

POLITICAL SCIENCE 5242 / 4242 POLITICAL BEHAVIOUR: REASON, PASSION, BIOLOGY

Prof. Louise Carbert
Wednesday 1:30 pm – 4:30 pm

Office: Hicks Administration Building 359
Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 3pm
Tel: 902.494.6628
Email: louise.carbert@dal.ca

Short abstract

Does reason or passion drive politicians and citizens to act as they do? Or does the dichotomy between the mind and the heart disguise a more fundamental biological basis to political behavior? This class studies the economic, social, psychological, and biological explanations for why and how individual people engage in politics. Topics covered include public opinion, modernization theory, culture wars, bio-politics, and political marketing. Although this material is inherently comparative, we principally want to investigate how it applies in Canada. We also want to carry the research findings forward, to consider how they generate concrete lessons for applied political practice today.

Extended overview:

Is political behavior driven by reason, passion, biology, or some combination of the three? As a first approach, we assume that it is based on rational judgments made through some sort of cost / benefit analysis, and we assume that our calculation of utility is informed by knowledge about public affairs. To test if this assumption operates in practice, we study the question of “culture wars” in North America.

The second approach is modernization theory, which is the intellectual descendent of structural Marxist and Weberian theory. This approach assumes that societies (and the individuals within them) change socially and psychologically in ways that correspond to change in the structure of the economy. These changes are rational, but they are large-scale, predictable, and independent of human volition.

The third approach assumes that political behavior is based principally on passion, as driven by biology. Research from primatology indicates that much of what people do politically corresponds to their genetic heritage which has its own rational calculus.

When research from biology and psychology is applied to political practice, the result is political marketing which is designed to appeal to voters’ emotions. Election campaigns are the height of applied social science in this regard.

Together, these three approaches enable students to reflect in a more profound way on how their own decision-making processes operate and how they arrive at their own personal loyalties. As a result, they become better equipped to become professional practitioners of politics.

GRADING SCHEME AND ASSIGNMENTS

| UNDERGRADUATE GRADING SCHEME | | DUE |
|---|-----|------------|
| <i>Undergraduates have the option, if they choose, to do the graduate grading scheme. Will be graded appropriately, at undergraduate level.</i> | | |
| Participation and response to student presentation | 15% | throughout |

| | | |
|---|-----|------------------------|
| 3 analytical papers @ 15% each (2000 words <i>maximum</i>) | 45% | throughout |
| Take home exam assignment | 40% | Early April (48 hours) |
| GRADUATE GRADING SCHEME | | DUE |
| Participation and response to student presentation | 10% | throughout |
| 2 analytical papers @ 10% each (2000 words <i>maximum</i>) | 20% | throughout |
| Oral presentation (rubric attached) | 40% | throughout |
| Take home exam assignment | 30% | Early April (48 hours) |

Oral presentation: All graduate students are required to deliver a presentation based on the readings from one week. The oral presentation is the centerpiece of graduate student work in the course; consider it to be equivalent to a major research paper. The presentations should take a decisive stand on the contributions of the readings to our understanding of the particular problem under study for that week and the larger themes of the course more generally.

More specifically, the presentations should:

1. Take a decisive stand on the contribution of the readings to understanding politics.
2. Based on the stand you take on the readings, present evidence in support of your position.
3. Extract the research design that underlies the results presented in each reading.
 - a. Evaluate if the research design adequately supports the conclusions presented.
4. Identify and assess the policy implications of the discussion presented.
5. Extract the article's theoretical approach. Does the theory or the theoretical approach actually explain what it is supposed to explain?
6. Even if you think the reading is perfect, analysis entails trying to find the weakest points of an argument and probing to see if it is a fatal flaw or not.
7. What contribution do the readings make to our overall understanding of politics?
 - a. Is it an empirical or theoretical contribution?
 - b. Do they complement or compete with previous readings? Are we any further ahead than we were before?

