 2013. “Politics in the Mind’s Eye: Imagination as a Link between Social and Political Cognition.” *The American Political Science Review* 107 (2): 275–93.
- Haidt, Jonathan. 2001. The emotional dog and its rational tail: A social intuitionist approach to moral judgment. *Psychological Review* 108 (4): pp. 814–834.
- Raccuia, Livio. 2016. “Single-Target Implicit Association Tests (ST-IAT) Predict Voting Behavior of Decided and Undecided Voters in Swiss Referendums.” *PloS one* 11 (10): e0163872.

Session 10 – April 03: Methods and survey question design workshop (from 09:30-15:00)

- Sniderman, Paul M. 2018. “Some Advances in the Design of Survey Experiments.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 21 (1): 259-75.
- Berinsky, Adam J. 2017. “Measuring Public Opinion with Surveys.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 20 (1): 309-29

Easter break and no seminar on April 16

Session 11 – April 23: Political Tolerance

- Kuklinski, James H., Ellen Riggle, Victor Ottati, Norbert Schwarz, and Robert S. Wyer. 1991. “The Cognitive and Affective Bases of Political Tolerance Judgments.” *American Journal of Political Science* 35 (1): 1-27.
- Petersen, Michael, Rune Slothuus, Rune Stubager, and Lise Togeby. 2011. “Freedom for All? The Strength and Limits of Political Tolerance.” *British Journal of Political Science* 41 (3): 581–97.
- Freitag, Markus, and Carolin Rapp. 2014. “The Personal Foundations of Political Tolerance towards Immigrants.” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 41 (3): 351–373.

Optional – April 24: Workshop on collected data – preliminary findings

Session 12 – April 30: Heuristics

- Petersen, Michael B., Rune Slothuus, Rune Stubager, and Lise Togeby. 2011. "Deservingness versus values in public opinion on welfare: The automaticity of the deservingness heuristic." *European Journal of Political Research* 50 (1): 24–52.
- Lau, Richard R., and David P. Redlawsk. 2001. Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Cognitive Heuristics in Political Decision-Making. *American Journal of Political Science* 45: 951–971.
- Steenbergen, Marco R., and Céline Colombo. 2018. "Heuristics in Political Behavior." In the *Oxford Handbook of Behavioral Political Science*.

Session 13 – May 7: Political Psychology in Context

- Funder, David C. (2008). Persons, situations and person-situation interactions. In O. P. John, R. W. Robin and L. A. Pervin (Eds.), *Handbook of personality: Theory and research* (pp. 568–580). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Newman, Benjamin J., Yamil Velez, Todd K. Hartman, and Alexa Bankert. 2015. "Are Citizens "Receiving the Treatment"? Assessing a Key Link in Contextual Theories of Public Opinion and Political Behavior." *Political Psychology* 36 (1): 123–31.
- Freitag, Markus, and Kathrin Ackermann. 2016. "Direct Democracy and Institutional Trust: Relationships and Differences Across Personality Traits." *Political Psychology* 37 (5): 707-23.
- Gary King. 1996. "Why Context Should Not Count." *Political Geography*, 15, Pp. 159–164.

Session 14 – May 14: Research Design Presentations

- Short presentations of your research design/seminar paper
- peer-feedback from one discussant