

# Political Psychology of Identity

POLS 295-01/PSYC 285-01 // Fall 2021 // Morse-Ingersoll 207  
TTh 2:35 – 3:50 PM // Professor Philip Chen // [chenp@beloit.edu](mailto:chenp@beloit.edu) //  
Office: Morse-Ingersoll 111 // Office Hours: Thursdays 10:00 – 11:30 AM

## **Course Description**

This course introduces you to the interdisciplinary field of political psychology with a focus on exploring the various foundations of social identity and the implications of these identities for political outcomes in the United States. Throughout the semester, we'll compare the influence of different identities and examine the psychological and political implications of social identities. The class focuses on three key identities: partisan identity, gender, and race. While there are no prerequisites, it is recommended that students have taken an introductory political science course or PSYC 100. This course counts for the social-cultural cluster of the psychology major.

## **Course Objectives**

By the end of this semester, you should be able to:

- Understand the social, psychological, and political roots of social identities
- Analyze and evaluate political events through the lenses of political psychology and social identity
- Design and develop research to test questions related to social psychology and political science

## **Structure of the Class**

I will occasionally lecture on new topics or extensions of the readings. However, I do not plan on lecturing on the readings because a) you are expected to have read them already and b) I'm not witty or interesting enough to lecture all the time.

The majority of the class will be spent on discussion and activities that are designed to help you integrate the readings and materials. Please come to class prepared to discuss the day's readings, as this is a key component of this course.

## **Office Hours and Help**

I strive to make this course understandable and accessible for all students. If you have any questions about the content or structure of the course or about specific assignments, please do not hesitate to contact me. I am always happy to help if you come to me before assignments or exams are due. Please do not wait to ask for help until after the due date, come talk to me before if you are struggling.

## **Required Texts**

This class will feature a mix of academic books and articles. The required books are listed below and are available at the college bookstore or from Amazon or other places online. Additional readings are available on the class Moodle site at:

<https://moodle.beloit.edu/course/view.php?id=172>

There are three required books for the course:

Jardina, Ashley. 2019. *White Identity Politics*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Mason, Lilliana. 2018. *Uncivil Agreement: How Politics Became Our Identity*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Peffley, Mark and Jon Hurwitz. 2010. *Justice in America: The Separate Realities of Blacks and Whites*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

## **Grading**

Grades are based on five different components, described in more detail below. 45% of your grade will come from the final research design paper that you will develop over the semester (1). 10% of your grade will come from a response paper on the readings of one day of class (2). An additional 5% of your grade will come serving as a discussion leader for that day of class (3). 10% of your grade consists of attendance and participation in class (4). Finally, 30% of your grade consists of weekly reading quizzes (5).

Reading Quizzes (Top 10)	30%
Response Paper	10%
Discussion Leader	5%
Final Research Design	45%
Research Questions	Required (No Grade)
Bibliography or Lit Review	Required (No Grade)
Research Design	Required (No Grade)
First Draft	Required (No Grade)
Paper Conference	Required (No Grade)
Final Draft	
Participation & Attendance	10%

**Weekly Reading Quizzes (30%)** – Over the past couple years, I’ve come to dislike the concept of midterm and final exams because they place a premium on memorization and intense study rather than a cohesive synthesis of the material we read. In essence, finals and midterms seem to encourage students to memorize minutiae instead of substance.

However, the readings for this class were chosen with intention and I believe they are important for students to get the most out of the class. While I will sometimes lecture on the readings, the

reading quizzes will focus both on things we cover in class as well as things that are only located in the readings.

While I would love to be able to simply ask “did you do the reading?” and grade you on this, it seems unrealistic. On Tuesdays of most weeks we will have a short, graded, **open hard copy note** reading quiz. You are welcome to use both class and reading notes, but you **must have hard copies** of those notes. You will not be allowed to use your phone or computer to access your notes during the quizzes, but you may print off your notes prior to class. These quizzes will consist of a few multiple choice or short answer questions, as well as one or two longer (2-3 paragraph) questions that ask you to synthesize the readings in some way.

I understand that sometimes things come up and readings don’t get done. Over the course of the semester, there are 11 Tuesdays when I will administer quizzes. Out of these 11 quizzes, I will drop your lowest score. The remaining 10 quizzes will be worth 30% of your grade. While no one quiz will make or break your final grade, failing to do any of the readings will severely limit your potential in this class.

At the end of the semester, I will simply take your highest 10 quiz grades (dropping the lowest two grades) and average them. Because you have two quizzes that are not counted, you cannot make up quizzes for unexcused absences. However, if you are going to miss a quiz and let me know ahead of time, we can make arrangements for you to take the quiz at a different time. If you are sick or have an approved absence, just make sure to send me an email or talk to me so we can schedule a time for you to take the quiz.

**Research Design (45%)** – Each student must complete a research proposal that identifies an aspect of political psychology that you would like to study and describes how you would go about studying this subject. Your paper will propose an original research design that tests your research question. This assignment requires you to conduct research and reading outside of the assigned course readings. This additional research should allow you to narrow your desired topic down to a testable hypothesis or set of hypotheses. The assignment requires you to write a literature review for your question and develop an experiment to test your question. You **will not** be expected to actually conduct the research study for this class.