You will have access to a computer with powerpoint software and a projector. You must use visual aids, if not slides, then overhead transparencies. Your presentation will be graded on its ability to communicate intellectually interesting and politically astute insights, not its technical artistry. Learning to present complex information in a visually compelling way is a valuable skill.

The speaking notes must be submitted as part of the assignment. Text need not be in formal essay format; it consists of presentation notes, provided that they are coherent, logical, cleaned up and properly formatted. Please create your speaking notes in the "notes" format of the ppt file. Then submit your notes in that format; it is also possible to submit notes in a separate text file.

One hour of class time is given over to your presentation. Be prepared to speak for approximately 30 minutes. You will address questions and comments from the class for the remainder of the time. The instructor chairs all presentations.

A sign-up sheet will be distributed on the first day. The sign-up sheet corresponds to topics on the syllabus, and you choose to present on a topic scheduled for that day. Students are not responsible for presenting all the material assigned for that day, but you are expected to be familiar with the assigned readings, and to be able to address questions as to how they relate to what you present. Much of the material is quite difficult and explaining the concepts and results accurately to your classmates will take time and effort. The evaluation rubric for the class presentation is appended to this syllabus.

When the presentations are over, the class will be expected to ask **critical and thoughtful questions** about the presentations. At the end of the course, students will grade each other on their attentiveness to each other's work,

using a short-version of the oral presentation rubric. This is an anonymous grade that is submitted to the instructor as an advisory grade; the instructor has task of compiling students' evaluations and assigning a final grade.

The **final take-home exam** requires you to synthesize broad course themes in an essay. To synthesize is to bring different aspects of the course material together in a single coherent explanation. The question to be posed typically asks the student to address – in all its historical and theoretical complexity- a current “crisis” in the study of politics.

There are **short analytical papers**. Short means short, maximum 2000 words. These papers analyse and critique the readings (or some subset thereof) assigned for a particular week. No additional research is required (or permitted) beyond the assigned readings. They must be submitted on the class for which the readings are assigned. No credit will be given for papers submitted earlier or later because the point is to have the papers enrich class discussion on that particular day.

SCHEDULE

Readings are listed below, in order of priority. Begin reading from the top, and make your way down as you engage in the material. In general, popular journalist accounts are listed first, as an introduction to the topic. Academic journals are listed next, followed by books. Students writing analytical papers, exam papers, and making presentations on the topic are expected to engage deeply in the academic sources. Most items are posted to bbl.

I. INTRODUCTION

7 January

Q: How to do social science by a four-fold matrix, inspired by Martin Hollis

[Watts, Duncan. 2011. “The human paradox that is common sense,” *New Scientist Magazine* issue 2821.](#)

[Brooks, David. 2011. “The unexamined society” *New York Times* 7 July.](#)

[Fiorina, Morris and Ian Shapiro. 2000. Political scientists debate rational choice, *New York Times*. 26 February.](#)

Flanagan, Tom. 1998. Chapter 1 “Rational Choice” *Game theory and Canadian politics* Toronto: U Toronto Press.

[Gelman, Andrew & Thomas Basbøll. 4 March 2014. “When do stories work? Evidence and illustration in the social sciences” *Sociological Methods Research* 43:4 547-570.](#)

The craft of visualizing social science

14 January

Q: How to construct and relate knowledge in a visually compelling story?

Brady, Henry. 2011. “The art of political science: Spatial diagrams as iconic and revelatory” *Perspectives on Politics*, 9:2, 311-331

Adams, Michael. 2014. Fire and Ice US, Canada and the myth of converging values. Environics, bbl slides

Bricker, Darrell. 2013. “The big shift - understanding the new Canadian” bbl slides.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nquKRW7W78I>

PANEL: Crafting a career in politics and government

14 January, 3 -5PM

SPEAKERS TBA WHEN CONFIRMED

II. ACADEMIC LINEAGE OF PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH

21 January

Q: Is a democratic public clever enough to get the politicians and the policies that it wants?

