POLITICAL SCIENCE 5242 / 4242
POLITICAL BEHAVIOUR: REASON, PASSION, BIOLOGY
PROF. LOUISE CARBERT

Wednesday 3:30 pm – 6:30 pm

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Short abstract

This is a course about how people behave politically. Is political behavior driven by reason, passion, biology, or some combination of the three? 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? Although this material is inherently comparative, we principally want to investigate how it applies to Canada.

Extended overview:

This is a course about how people behave politically. 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. When research in 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 science in this regard.

The fourth approach assumes that political behavior is 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.

Together, these four 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNDERGRADUATE GRADING SCHEME</th>
<th>DUE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduates have the option, if they choose, to do the graduate grading scheme. Will be graded appropriately, at undergraduate level.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation and response to student presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 analytical papers @ 10% each (1500 words maximum)</td>
<td>60%</td>
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**GRADUATE GRADING SCHEME**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Take home exam assignment</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Early April (48 hours)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation and response to student presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>throughout</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 analytical papers @ 10% each (1500 words <em>maximum</em>)</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>throughout</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral presentation (rubric attached)</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>throughout</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take home exam assignment</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Early April (48 hours)</td>
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**Oral presentation:** All graduate students are required to deliver a presentation based on the readings from one week. The oral presentation is the centrepiece 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 worth 10%.

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 unit. In general, popular journalistic 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 academic sources. Most items are posted to bbl.

**I. INTRODUCTION**

Doing social science by a four-fold matrix, inspired by Martin Hollis 8 January


**II. PUBLIC OPINION AND POLITICAL CULTURE**

The academic lineage of public opinion research 15 January

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


Public opinion and culture of Nova Scotia


III. RATIONAL BEHAVIOR

Theory of rational political behaviour


Craft of modelling rational behaviour


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

5 February


**(Ir)Rational culture wars of North America: intimate dimension** 12 February


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


IV. STRUCTURAL THEORIES: MODERNIZATION & POST-MODERNIZATION 26 February

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

World Values Survey http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/

Question: Does modernization theory gets stuck in the Arab world which is unique world unto itself and to where standard concepts do not travel?


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.”


V. Biology & Politics

Genetic components to political ideology 12 March


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


An evolutionary legacy of altruism or violence? 12 March


V. POLITICAL PSYCHOLOGY

B. Psychology theory behind political marketing 19 March


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


B. Putting political psychology to work in practice in United States 26 March

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

Canadians catching-up 2 April

Alex Marland, “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.

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 the Dalhousie Calendar.

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 (ie, 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.