To: Social Science Curriculum Committee

From: David Somers, Professor & Chair and David Mayers, Professor & Chair

Re: PO409/609 Political Psychology

Date: November 3, 2016

We are writing to let you know that the Department of Psychological & Brain Sciences has voted in favor of cross-listing PO409/609. The psychology course number will be CAS PS 512.

Please let us know if you have any questions.
PO XXX: The Political Psychology of Group-Based Politics

Political psychology is a field of study that integrates psychological theory and research, especially in cognitive and social psychology, with political science approaches to the study of political thinking, behavior, decision-making, conflict, and cooperation. In this course we will study political psychology as it informs group-based politics, including especially race, gender, class, and political party affiliation. Too often, commentators who try to understand the political psychology of particular dimensions of human society, such as race or gender, focus only on race or gender, neglecting the ways that a broader understanding of the dynamics of intra- and inter-group relations and politics, as well as the nature of human perception, thought and interaction can inform how we understand the cases of particular groups in politics. This course will provide that critical grounding for understanding.

This course will
- give you an understanding of essential theories and research on political psychology;
- develop your ability to analyze contemporary issues of race, gender, class, and other aspects of group-based politics using the most current findings of high-quality research;
- enable you to sketch out research designs that would help us answer tough questions about the political psychology of groups and politics;
- give you experiencing reading and understanding contemporary research in social and cognitive psychology and political science.

Requirements

Class Attendance and Participation: All students are expected to attend all classes and come to class prepared, which means completing any assigned readings, activities, or other assignments.

I will usually spend some portion of the final hour of each class introducing the next week’s topic so that you are well-prepared to do the coming week’s reading assignments effectively. We will devote most of most class periods to discussion. All students are expected to remain engaged and participate in the full length of all class meetings – this means no use of the web or social media during class time that is unrelated to the current discussion. Not even under the table in your lap.

POXXX Blog: Every student is required to participate in a class-wide blog posted on the course website and available to all participants in the course (only). All students should submit at least one significant entry each week (you can submit more). You may meet the minimum requirement either with a new topic or response to someone else. The entries should be thoughtful, well written (regular English, not twitter English or emoticons), and should address important issues, questions, or observations that come up in the course of your assigned reading and other class participation, class discussion, or other serious news or information with a bearing on the topic of the week.

We will start a new blog each week; the blog week runs Wednesday, noon through Wednesday 11:59 a.m.; that is, the new blog week starts the afternoon before the first class each week. Blog discussion should be lively and even contentious, but it must be civil, intelligent, and informed. If you are unsure about whether an entry you plan to write is acceptable for the blog, or if you want to write things you would prefer not to share with the whole group, you may use the journal format to write privately to Professor Sapiro, but you must participate in the collective blog as specified.
Your blog participation will be graded through crowd-sourced assessment, and you will be required to participate in the collective assessment process. This means peers will assess each others' contributions over the course of the semester on how interesting and valuable their entries were.

**Two brief in-class exams:** Twice during the semester we will spend part of the class period on a brief essay exam in which you will demonstrate your understanding of the course material, including readings and discussion.

**Final Paper:** Every student will submit a final research paper on a topic of your choice relevant to the course. The papers are due no later than the scheduled final exam.

Your paper should be about 15 pages in length and use proper research paper form, including complete and accurate bibliography and foot/endnotes. (I don’t care which form you use as long as it is a standard one and you use it properly and consistently.)

You may do a joint final project with another student in the course. The paper should be double the size and all co-authors will receive the same grade regardless of what each individual put into the project.

You must submit a brief **paper proposal** no later than Wednesday 1 March at noon. Feel free to submit it as soon as you can -- that will give you more time to work on the paper. Your proposal should be brief -- no more than the equivalent of one page, 12-point font. It should include:

- Tentative title of the paper.
- A one-paragraph description of the main question(s) or problem(s) your paper will address.
- A brief description of the major method(s) and types of sources you will use for your investigation.
- A brief statement about why this topic is worth pursuing.
- A list of any questions or problems for which you would like some help or advice.