- [Menand, Louise. 2004. "The unpolitical animal: How political science understands voters," *New Yorker*. August 30.](#)
- Zaller, John. 1998. "Monica Lewinsky's contribution to political science" *Political Science & Politics*. 31:2, 182-189.
- Zaller, John. 2012. "What nature and origins leaves out" *Critical Review* 24: 4, 2012.
- Klein, Ezra. 2014. "Moderate voters are a myth" *VOX*. 8 July.
- Ahler, Douglas, David Broockman. 2014. "How ideological moderation conceals support for immoderate policies: a new perspective on the 'disconnect' in American politics. Unpublished paper, 23 September [LC1].
- Butler, Peter. 2007. *Polling and public opinion: A Canadian perspective*. University of Toronto Press.
- [Converse, Philip. 1964. "The nature of belief systems in mass publics." In David Apter, ed. *Ideology and Discontent*. Free Press. 206-261.](#)

III. RATIONAL AND IRRATIONAL CULTURE WARS OF NORTH AMERICA

A. (Ir)Rational culture wars of North America: class and geography

28 January

- Brooks, David. 2001. "One nation, slightly divisible," *Atlantic Monthly* Dec.; 288, 5
- Dionne, E. J. 2006. "Why the culture war is the wrong war," *Atlantic Monthly*; Jan/Feb, 297:1, 130-135.
- Bowman, Carl. 2010. "Myth of a non-polarized America" *Hedgehog Review*. Fall, 65-77.
- Gimpel, James & Kimberly Karnes. 2006. "The rural side of the urban-rural gap" *PS: Political Science & Politics* July.
- Gelman, Andrew. 2008. *Red state, blue state, rich state, poor state: Why Americans vote the way they do*. Princeton University Press. [Video presentation](#)
- Feller, Avi, Andrew Gelman and Boris Shor. 2012. "Red State / Blue State Divisions in the 2012 Presidential Election, *Forum* 10:4, 127-131.
- Abrams, Samuel & Morris Fiorina. 2012. "The Big Sort" that wasn't: A skeptical re-examination" *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 45:02, pp 203-210.
- Fiorina, Morris, Samuel Abrams, Jeremy Pope. 2010. *Culture war? The myth of a polarized America*. Longman.
- Abramowitz, Alan. 2010. *The disappearing center: Engaged citizens, polarization, and American democracy*. Yale University Press.

B. (Ir)Rational culture wars of North America: marriage and family

4 February

- Douthat, Ross. 2010. "The Changing Culture War," *New York Times*. December 6.
- Wilcox, Bradford, Paul Taylor, and Chuck Donovan. 2011. *When marriage disappears: The retreat from marriage in Middle America*. Heritage Foundation
- Murray, Charles. 2012. "The new American divide," *Wall Street Journal*. 21 January 2012
- Gelman, Andrew, 2013. "Charles Murray's *Coming Apart* and the measurement of social and political divisions," *Statistics, Politics, and Policy* 2013; 4:1, 70-81.
- Autor, David and Melanie Wasserman. 2013. *Wayward sons: the emerging gender gap in labor markets and education*. Washington: Third Way.

[Banks, Ralph. 2011. "The racial gap in marriage: how the institution is tied to inequality," *Atlantic Monthly*.](#)

Madsen, Richard. 2011. "American Grace: an Interview with Robert Putnam and David Campbell," *Hedgehog Review*, spring, 59-68.

Putnam, Putnam. Carl Frederick, Kaisa Snellman. 2012. "Growing class gaps in social connectedness among American youth," Boston: Harvard Kennedy School of Government The Saguaro Seminar: Civic Engagement in America. August 8.

C. (Ir)Rational culture wars of North America: Canadian anomalies or not?

11 February

Bisset, Ben. 2014. "An 'unintegrated' province? Examining the extent of spatial cleavages in public opinion in Nova Scotia. Paper Presented at the Annual General Conference of the Atlantic Provinces Political Science Association, Memorial University, St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, October 3-5, 2014

Malloy, Jonathan. 2009. "Bush / Harper? Canadian and American Evangelical politics compared," *American Review of Canadian Studies*. 39:4, 352-363.

