General structure: The objective of this seminar, offered in alternate years, is twofold. One is to review and discuss the major current literature in political psychology. The second is to examine in some depth selected specific research areas of special current activity.

Note: There are no formal prerequisites to this course. Check with me if you have any questions about appropriate background.

Assignments:

The course is structured in terms of “units,” typically two or three per week, each typically with three papers each on a particular topic. In most cases they have been selected as posing some controversy or debate that can frame our discussion. The readings are generally a mix of general review and/or Handbook articles, and quantitative empirical studies.

There are three kinds of assignments for the course.

(1) Required readings expected of everyone are marked by an asterisk (*). Other citations are for reference.

(2) Four brief (two to three pages each) papers will be written over the course of the quarter, each on a different “unit” from different weeks. The papers would generally be better in a “compare and contrast” than in a purely descriptive style. For example, what is the debate about? What are the most pertinent data for resolving any differences? What is your perspective on where any debate stands? Students should sign up for specific units the first day of class so that we get a good spread of expertise rather than everyone piling up on a few units. These papers are due by noon the Monday before class, preferably in hard copy in my mailbox in Rolfe Hall 2134.

(3) A final term paper on a topic encompassed by the course is described at the back of the syllabus. It will take the form of a somewhat expanded/in-depth treatment of a topic explicitly taken up in one week of the class. The topic should be cleared with me in advance by email by the end of the seventh week, with a 200 word abstract of your plan, explicitly specifying how it links to the course (e.g., “sexual behavior of the Rhodesian Ridgeback” may make a great dissertation, but perhaps not a term paper for this course).
Availability of readings for purchase:


Possible background readings:


Readings marked “W” will be on course website. The others are available online through the UCLA library.

WEEK 1: BACKGROUND (April 3)

On a separate memo posted on the website is material that would be included in a broad survey course on political psychology and so is cited here for completeness. We will go over this material briefly in Week 1. Familiarity with the starred reading would be useful.


WEEK 2: EARLY APPROACHES UPDATED (April 10).

Political Socialization


The diversity challenge: Social identity and intergroup relations on the college campus (pp. 65-99). New York: Russell Sage Foundation. (W)


Genetics


Comment: The human-genetics challenge to social learning theories of attitude acquisition.


Personality and politics


Comment: Reawakening of authoritarianism. Compare treatments of personality and politics by psychologists and political scientists.

WEEK 3 (April 17): POLITICAL INFORMATION PROCESSING

**Dual system processing**


Comment: The return of non-conscious processes as a challenge to rational choice.


**Emotions**


Comment: After the long era of preoccupation with cognition (the 1960's through the 1990's), emotions and motivation have re-emerged in both social psychology and political behavior research.


Mass Communication


Comment: The dreaded 'minimal effects model' as a primary foil, and the media as telling people 'what to think about' rather than 'what to think,' challenged.


WEEK 4: SYMBOLIC POLITICS (April 24)

Ideology


Comment: Compare political scientists' treatment with that of psychologists.


Individual self-interest


Comment: Another set of challenges to rational choice, which Chong defends.


Geography and “racial threat.”


Comment: Another version of rational choice (‘realistic group conflict’), triggered by Key’s classic book. These are three excellent more recent papers.


WEEK 5: PREJUDICE AND POLITICS (May 1)


**Symbolic racism**


Comment: Contentious issues, going back many years. Hard to find a moderate middle.


Kinder, D. R., & Sanders, Lynn M. (1996). *Divided by color: Racial politics and democratic ideals.* Ch. 5: Subtle prejudice for modern times (pp. 92-127). University of


Obama’s race.


WEEK 6: PREJUDICE AND POLITICS: ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES (May 8)

Continuing racialization


Ethnocentrism.

*1. - 4. Kinder, Donald R., & Cindy D. Kam (2009). *Us against them: Ethnocentric foundations of American opinion*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Ch. 1 (‘Four theories in search of ethnocentrism’), Ch. 3 (‘American ethnocentrism today’), Ch. 4 (‘Enemies abroad’), Ch. 9 (‘Us versus them in the American welfare state’).

Comment: Resurrecting a concept at the center of disputes over authoritarianism.

Social and political ingroup identity.

Comment: Social identity theory extremely popular in social psychology. How well does it carry over into studies of political behavior?


**WEEK 7: THE NEW IMMIGRANTS AND THE AMERICAN RACIAL ORDER (May 15)**

Racial hierarchy.


*2. Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo, & Karen S. Glover (2004). “We are all Americans”: The Latin Americanization of race relations in the United States. In Maria Krysan and Amanda E. Lewis (Eds.), *The changing terrain of race and ethnicity* (pp. 149-186). New York: Russell Sage Foundation. (W)*

Comment: Alternative challenges to older traditions of studying socio-cultural prejudice, triggered in part by more complex racial and ethnic patterns since the 1960s..


The new immigrants and the color line


Comment: More efforts to come to grips with the more complex society than the old black-white binary.

The new immigrants and national identity.


Comment: Left and Right turn out to have a certain amount in common.


WEEK 8: PARTISANSHIP  (May 22)

The political life cycle


Comment: Descendents of the earlier tradition of political socialization. The shadow of The American Voter hangs heavy over this week, as it does over several others.


Polarization and sorting


Comment: Quite a spirited battle.
WEEK 9: PARTY ALIGNMENTS (May 29)

Dealignment?

*1-4. Dalton, Russell J. (2013). The apartisan American: Dealignment and changing electoral politics. Los Angeles: CQ Press. Ch. 2 (‘The two sides of the dealignment debate’); Ch. 3 (‘Can partisans go to heaven?’); Ch. 6 (‘Images of parties and the party system’); Ch. 8 (‘Switchers, splitters, and late deciders’). (W)


Comment: Another spirited battle.


Realignment in the White South


Comment: as is often the case, the shadow of race and racism hangs heavy over the debate.

WEEK 10: OTHER CONTEMPORARY PARTISAN REALIGNMENTS (June 6)

Social class


Comment: The debate swirls around the white working class, and whether it has shown movement toward the Republicans.


Religion


Psychology M228B/Political Science M261D: Seminar in Political Psychology

Spring 2012 Assignments

A. Term paper: Choose one week from the course and work within that framework

1. Choose a topic, and clear it with me no later than the end of the seventh week

2. Literature review on that topic (10 - 15 pp.)

3. Brief proposal for a research study on that topic (3 - 5 pp.) or preliminary research