While the technical requirements of the assignment are fairly specific, you have great freedom to choose a topic that interests you. Throughout the semester, various portions of the proposal will be due. This allows me to follow your progress and help guide you as you develop your proposals. These due dates are listed in the course schedule. I’ll hand out a detailed paper assignment and descriptions of each assignment.

I understand that this may be the first time you are asked to complete an assignment exactly like this, and that may cause you a bit of worry. I suggest that you come to me early with any questions that you have. I’m happy to help you refine a topic or suggest ways to locate additional sources, but I need to know that you’d like help, so please come talk to me early.

You’ll notice a number of components marked “Required (No Grade).” These pieces of the research design can be thought of as low stakes requirements. In order to receive a final grade on your literature review, you must turn in all of these components, even though your performance

on these assignments does not factor into your grade. Failing to turn in these assignments will lower your final project grade by 1/3 of a letter grade for each missing piece. For instance, if your grade for the entire literature review project was a B+, but you failed to turn in your research questions, your final grade for the project would be a B. If you were missing both the research questions and proposal, your B+ would become a B-.

**Response Essay (10%)** – Each student will complete a response essay on the readings for a specific day. You will have an opportunity to pick the class session that you would like to write about. Along with the response essay, each student should turn in three discussion questions about the readings for us to talk about.

Response essays and discussion questions are due to me **by noon on the day of class**.

Each paper should include a brief summary of the arguments in the reading(s) and a critique of the argument, evidence, and conclusions. Papers should be 3-4 pages long, double spaced. I will distribute a separate handout with more information about this assignment.

**Discussion Leader (5%)** – In addition to your response essay, you will be responsible for leading class discussion on the day you wrote your response essay for. You are not responsible for leading the entire day's discussion. Instead, I will give you the chance to lead the first 15 minutes of class (approximately). You should feel free to use this time to encourage discussion however you'd like. You can simply ask questions, or you may bring in additional short readings or activities. If you would like additional time beyond 15 minutes, that's fine, just ask me so I can plan accordingly.

There will be some days when two students are scheduled to lead discussion for the same set of readings. You are welcome to lead discussion together or to lead two separate discussions, the choice is yours. If you have a friend in the class who you would like to lead discussion with, feel free to sign up together for a specific date.

**Participation and Attendance (10%)** – The participation portion of your grade includes regular attendance in class, completion of in-class activities, participation in class discussions, and asking questions during class, and, most importantly, being an active and committed member of each simulation.

Half of this grade is based purely off of attendance. I will hand out a sheet for everyone to sign in at the start of class. If you are late to class, please check with me after class to make sure I've recorded your attendance for the day. There are 25 days in the semester that we will meet as a class, and I will use the following scale to determine your attendance grade:

A	0 – 1 absences
A-	2 – 3 absences
B+	4 absences
B	5 absences
B-	6 absences
C+	7 absences
C	8 absences

C-	9 absences
D+	10 absences
D	11 absences
F	12 or more absences

NOTE: This count does NOT include excused absences. If you miss class because of an approved college activity, illness, or prior arrangement with me, this will not count against your attendance grade. But you do need to let me know!

The other half of this grade is based on in-class participation. I'll advise you that I take the participation portion of the class seriously. I give very few A grades for participation. Thus, you shouldn't assume that simply attending class regularly is enough to get full participation. I grade participation holistically. If you are attentive in class, offer opinions and reactions to readings, and are engaged in discussion, you will do fine. But these are not simply "free" points for the class.

**Grade Scale:**

A	93-100	C	73-76
A-	90-92	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	63-66
B-	80-82	D-	60-62
C+	77-79	F	<60

**Grading** – On some assignments, you may receive a grade of B+/A- or something like that. This is just my shorthand way of assigning a number grade between two letter grades. Thus, an A grade is recorded in the grade book as 100 points while an A- grade is recorded as 92 points. If I think your work fell between these points, you may get an A-/A, which would be recorded as 96 points. So a A-/A is technically an A grade, but in the middle of the A range instead of the high end.

When calculating final grades, I always round up. So an 88.7% in the class becomes an 89% (B+), but an 89.1% would be rounded up to a 90% (A-).