Farney, James. 2012. *Social conservatives and party politics in Canada and United States* Toronto: UTP.

Wilson, Matthew and Michael Lusztig. 2004. "The spouse in the house: What explains the marriage gap in Canada?" *Canadian Journal of Political Science*. 37:4, 979-99.

READING WEEK, NO CLASS 18 February

IV. STRUCTURAL THEORIES: MODERNIZATION & POST-MODERNIZATION

25 February

Question: Do the economy and society work together along predictable pathways?

A. PROMISE AND POTENTIAL OF THE WORLD VALUES SURVEY <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/>

Inglehart, Ronald and Christian Welzel. 2010. "Changing mass priorities: The link between modernization and democracy" *Perspectives on Politics*, 8: 551-567.

Weyland, Kurt. 2012. "The Arab Spring: Why the surprising similarities with the revolutionary wave of 1848?" *Perspectives on Politics*. December 10:4 917-934.

B. STRUCTURAL THEORY APPLIED: Resource curses (or blessings?)

4 March

Adams, Julia and Ann Shola Orloff. 2005. "Defending modernity? High politics, feminist anti-modernism, and the place of gender," *Politics & Gender*, 1: 166-182.

Ross, Michael. 2008. "Oil, Islam, women," *American Political Science Review* 102: 107-123.

Debate: Oil, Islam, and Women, *Politics & Gender*, 5:4 (December 2009).

Norris, Pippa, "Petroleum patriarchy? A response to Ross."

Kang, Alice, "Studying oil, Islam, and women as if political institutions mattered."

Ross, Michael, "Does oil wealth hurt women? A reply to Caraway, Charrad, Kang, Norris."

Inglehart, Ronald and Pippa Norris. 2003. *Rising tide: Gender equality and cultural change around the world*. Cambridge University Press.

V. Biology & Politics

A. An evolutionary legacy of altruism or violence?

11 March

Buller, David. 2009. "Four fallacies of pop evolutionary psychology." *Scientific American* 300:1, 74-81 (January).

Johnson, Eric. 2012. "Women and children first. [Interview with Sarah Hrdy](#)" *Times Higher Education*. 15 March.

Steven Pinker. 2008. "[The moral instinct](#)," *New York Times*. January 13.

Joseph Henrich, Robert Boyd, Peter Richerson. 2012. "The puzzle of monogamous marriage" *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*. 367, 657-669.

Hrdy, Sarah. 2009. *Mothers and others: The evolutionary origins of mutual understanding*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

B. Genetic lineage of temperament, ideology, and thence partisanship?

18 March

[Jacobs, Tom. 2010. "A new take on political ideology: An evolutionary psychologist proposes a new framework for understanding the root causes of our political beliefs," *Miller-McLure*. October 26.](#)

Hayden, Erika Check. 2009. "The other strand," *Nature* 457:776-79 (February 12).

Inglehart, Ronald, et al. 2013. *Genes, security, tolerance and happiness*. Basic Research Program Working Papers Series: Sociology. National Research University, Higher School of Economics.

Oxley, Douglas R., et al. 2008. "Political attitudes vary with physiological traits." *Science* 321:1667-1670.

Fowler, James and Darren Schreiber. 2008. "Biology, politics, and the emerging science of human nature." *Science* 322:912-914.

Edsall, Thomas. 2013. "Are our political beliefs encoded in our DNA?" *New York Times*. 1 October.

Begley, Sharon. 2007. "The roots of fear: The evolutionary primacy of the brain's fear circuitry makes it more powerful than reasoning circuits" *Newsweek*.

Exchange in *Perspectives on Politics* 11(2) June 2013.

John Hibbing. "Ten misconceptions concerning neurobiology and politics."

