

POSC 306: The Psychology of Identity Politics and Group Behavior

Syllabus

Location: Online

MW 10:00-11:10am, F 9:50-10:50am

Carleton College

Winter 2021

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Phone: 608-440-0026

Office Hours: 1:00-2:00pm Tuesdays online (schedule via Moodle) & by appointment

**** **Course Moodle Website:** <https://moodle.carleton.edu/course/view.php?id=35103> ****

**** **Course Meeting Link:**

<https://carleton.zoom.us/j/98398500735?pwd=R2pNYmZHM25Hd21LdFlLa1NQeUw1QT02> (password: group) ****

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I. Course Description and Objectives

In recent years we have heard a lot about “identity politics.” This course aims to answer the question, why do people form group-based identities and how do they impact mass political attitudes and behavior? Using examples from American politics, we will examine the psychological underpinnings of identity and group-based affiliations as well as their political consequences. In doing so, we will explore how bias, prejudice, and social hierarchy are formed, maintained, and changed. Such evaluations will be based on discussions of various dominant and minority group identities including partisanship, race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, religion, and place.

The objectives of the course are as follows:

- Evaluate the ways in which identity politics can be helpful, and the ways in which it can be problematic.
- Understand the psychological reasons why people form into groups and engage in intergroup conflict.
- Understand how group identities become linked to political issues and candidates, currently and in the past, in the U.S. context.
- Understand how partisanship has become based on identities and group loyalties.
- Understand how other specific types of identities relate to American politics in different ways.
- Critically evaluate sources of information and debates around identity and groups in political psychology.
- Engage in individual and group projects.

II. Course Expectations

In this course, I expect you to be professional, respectful, and engaged. What does this mean? This means that, barring extenuating circumstances, you should complete your work on time, do your readings and assignments on time, and attend class.

During our meeting time, I expect you to minimize distractions for other students, show up on time, participate in class discussions, and be respectful of other students and the instructor during the discussions. Discussions about politics can become heated as our opinions have deep-seated roots in our psychology and morality. Therefore, respectful and open-minded discourse is a must. You may eat or drink during class sessions. Phone use during class is not allowed.

You can expect me, the instructor, to prepare and post course material sufficiently in advance, return graded assignments in a timely fashion, show up to class meetings on time, be available in and outside of office hours, return your emails within 24 hours, notify you of changes to expectations well in advance, and be respectful, professional, and engaged.

III. Required Textbooks

There are a few smaller textbooks that are required for this course, and there will be several other required readings posted on Moodle that are available for free. See Moodle website for most recent updates. The [Schedule below](#) also has other readings – though these are subject to revision. Please let the instructor know if you have trouble obtaining copies of these textbooks.

The required textbooks are:

1. *Identity Crisis: The 2016 Presidential Campaign and the Battle for the Meaning of America*. By John Sides, Michael Tesler, and Lynn Vavreck. Princeton University Press, 2019.
2. *Uncivil Agreement: How Politics Became Our Identity*. By Liliana Mason. University of Chicago Press, 2018.
3. *The Lies that Bind: Rethinking Identity*. By Kwame Anthony Appiah. Profile Books, 2018.
4. *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment*. By Francis Fukuyama. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018.

IV. Course Structure

How is this Class Going to Work?

This course is primarily going to be administered through Moodle and class sessions will occur via Zoom. Assignment sheets, announcements, additional readings, zoom meeting links, and other materials will be posted here. You will turn in your assignments on the Moodle course site as well.

The classes will therefore be held *synchronously*. Most class sessions will involve discussions of required readings, with a small percentage of the in-class time devoted to lecturing by the instructor.

The online materials for the week will be posted by the Monday before the week it will be covered. For instance, Week 3 is Monday 1/18 through Sunday 1/24. Therefore, the materials for Week 3 will be posted and finalized by Monday 1/11 by the end of the day.

What If I Test Positive For COVID-19?

In the event that you test positive for COVID-19, there are three things you need to immediately keep in mind:

1. Prioritize your own health over this class, and,
2. Please contact the instructor to create a customized plan for getting through the course.

Your participation or other assignment grades will not be penalized if you miss anything due to testing positive for COVID-19.

V. Course Assignments/Grading

Assignment Information

The final grade for the class will be based on the following:

- **Group Project (20%)** – Due Week 6
- **Final Paper (30%)** - due Sunday 3/14 by 5pm
- **Final Paper presentation (10%)** - Week 10
- **Discussion Questions (20%, 10% each)** – Throughout the term (see below)
- **Participation (20%)** – Throughout the term

Some additional information on each of these assignments can be found below, though more information will be provided throughout the term:

Group Project (20% of total).