**Course Schedule:**  
**Days with reading quizzes marked with (RQ)**

Introduction

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August 24	First Class – No Readings
August 26	Ross & Nisbett Ch 1* Fiske & Taylor Ch 2* McDermott 2002*

Partisanship as Social Identity

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August 31(RQ)	Green, Palmquist & Schickler Ch 1* Green, Palmquist & Schickler Ch 2*
September 2	Mason Ch 1 Mason Ch 2
September 7 (RQ)	Mason Ch 3
September 9	<b>DUE: Research Questions</b> Jigsaw Groups Mason Ch 4 Mason Ch 5 Mason Ch 6
September 14 (RQ)	Mason Ch 7 Mason Ch 8

Gender Stereotyping

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September 16	Fiske & Taylor Ch 11* Streb et al 2008* Burden et al 2017*
September 21 (RQ)	Chen, Thomas, Harell, & Gosselin (Stereotypes)* Eagly & Carli Ch 5* Eagly & Carli Ch 6*
September 23	Huddy & Terkildsen 1993* Bauer 2015* Brooks Ch 8*

September 28 (RQ) Bauer 2016\*  
Sanbonmatsu & Dolan 2009\*  
Chen, Thomas, Harell, & Gosselin (Evaluations) \*

September 30 Bos & Schneider Ch 11\*  
Steele Ch 3\*  
McGlone et al 2006\*

### Race and the Criminal Justice System

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October 5 (RQ) Peffley & Hurwitz Ch 1  
Peffley & Hurwitz Ch 2

October 7 **DUE: Literature Review/Annotated Bibliography**  
Jigsaw Groups  
Peffley & Hurwitz Ch 3  
Peffley & Hurwitz Ch 4  
Peffley & Hurwitz Ch 5

October 12 NO CLASS (Fall Break)

October 14 NO CLASS (Fall Break)

October 19 (RQ) Peffley & Hurwitz Ch 6

### Racial Prejudice

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October 21 Jost & Sidanius Ch 19\*  
Gilens 1996\*

October 26 (RQ) Kinder & Kam Ch 3\*  
Kinder & Kam Ch 5\*

October 28 **DUE: Research Design**  
Valentino et al 2002\*  
Tesler & Sears Ch 2\*  
Tesler & Sears Ch 3\*

November 2 (RQ) Tesler Ch 5\*  
Tesler Ch 7\*

## White Identity

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November 4	Jardina Ch 1 Jardina Ch 2
November 9 (RQ)	Jardina Ch 3 (Can stop at page 69) Jardina Ch 4
November 11	<b>DUE: First Draft</b> Jigsaw Groups Jardina Ch 5 Jardina Ch 6 Jardina Ch 7
November 16	NO CLASS (Paper Conferences)
November 18	NO CLASS (Paper Conferences)
November 23 (RQ)	Jardina Ch 8 Jardina Ch 9
November 25	NO CLASS (Thanksgiving)
November 30	Peer Review – No Readings
December 2	Final Class – No Readings
December 9	<b>DUE: Final Paper Draft by 5 PM</b>

Attendance: Regular attendance is vital for your success in this course. I understand, however, that sometimes circumstances prevent you from coming to class. Missing one class will not destroy your grade; missing several will.

Grade Changes: Any appeals of a grade must be made at least **24 hours after** I hand back an assignment or exam. If you would like to appeal the grade you got on an assignment, prior to meeting with me you must submit a written statement detailing why you think your grade should be changed. I will then meet with you to discuss your statement and why you think your grade should be changed.

If I make a mistake in totaling your grade for an exam or assignment (e.g. I added the points up incorrectly) then you do not need to write a statement or wait 24 hours. Just talk to me after class or during office hours and I'll double check and fix the mistake.

Contacting the Professor: I encourage you to contact me with questions and concerns about the course, readings, and assignments. In general, quick clarification questions can be handled over email. More in-depth questions are best discussed in person during my office hours, where we can have an actual conversation. If my office hours conflict with your class or work schedule, I am available by appointment as well.

Please allow a full 24 hours for an email response. Often, my responses will be quicker than this, but do not send multiple emails about the same request until 24 hours have passed. I cannot guarantee that if you email me right before an assignment or exam that I will be able to answer your question in time, so please make sure and email me early if you have a time-specific question.

Extra Credit and Retakes: There is one scheduled extra credit opportunity in the class. You may not retake quizzes.

Disability Services and Accommodations: Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability and need accommodations, contact Learning Enrichment and Disability Services (LEADS) located on 2nd floor Pearsons (north side), [608-363-2572](tel:608-363-2572), [learning@beloit.edu](mailto:learning@beloit.edu) or through [olesena@beloit.edu](mailto:olesena@beloit.edu). For accommodations in my class, you are to bring me an Access Letter from the Director of LEADS and then we will discuss how to implement the accommodations. Contact that office promptly; accommodations are not retroactive.

**Free peer tutoring** is available for most classes. For a tutor, apply by going to your Portal, to the Student Life tab, and then apply using the Tutoring Forms (on left) and Request a Tutor. If you have any questions, contact LEADS.

If you want support from an **Organizational Tutor**, they are available in the Learning Lab (Blaisdell 103B) Sundays through Thursdays from 6-8 pm. You also can request an organizational tutor on the portal.

Every effort will be made to give you agency over disclosure of your disability status. Confidentiality is maintained to the extent possible but at times others need to know some information to provide you appropriate accommodations.

Inclusivity: **Inclusivity** is a demonstration of equity and social justice through awareness, understanding, and respect for the differences in identity, culture, background, experience, and socialization, and the ways in which these forms of difference impact how we live and learn. Inclusivity requires equitable, institution-wide representation and access to resources. In practice, this manifests itself by each individual being aware of, committed to, and responsible for the well-being and care of all students, staff, and faculty.