Kay Lehman Schlozman, "Two concerns about ten misconceptions."

Troy Duster, "Emergence vs. reductionism in the debate over the role of biology in politics"

Beckwith and Corey Morris. 2008. Twin studies of political behavior: Untenable assumptions?

Anna Jaap Jacobson, "New souls for old."

V. POLITICAL MARKETING

A. Psychology behind political marketing

25 March

McDermott, Rose. 2004. "The feeling of rationality: The meaning of neuroscientific advances for political science." *Perspectives on Politics* 2(4):691-706 (December).

Westen, Drew. 2011. What happened to Obama? *New York Times*.

Westen, Drew. 2007 The political brain: The role of emotion in deciding the fate of the nation.

Fletcher, Joseph and Jennifer Hove. 2012. "Emotional determinants of support for the Canadian mission in Afghanistan: a view from the bridge," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 45:1, 33-62.

Cutler, Fred. 2002. "The simplest shortcut of all: Sociodemographic characteristics and electoral choice" *Journal of Politics*, 64:2, May, 466-490.

Barbaro, Michael & Ashley Parker 2012. "Gosh, who talks like that now? Romney does" *New York Times*. 20 Oct.

Neuman, Peter, George Marcus, Ann Crigler, Michael MacKuen (Eds.). *The affect effect: Dynamics of emotion in political thinking and behavior*. Chicago: U of Chicago Press.

Sears, David, Sears, Leonie Huddy, and Robert Jervis (Eds.). 2003. *Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Marcus, George. 2002. *The sentimental citizen*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.

LeDoux, Joseph, *The emotional brain*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996, pp. 11-41.

B. Political marketing: Putting science to work with technology

1 March

Singer, Natasha. 2013. "A data broker offers a peek behind the curtain," *New York Times*. 31 August.

Edsall, Thomas. 2012. "Let the nanotargeting begin?" *New York Times*. 15 April.

Federico Christopher, Howard Lavine, Christopher Johnston. 2012. "The unexpected impact of coded appeals," *New York Times*. 10 September.

Lau, Richard, Lee Sigelman, Ivy Brown Rovner. 2007. "The effects of negative political campaigns: A meta-analytic reassessment" *Journal of Politics*. 69: 4, 1176–1209.

Freedman, Paul, Michael M. Franz, Kenneth Goldstein. 2004. "Campaign advertising and democratic citizenship." *American Journal of Political Science* 48: 723-741.

Ansolabehere, Stephen & Shanto Iyengar. 1996. "The craft of political advertising: A progress report." In Mutz, Sniderman, Brody (Eds.), *Political persuasion and attitude change*. Cambridge U Press. Ch. 4.

Gillespie, Tarleton. 2013 "The relevance of Algorithms." In Media Technologies, ed. Tarleton, Pablo Boczkowski, Kirsten Foot. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Bennett, Colin & Robin Bayley. 2012. Canadian federal political parties and personal privacy protection: a comparative analysis. Prepared for the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada.

GUEST SPEAKER FROM DAL SOCIAL MEDIA LAB AVAILABLE? LIZ DUBOIS

C. Political marketing: Canadians go shopping for votes

8 April

Marland, Alex and Tom Flanagan. 2013. "Political branding of the Conservative Party of Canada" *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 46:4, 951-69.

Marland, Alex, "The brokerage party is old school: Why the branded party is the new model of Canadian politics" Paper presented at the 2014 Canadian Political Science Association Conference, Brock University, St. Catharines, 27-29, 2014

Marland, Alex. "What is a political brand?: Justin Trudeau and the theory of political branding" Paper presented at the 2013 annual meetings of the Canadian Communication Association and the Canadian Political Science Association University of Victoria, British Columbia, 6 June, 2013.

Delacourt, Susan. 2013. *Shopping for votes*. Madeira Park BC: Douglas & McIntyre.