Students will be randomly placed into small groups of 2-3 to complete a group project on the politicization of groups and identities via campaigns and/or the media. This project involves a short group-written paper (2-3 pages total) and a presentation to the class. Students will present on Wednesday, Feb. 10 (Week 6); project papers are due the day of presentation by 5pm. The presentations will be around 10-15 minutes long, depending on the total class size, with some time for Q&A afterward. More information on these projects will be available on Monday 1/23 via an assignment sheet and in-class explanation.

Final Paper (30% of total).

This paper can either be a full research paper or a research design, but should be around 12 pages in length, double spaced. The paper topic is one of your choosing. More information on this will be provided in a separate assignment information sheet. The final paper is due on Sunday, 3/14 by 5pm (uploaded to Moodle). Students will have to provide short presentations on their topic to the class during Week 10 – see below for details.

Final Research Paper Presentation (10% of total).

Students must present preliminary work/findings on their final research paper (or research design) during Week 10 (3/8 and 3/10). These presentations should be 5-10 minutes in length, though this is subject to class size. Each presentation will be followed by a brief Q&A period. More information on this will be provided later in the term.

Discussion Questions/Discussion “Leader” (20% of total, 10% each time).

Two times during the term, each student will form a series of three discussion questions in preparation for that discussion day. These discussion questions should be based on the readings for that day, but can relate to other readings or ideas/topics found throughout the course or outside of the course. The student will then briefly introduce the context of the question and help facilitate the discussion around those questions.

Participation (20% of total).

As mentioned above, you are expected to participate in class discussions and make an effort to engage with the course material. Regularly attend class, come prepared to discuss the topics and materials, ask questions on material you do not understand, and participate in discussions with thoughtful and respectful comments/questions.

Late assignments will incur a 5-percentage point deduction per day, barring extenuating circumstances.

Grading Scale

The course will follow a standard grading scale:

A: Achievement outstanding relative to the basic course requirements

A 93 or higher

A- 90-92

B: Achievement significantly above the basic course requirements

B+ 87-89

B 83-86

B- 80-82

C: Achievement meeting the basic course requirements

C+ 77-79

C 73-76

C- 70-72

D: Achievement worthy of credit but below the basic course requirements

D+ 67-69

D 63-66

D- 60-62

F: Achievement significantly below basic course requirements

Anything below 60

Grade Dispute Policy

If you wish to dispute a grade on your assignment, please type a short memo that addresses the reasons why you think your grade should be changed and send it to me via email (klunz@carleton.edu) at least 24 hours after you received the grade for this assignment. Once received, I will arrange a meeting with you to discuss the grade further. Note that once you initiate a grade dispute process, there is a chance that your grade will be *lowered* upon further consideration.

Extensions

Extensions will be granted at the discretion of the instructor. That said, I cannot grant extensions past the last day of classes due to a Carleton-wide policy, unless there are extenuating circumstances.

A Note on Office Hours

Office hours are a time where we can chat one-on-one. Err on the side of coming to office hours on occasion (you don't have to come every time, and you are not required to come).

Typically, I will answer questions about the course, including things we're covering right now, assignments, and how you're doing generally. I'm also happy to talk about things like going to grad school, life after Carleton (I was a Carleton grad), and political science as a discipline. Don't be nervous about coming or worried about what we'll talk about – even if we spend 20 minutes talking about non-class related or seemingly trivial topics, it's helpful for you because I'll get to know you and can potentially write recommendations for you for future job applications or graduate school applications. Nothing you say in office hours, and no questions you ask, will result in a lower grade – office hours are not graded, nor will any questions asked in office hours about a specific assignment result in a lower grade on that assignment.

VI. Schedule

The following is an overview of the course. Note that additional readings may be added to some weeks; this change will be advertised at least 10 days before the first discussion section for that week. Please refer to Moodle for more detailed instructions and updates, and to get access to the readings marked “(M)”. Complete the week's readings before you attend the class discussion.

Part 1: Introduction to the Course

What is identity politics? Is it good or bad for political outcomes and the functioning of American politics? When has it been beneficial, and when has it been harmful? How does this class approach questions relating to identities and intergroup dynamics?

Monday 1/4:

Required Readings:

[Short Excerpt from *Political Tribes*](#) by Amy Chua, posted in *The Guardian*

[“Identity Politics: Friend or Foe?”](#) by Alicia Garza

Optional Readings:

Federalist Papers No. 10

Part 2: The Social and Political Psychology Behind Identity and Groups

Why do we affiliate with groups and form group identities? How does group membership and group identity differ? What are the roles of threats, norms, values, and emotions?

