

Topics in Political Psychology - Psyc 105 - Fall, 2004

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Office Hours: MWF 3:00-3:30, or by appointment

This class will not be an exhaustive overview of Political Psychology. Rather, the class will explore selected topics within this area in depth, via lecture, readings and discussion. The topics for later class sessions will be left open and student input will be solicited in determining the topics for those classes. Class Format will be lecture and discussion. **A research paper and three exams** will be required. The course will use **Groupthink** by Irving Janis (1982) supplemented by articles.

Class Preparation.

Please read all assigned materials before class. Some information may be redundant with the text but we will use class time to reiterate and explain difficult material in the readings, as well as providing additional information.

Evaluation

(i) Exams: There will be three non-cumulative exams. All exams will be a mix of short answer and essay questions. Each exam will count as 25% of the final course grade. **Should you need to miss an exam due to illness or emergency, All make-up exams will be scheduled to immediately follow the third exam.**

(ii) Paper: A library research paper on a subject related to one of the course topics will be due, in class, on **Wednesday, November 10, 2004**. The paper should be a double-spaced, typewritten document consisting of a **maximum** of six (6) pages of text. Sources should be referenced in APA style. The paper will count as 25% of the final course grade.

The purpose of the paper is to give you a chance to explore some topic related to the course that you find especially interesting. The "ideal paper" will be thoughtful, written clearly and with correct grammar. Multiple sources should be consulted and referenced. Having only psychology textbooks as Sources is **not** acceptable.

Paper Proposal: A proposal of your paper topic is due on **Wednesday, October 6**, in class. The proposal should include a one-to-two paragraph description and **justification** of your paper topic, with at least two references (in APA style). To justify your topic, explain: **why you chose** the topic; **why are you interested** in the topic; and how the topic **fits within the scope** of this course. You are encouraged to see me about your ideas for paper topics **before** the proposals are due. **Those who provide a properly constructed paper proposal by the date specified may earn up to 4 extra-credit points which may be added to any test score.**

Note the due date and time for the final paper (Nov. 10 in class) -- do not ask for extensions! For every business day the proposal or the paper is late a full letter grade will be deducted (e.g., an A would become a B, a B+ a C+, and so on).

Course Grading Scale

A+	97-100 %
A	93-96
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	0 - 59

Students with Disability:

If you have a disability which may require assistance or accommodations, or you have questions related to any accommodations for testing, note takers, readers, etc., please speak with me as soon as possible. All disabilities need to be documented through the office of disabilities services. They are more than willing to have you tested and document any disabilities you may have. Please make use of this resource here at Rhodes if you believe a disability is interfering with your school work.

Honor Code

As students at Rhodes College, you have all signed an Honor Code. This is a precious tradition here at Rhodes College and one that needs to be respected and maintained. A violation of this code would include looking at assignments from others (past or present), taking material off the Internet (i.e., papers), plagiarizing the work of others, etc. I would like you to pledge all work turned in for credit in this course. You may write out the pledge ("I have neither given or received help on this assignment/test") or you may simply write the word "Pledged". Then sign your name below this. I trust students to uphold the Honor Code and think signing each assignment is an important reminder of the ethical standard in which we believe.

Experiment Participation.

Students are encouraged to participate in ongoing research in the department by volunteering for three hours to be subjects in experiments conducted by students in advanced psychology classes. The Human Subjects Review committee will approve all such research first, and participants will be given an opportunity to learn about the findings of the research at the end of the project. We believe that participation as a subject is an excellent way to gain first-hand knowledge and deeper understanding about how psychological research is conducted. Students who participate in an experiment will write a short report describing (1) what they did and how they felt

during the experiment and (2) what the research question and the researchers' hypotheses were. These reports are due at the end of the semester.

An alternative to the experiment participation requirement is offered to those students who do not wish to be a research subject or are unable to schedule an experiment. This will involve a comparable amount of writing about research that the student will read.

8/25	Introduction and Overview.
8/27 - 9/3	Social Influence - Compliance, Conformity, & Obedience; Propaganda
9/6	No Class - Labor Day
9/8-10	<u>The Psychology of Political Rhetoric</u> Reading: Martin, J., Scully, M., & Levitt, D. (1990). Injustice and the legitimization of revolution: Damning the past, excusing the present, and neglecting the future. <u>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</u> , 59, 281-290.
9/13-15	<u>Negative & Positive Political Advertising</u> Reading: Houston, D. A., Doan, K. A., & Roskos-Ewoldsen, D. (1999). Negative political advertising and choice conflict. <u>Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied</u> , 5, 3-16.
9/17-9/24	Terrorism & Mob violence.
9/27	First Exam
9/29-10/1	<u>Introduction to Groupthink; Psychologically-informed analysis of "Real World" Phenomena</u> Reading: Janis: Preface, Chapter 1.
10/4-8	<u>The Groupthink Syndrome; Groupthink in Action: The Bay of Pigs, the Korean War, Pearl Harbor, the Vietnam War.</u> Reading: Janis: Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5. PAPER TOPIC DUE - 10/6
10/11	<u>Avoiding Groupthink</u> Reading: Janis: Chapters 6 and 7.
10/13	<u>The Watergate Cover-up from a Social Psychological perspective</u> Reading: Janis: Chapter 9.
10/15	<u>Beyond Groupthink: The Psychology of Political Group Decision Making</u> Reading: Tetlock, Peterson, McGuire, Chang, & Feld (1992). <i>Assessing political group dynamics: A test of the groupthink model.</i> <u>JSPS</u> , 63, 403-425.
10/18	No class

10/22-27	<u>Beyond Groupthink Continued</u>
10/29	Second Exam
11/1 – end of semester	TOPICS TO BE DECIDED FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE CLASS PAPER DUE 11/10
11/24-26	No Class -- Thanksgiving