Kinsella, Warren. 2007. *The war room: Political strategies for business, NGOs, and anyone who wants to win*. Toronto: Dundurn Press.

Wells, Paul. 2006. *Right side up: The fall of Paul Martin and the rise of Stephen Harper's new conservatism*. Toronto: Douglas Gibson.

Marland, Alex. 2012. "Political photography, journalism, and framing in the digital age: the management of visual media by the prime minister of Canada" *The International Journal of Press / Politics*: 17. 214-233.

Alex Marland, Thierry Glasson, Jennifer Lees-Marshment, eds. 2012. *Political marketing in Canada*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS

From the University Calendar: "Students are expected to complete class work by the prescribed deadlines. Only in special circumstances ... may an instructor extend such deadlines." Late papers will be assessed a late penalty at the instructor's discretion. Students who miss a deadline on account of illness are expected to hand in the assignment within one week of their return to class, with a medical certificate, per academic regulations of Dalhousie.

Papers should be submitted directly to the instructor, or the teaching assistant, or in person to the Political Science office between 8:30 am and 4:30 pm on weekdays only. The instructor cannot assume responsibility for papers otherwise submitted.

Students may request accommodation as a result of barriers related to disability, religious obligation, or any characteristic under the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act. Students who require academic accommodation for either classroom participation or the writing of tests, quizzes and exams should make their request to the Office of Student Accessibility & Accommodation prior to or at the outset of each academic term. Please see www.studentaccessibility.dal.ca for information and to obtain Form A: Request for Accommodation.

A note taker may be required to assist a classmate. There is an honorarium of \$75/course/term. If you are interested, please contact OSAA at 494-2836 for more information. Please note that your classroom may contain specialized accessible furniture and equipment. It is important that these items remain in the classroom so that students who require their usage will be able to participate in the class.

INFORMATION ON PLAGIARISM

Proper documentation is required on all writing assignments. Failure to document sources constitutes plagiarism and can result in severe academic penalty. You should keep your rough notes and be prepared to defend your work orally. Consult a writing/style manual for acceptable citation styles.

Any paper submitted by a student at Dalhousie University may be checked for originality to confirm that the student has not plagiarized from other sources. Plagiarism is considered a serious academic offence which may lead to loss of credit, suspension or expulsion from the University, or even to the revocation of a degree. It is essential that there be correct attribution of authorities from which facts and opinions have been derived.

At Dalhousie there are University Regulations which deal with plagiarism and, prior to submitting any paper in a course; students should read the Policy on Intellectual Honesty contained in the Calendar or on the Online Dalhousie website. As a student in this class, you are to keep an electronic copy of any paper you submit, and the course instructor may require you to submit that electronic copy on demand.

Additional Information for Graduate Students

As this is a cross-listed class, the requirements for graduate students are somewhat different from those for undergraduates. The number of and types of assignments are the same, but the expectations for these assignments are considerably higher:

1. In all assignments, graduate students are expected to evince a deeper analytical ability when evaluating readings; to show familiarity with a wider variety of sources; and to articulate a greater complexity of thought, in both verbal and written forms.
2. The writing style for graduate students should illustrate greater sophistication, both in the construction of the argument and in the clarity and lucidity of the writing.
3. Graduate students are expected to be prepared for each seminar; and to read beyond the minimal expectations set out for undergraduates (*i.e.*, more than one primary reading, secondary text, one online/PDF article, one student paper). Attendance is crucial. Graduate students should be willing to participate actively in the discussions, rather than waiting to be called upon to speak.
4. At the graduate level, students should show an understanding of the nuances of criticism, ie, how to accomplish an intellectually incisive criticism in a respectful and constructive manner.
5. Research papers for graduate students are generally longer (around 20 pages). They should show evidence of good research skills; of the capacity for revision; and of the analytical capability noted in (1) above. Graduate students may choose to tailor their research papers to their thesis work; but please discuss this with me in advance.
6. Graduate students should enjoy their work more thoroughly.

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