Wednesday 1/6: Theories of Identity

Required Readings:

- Huddy 2003
- Part of *The Lies That Bind*

Optional Readings:

Friday 1/8: Social Identity Theory

Required Readings:

- Excerpt from *Tajfel and Turner (1979)*
- Huddy (2001)
- Stets and Burke (2000)

Optional Readings:

- Abrams and Hogg (2010) Chapter 11
- Pettigrew

Monday 1/11: Morals, Norms, and Emotions

Required Readings:

- Excerpt from *The Righteous Mind* by Jonathan Haidt

Optional Readings:

Wednesday 1/13: Threat and Intergroup Hostility

Required Readings:

- Branscombe et al. 1999

Optional Readings:

Friday 1/15: Threat and Intergroup Hostility

Required Readings:

- Excerpt from *Us Against Them* by Kinder and Kam
- *Sidanius and Pratto*

Optional Readings:

Part 3: The Politicization of Groups

How do groups mobilize to collective action or political consciousness? How do groups and identities become politicized and linked to issues, candidates, etc.? What is the role of intergroup conflict in politics?

Monday 1/18: Group Consciousness, Linked Fate

Required Readings:

- [McClain et al. 2009](#)
- Donnelly 2020

Optional Readings:

- Cook et al 1987
- [Miller, Gurin, and Gurin \(1980\)](#)

Wednesday 1/20: Group Consciousness, Linked Fate, and Social Movements (“bottom-up”)

Required Readings:

- Simon & Klandermans (2001)

Optional Readings:

Friday 1/22: Group Definition and Politicization by Elites (“top-down”)

Required Readings:

- Posner 2004;
- McTague and Layman 2009
- Article on Fox News and white identity salience

Optional Readings:

Monday 1/25: Politicization in the Contemporary U.S. Context

Required Readings:

- Part of *Identity* by Francis Fukuyama

Optional Readings:

Note: We will go over the Group Project on this day.

Wednesday 1/27: Politicization in the Contemporary U.S. Context

Required Readings:

- Part of *Identity* by Francis Fukuyama
- Part of *Identity Crisis* By Sides, Tesler, and Vavreck

Optional Readings:

Friday 1/29: Politicization in the Contemporary U.S. Context

Required Readings:

- Part of *Identity Crisis* By Sides, Tesler, and Vavreck

Optional Readings:

Part 4: The Special Case of Partisan Identity

How is partisanship as an identity or group unique? How does partisanship impact public opinion, political behavior, and the larger political system/culture?

Monday 2/1:

Required Readings:

- *Uncivil Agreement* by Liliana Mason

Optional Readings:

Wednesday 2/3:

Required Readings:

- *Uncivil Agreement* by Liliana Mason

Optional Readings:

Friday 2/5:

Required Readings:

- Klar et al. 2018
- *Iyengar, Sood, and Lelkes 2012*

Optional Readings:

- Egan 2020

NO CLASS MEETING MONDAY 2/8 DUE TO MIDTERM BREAK

Part 5: Group Presentations

During this day, students will present the findings from their small group projects.

Wednesday 2/10: Group Project Presentations

Note: Group projects due day of presentation by 5pm.

No readings for this day

Part 6: Particularities of Various Social Identities

Not all identities matter equally for politics in the U.S., and different group identifiers have different ways in which they relate to politics and political attitudes. How are identities and group dynamics of race, gender, sexuality, class, religion, and different levels of place unique in American politics?

Friday 2/12: Racial/Ethnic Identity

Required Readings:

- Bobo and Hutchings 1996
- Valenzuela and Michelson 2017

Optional Readings:

- Gurin, Hurtado, and Peng 1994
- [Sellers et al. 1998](#)
- Bobo and Gilliam 1990

Monday 2/15: Racial/Ethnic Identity

Required Readings:

- Excerpt from *White Identity* by Ashley Jardina

Optional Readings:

Wednesday 2/17: Gender and Sexual Identity

Required Readings:

- Murib (Ch. 2)

- Brettschneider et al. (Ch. 16)
- TBD

Optional Readings:

- Tadlock and Taylor (Chapter 12)

Friday 2/19: Class Identity

Required Readings:

- Chapter on Class in *The Lies That Bind*
- Evans 2017 Chapter 9

Optional Readings:

Monday 2/22: Class Identity

Required Readings:

- Walsh et al. 2004
- Hooker and Tillery 2017 *PS article*

Optional Readings:

Wednesday 2/24: National Identity

Required Readings:

- Schildkraut 2014
- Levendusky 2020 (or 2019)

Optional Readings:

- Breakwall 2000

Friday 2/26: National Identity

Required Readings:

- Huddy and Khatib 2007
- Citrin and Sears 2009 or Citrin et al 2007

Optional Readings:

Monday 3/1: Other Place-Based Identity

Required Readings:

- *Rural Identity* 2012 AJPS paper by Katherine Cramer
- 2020 Pol Geo by B. Kal Munis or Lunz Trujillo?