To submit your paper proposal: Your paper should be composed in Word format with the document title, “YOURLASTNAME Paper Proposal Final” and submitted through the course website.

Your final paper is due no later than the date of the final examination. You may submit a draft for my consideration, but your draft must be submitted more than a week before your due date and you have to give me 2 days to get a chance to read your draft.

To submit your final paper: Your paper should be composed in Word format with the document title, “YOURLASTNAME Final Paper” and submitted to the course website.

**Final Examination:** This will be cumulative, covering the whole course. It will be held at the schedule examination time.

**Grading**
The weight of each element in the final grade:

- Final Paper (including 5% for the Final Paper Proposal): 30%
- Final Examination: 20%
- Each in-class Exam: 10%
- Class Participation: 20%
If you believe that the assessment I made of a particular piece of work -- for example, the answer to an exam question, or a comment on your paper -- was a mistake, I may reassess the entire piece of work from scratch, which means the grade could go up, down, or stay the same. But I do grade very carefully.

Please note that your work will not be assessed by a machine. I reserve the right to use my discretion in assessing the quality of your work and achievements in the course.

**Expectations**

*Your work should be submitted on time.* Plan now to make sure this happens without panic. If you find that you will submit an assignment late, you must submit it with a written excuse. I will grade both the assignment and the excuse, and the value of the assignment can be weighted down (only) by the quality of the excuse. "I was really busy" or "I had a lot of work" is not a good excuse. It is true of everyone else in class.

*Civility* is an essential ingredient in the process of learning in an academic environment, especially when the subject is as provocative, contentious, and occasionally uncomfortable as the topics that arise in the political and campaign world. Civility requires respect but not either being silent or silencing others. Conversations about contentious topics are not always very comfortable, nor should they be, but they must be respectful. Name calling, trolling, being quick to take offense, assuming one has “natural” knowledge that is better than other people’s knowledge are all toxic to civility.

**Participation.** There are no pure observers in the classroom; everyone should participate.

**Academic Integrity.** By remaining in the course you are tacitly agreeing to follow standard principles of academic integrity in this course. Academic dishonesty is a serious offense because it undermines the bonds of trust and honesty among members of the community and defrauds those who may eventually depend upon our knowledge and integrity. Such dishonesty consists of cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, and plagiarism. Examples of academic dishonesty include using someone else’s words or ideas without proper documentation; copying some portion of your text from another source without proper acknowledgement of indebtedness; borrowing another person’s specific ideas without documenting their source; turning in a paper written by someone else, an essay "service," or from a web site. *Any assignment that is generated in whole or part through academic dishonesty will be failed with no “do-overs."* If you think you may not understand what constitutes academic integrity or the lack of it, consult with me in advance. [Wording provided largely by Jeffrey Henriques years ago.] For the university policy on academic conduct, see [http://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/](http://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/).

**Disabilities.** Students have a right to reasonable accommodations to take account of certain physical or cognitive disabilities and allow them to pursue success in their education at BU. Students who believe they require such accommodations must go through the formal process of application in a timely way. For more information, see [http://www.bu.edu/disability/policies-procedures/academic-accommodations/beginning-academic-program/](http://www.bu.edu/disability/policies-procedures/academic-accommodations/beginning-academic-program/).

**Readings**
Most readings are available through the course website on Blackboard. The books for purchase are:
You will notice a lot of readings listed each week. You are required to do a substantial amount of preparation each week – this is a 4-credit course, which means that standard expectations are that you would be spending at least 8 hours each week preparing. I will identify some readings each week that everyone should read, and will give the class individual flexibility in which others they read. Therefore, all students will be responsible for explaining, criticizing, and applying the readings they did to other students who did not read exactly the same assignment. Everyone is a teacher.

**Graduate Students:** Graduate students will be required to read more of the listed readings and will have somewhat different written assignments. I will work with you to make sure the course fits the needs of your graduate program, and it will include more attention to research design.

**Office Hours and Contact**
I have walk-in office hours Wednesdays, 2-4 pm in my office. Please let me know if you need to talk to me privately; otherwise, everyone who shows up is welcome to join in. Students can often learn from each others’ questions.

