

POLITICAL SCIENCE 5242 / 4242
POLITICS OF REASON, PASSION, AND BIOLOGY
PROF. LOUISE CARBERT

Monday 2:30 pm – 5:30 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? Do these approaches leave any room for citizens to exercise their own judgment, or is autonomy lost altogether? Normative questions of justice, equality, and freedom are deeply embedded within each approach and must be confronted as they apply in practice. 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

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	10%	throughout
3 analytical papers @ 20% each (2000 words <i>maximum</i>)	60%	throughout
Take home exam assignment	30%	April 5-7 (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%	April 5-7 (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 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.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Social science: in pursuit of a synthesis of reason and passion

7 January

[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.](#)

Barbaro, Michael and Ashley Parker 2012. “Gosh, who talks like that now? Romney does” *New York Times*. October 20.

B. The academic lineage and future of political science research

14 January

[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 and Politics*. 31:2, 182-189.

Edge.org. 2012. [“How to win at forecasting. A conversation with Philip Tetlock.” Introduction by Daniel Kahneman.](#) See also The Good Judgment Project, Amazing Game of Life demo.

[Converse, Philip. 1964. “The nature of belief systems in mass publics.” In David Apter, ed. *Ideology and Discontent*. Free Press. 206-261.](#)

II. RATIONAL BEHAVIOR

A. Theory of rational behaviour in a four-fold matrix of methods 21 January

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

[Flanagan, Tom. 2011. “The emerging Conservative coalition” *Policy Options* June, 104-108.](#)

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

[Nau, Robert. Study Guide, PhD Seminar on Choice Theory and political science, Duke U School Business.](#)

B. (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.

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. [Presentation](#)

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 Publishers.

Morrill, Richard, Larry Knopp, Michael Brown. 2011. “Anomalies in Red and Blue II: Towards an understanding of the roles of setting, values, and demography in the 2004 and 2008 U.S. presidential elections,” *Political Geography*. 30:3, March, 2011. 153-168

Abramowitz, Alan. 2008. “2008 election: Polarization continues.” In *Controversies in voting behaviour*. Eds., Richard Niemi, Herbert Weisberg, David Kimball. Washington DC: CQ Press, Division of Sage, 5th edition, 297 - 318.

Abramowitz, Alan. 2010. *The disappearing center: Engaged citizens, polarization, and American democracy*. Yale University Press.

C. (Ir)Rational culture wars of North America: intimate dimension 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

Editor. 2007. "The frayed knot: As the divorce rate plummets at the top of American society and rises at the bottom, the widening "marriage gap" is breeding inequality," *Economist*.

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

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.

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

III. STRUCTURAL THEORIES: MODERNIZATION & POST-MODERNIZATION

11 February

Guest lecture: Dr. Peter Butler is professor emeritus of Sociology and Public Administration at Dalhousie. Professor Butler has been a consultant for provincial and federal governments, and has done research and polling for political parties.

Butler, Peter. 2007. *Polling and public Opinion: A Canadian perspective*. University of Toronto Press. Chapters 3, 4, and 5.

Brodie, Ian and Neil Nevitte. 1993. "Evaluating the citizens' constitution theory," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 26:2, 235-259.

Cairns, Alan. 1993. A defence of the citizens' constitution theory: A response to Ian Brodie & Neil Nevitte," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 26:2, 261-267. Brodie & Nevitte rebuttal.

MODERNIZATION THEORY AND GENDER

18 February

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

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

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

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."

READING WEEK, NO CLASS 25 February

IV. Biology & Politics

A. Genetic components to political ideology

4 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.](#)

Exchange in *Perspectives on Politics* 6(2) June 2008.

Charney, Evan. "Genes and ideologies."

Alford, John, Carolyn Funk, John Hibbing. "Beyond liberals and conservatives to political genotypes and phenotypes."

Hannagan, Rebecca, and Peter Hatemi. "The threat of genes: A comment on Evan Charney's 'Genes and ideologies'."

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

Alford, John, Carolyn Funk, John Hibbing. 2008. "Twin studies, molecular genetics, politics, and tolerance: A Response to Beckwith and Morris." *Perspectives on Politics*, 6:4, 793-797.

Woessner, Matthew and April Kelly-Woessner. 2007. "Left pipeline: Why conservatives don't get doctorates" Reforming the Politically Correct University, American Enterprise Institute

Verhulst, B., Eaves, L. J., Hatemi, P. 2012. "Correlation not causation: The relationship between personality traits and political ideologies" *American Journal of Political Science*, 56: 34-51.

B. An evolutionary legacy of altruism or violence?

11 March

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

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.

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

Loewen, Peter. 2010. "Affinity, antipathy, and political participation: How our concern for others makes us vote" *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 43:3 (September), 661-87.

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

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

Flanagan, Tom. 2011. "Monogamy and Democracy" Canadian Political Science Association.

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

Rosen, Stephen Peter. 2005. *War and human nature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Johnson, Dominic D., et al. 2006. "Overconfidence in Wargames: Experimental evidence on expectations, aggression, gender and testosterone." *Royal Society* 273:2513-20.
[Http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1634904/pdf/rsrb20063606.pdf](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1634904/pdf/rsrb20063606.pdf)

Satoshi Kanazawa. 2009. "[Evolutionary psychological foundations of civil wars](#)" *Journal of Politics*, 7:1 (January).

V. POLITICAL PSYCHOLOGY

A. Does Big Data enrich or impoverish the quality of Canadian democracy? 18 March

Guest lecture: Len Preeper, President, Thinkwell Research <http://thinkwellresearch.ca/>

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

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

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

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

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.

B. Psychology theory behind political marketing 25 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*.

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

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.

Huddy, Leonie, Stanley Feldman, Erin Cassese. 2007. "On the distinct political effects of anxiety and anger." In Peter Neuman, Russell, 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. Putting political psychology to work in practice

1 April

- Westen, Drew. 2011. [What happened to Obama. *New York Times*](#).
- Federico Christopher, Howard Lavine, Christopher Johnston. 2012. "[The unexpected impact of coded appeals *New York Times*](#). September 10.
- Gelman, Andrew & Thomas Basbøll. 2012. "[When do stories work? Evidence and illustration in the social sciences](#)."
- 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.
- Freedman, Paul, Michael M. Franz, Kenneth Goldstein. 2004. "Campaign advertising and democratic citizenship." *American Journal of Political Science* 48: 723-741.
- Lau, Richard, Lee Sigelman, Carolyn Heldman, Paul Babbitt. 1999. "The effects of negative political advertisements: A meta-analytic assessment." *American Political Science Review* 93: 851-876.
- Westen, Drew. 2007 *The political brain: The role of emotion in deciding the fate of the nation*.

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.