I am nearly always available by email and I respond quickly, but be patient and considerate. I want to meet with all students in the course individually, so please find excuses to come by.

**Week by Week Agenda and Preparation**

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<tr>
<th>Journal &amp; Book Abbreviations:</th>
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<tr>
<td>AJPS: American Journal of Political Science</td>
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<td>APSR: American Political Science Review</td>
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<td>ARPS: Annual Review of Political Science</td>
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<td>HSP: Handbook of Social Psychology</td>
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<td>JOP: Journal of Politics</td>
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<td>JPSP: Journal of Personality &amp; Social Psychology</td>
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<td>OHPP: Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology</td>
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<td>PoP: Perspectives on Politics</td>
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<td>PP: Political Psychology</td>
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**Thurs 1/19: Introduction: Political Psychology, Groups, and Politics**
An introduction not just to the course, but to some of the problems of the course: identity; social conflict; the development of political orientations; emotions; choice, rationality, and behavior.

In class: see *Ida* (2013; 82 minutes)

**Thurs 1/26: Introduction to Political Psychology – Approaches and Methods**
Discussion of the field of political psychology, its methods and approaches. Applications to the issues of groups and politics, especially in the context of leadership, decision-making, and inequality.
Huddy, Leonie, David O. Sears, and Jack S. Levy, “Introduction: Theoretical foundations of political psychology.” OHPP, Ch1.

**Thurs 2/2: Political Socialization and Individual Development**
How do people develop their patterns of political orientations and behavior? What are some of the chief influences on that process and its outcomes? What are some of the special issues in considering political socialization and individual development in the context of inequality and conflict?

Sears, David O. and Christia Brown. 2013. “Childhood and adult political development. OHPP, Ch.3.

**Thurs 2/9: Rationality, Cognition, and the Structure of Thinking**
What are the limits of “rationality?” How does the mind put things together? How aware are we of the ways our minds work? What are the limitations of the clarity of perception?

Taber, Charles S. and Everett Young. 2013. “Political information processing.” OHPP, Ch. 17.
Kinder, Donald. 2013. “Prejudice and politics.” OHPP, Ch.25.
In BU Library Online.

**Thurs 2/16: Continue with Rationality and Cognition; Personality**
What is “personality” and what are the linkages between among groups, social interactions, social context and personality? How does personality function and apply in politics?

*First brief exam during this session*

Caprara, Gian Vittorio and Michele Vecchione. 2013. “Personality approaches to political behavior.” OHPP, Ch 2.
Take online “Big 5” Personality Test. Available at: [http://www.personalitytest.org.uk/](http://www.personalitytest.org.uk/).

**Thurs 2/23: Intergroup Behavior: General Principles**
Before we start focusing on specific groups in politics, what basic principles have social scientists uncovered about the way that people interact with each other as members of different social groups? What kinds of circumstances shape these group and inter-group dynamics?
Huddy, Leonie. 2013. “From group identity to political cohesion and commitment.” OHPP, Ch.23.
Al Ramiah, Anathi and Miles Hewstone. 2013. “Discrimination: Conditions, consequences, and ‘cures.” OHPP, Ch.27.

**Thurs 3/2: Continue Intergroup Behavior; Emotions and Politics**
What role do emotions play in political thinking and behavior, especially with regard to different social groups?


**Thurs 3/16: Applications: Nationality, Religion, and Ethnicity**
Implicit Association Test: https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html. Go to Take a Test and try Arab-Muslim, Asian-American.

**Thurs 3/23 Race**
Kinder, Donald R. 2013. “Prejudice and politics.” OHPP, Ch. 25.

**Thurs 3/30 Applications: Gender**


Take online Implicit Association Test for Gender-Career. Available at: https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/selectatest.html

**Thurs 4/6: Applications: Class and Economic Sector**

*Second brief exam during this class*


**Thurs 4/13: Applications: Partisanship and Increasing Polarization of American Politics**


**Thurs 4/20: Political Media and The Politics of Groups**


**Thurs 4/27: Can't We Just Talk? Plus Conclusions**