Optional Readings:

- *The Politics of Resentment* by Katherine Cramer

Wednesday 3/3: Religious Identity and Identity Based on Issues

Required Readings:

- Margolis
- Lacombe 2018
- Putnam and Campbell

Optional Readings:

Friday 3/5: Critiques and Reflections

Required Readings:

- TBD

Optional Readings:

Part 8: Student Final Paper Presentations

This week students will give short presentations on what they've worked on for their final papers, including the topic, argument, and supporting details or evidence.

Monday 3/8: Student Final Paper Presentations

No assigned readings

Wednesday 3/10: Student Final Paper Presentations

No assigned readings

FINAL RESEARCH PAPER DUE SUNDAY 3/14 BEFORE 5:00 PM (to Moodle)

VII. Carleton Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that Carleton is located in the city of Northfield, founded in 1856. The land in Northfield had once been where the Indigenous Dakota and Ojibwe people had lived since time immemorial; less than a decade before Northfield's founding, Minnesota had expelled the Dakota and Ojibwe people from these lands.

Please remember to respect and honor the Dakota and Ojibwe people, to respect and care for the land, and to celebrate the resilience and cultures of the Dakota, Ojibwe, and other Indigenous peoples all over the world.

VIII. Academic Honesty

In writing course papers, students must document all passages, paraphrases and/or ideas that are borrowed from any source, and direct quotations must be placed within quotation marks. Similarly, papers must represent research conducted for the course in which they are assigned and no other; it is not appropriate to submit a paper that has already been or will be submitted to another course. Finally, papers must be the product of students' own work. Papers written by anyone other than the student, including those purchased from commercial research services, are unacceptable.

All work is expected to be your own. Cheating, plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas without properly citing them), and all forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated and will be strictly handled according to university policy. If you are uncertain, cite your sources! A discussion of plagiarism can be found at: <https://www.carleton.edu/writing/plagiarism/>.

IV. Additional Carleton Policies and Student Support

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES – HELPDESK

The ITS helpdesk is a centralized support center for all students, staff and faculty on campus. For students, we support their personally-owned devices including a drop-off repair service for software and some minor hardware issues. The helpdesk also supports and maintains 13 [public computer labs](#) and their associated printers across campus. To contact the ITS helpdesk, go to <https://apps.carleton.edu/campus/its/services/helpdesk/> or you can call, email, or contact the helpdesk directly by phone at 507-222-5999 (x5999 from on campus). Phone is best for time-sensitive requests. You can also email helpdesk@carleton.edu (Any email sent to this address automatically opens a support ticket) or contact the Web Help Desk: <https://helpdesk.carleton.edu/> to open your own ticket.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Carleton College is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The Disability Services office (Burton Hall 03) is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations. If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, autism spectrum disorders, chronic health, traumatic brain injury and concussions, sensory, or physical), please contact Chris Dallager, Director of Disability Services, by calling 507-222-5250 or sending an email to cdallager@carleton.edu to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.

TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

The Assistive Technologies program brings together academic and technological resources to complement student classroom and computing needs, particularly in support of students with physical or learning disabilities. Accessibility features include text-to-speech (Kurzweil), speech-to-text (Dragon) software, and audio recording Smartpens. If you would like to know more, contact aztechs@carleton.edu or visit go.carleton.edu/aztech.

LEARNING STRATEGIES AND TIME MANAGEMENT

Steve Schauz, Academic Skills Coach, is eager to help you develop learning strategies that work in the Carleton context. His goals are to heighten your awareness of your personal strengths and to offer different ways you can approach your academic work so you're more efficient and effective. For details and resources: [Learning Strategies & Time Management](#). If you prefer to learn these skills and strategies on your own, visit "[Helpful DIY Resources](#)."

LIBRARY RESOURCES

Your librarian for this course and for Political Science is [Sean Leahy](#). You may also email reference@carleton.edu. Librarians are excellent sources of assistance with your research in this class. You can drop by the library's [Research/IT desk](#) to ask any question you have, at any point in your process, or chat with a librarian online 24/7. Librarians help students find and evaluate articles, books, websites, statistics, data, government documents, and more. For more information on hours and librarians, visit the Gould Library website at go.carleton.edu/library.

WRITING SUPPORT

The Writing Center, located in 420 4th Libe, has peer writing consultants who can work with you during any stage of the writing process (brainstorming to final proofreading). Hours and more information can be found on the [writing center website](#). You can reserve specific times for conferences in 420 4th Libe by using their [online appointment system](#). Walk-ins are welcome, though writers with appointments have priority.

If you are a second language writer and believe you might benefit from working individually with a writing consultant on a regular basis this term, email Renata Fitzpatrick, [Multilingual Writing Coordinator](#), call her at x5998, or stop by her office in 420D 4th Libe. She can arrange once- or twice-a week meetings between you and a specific writing consultant throughout the term.

STUDENT HEALTH

Carleton College urges you to make yourself--your own health and well-being-- your priority throughout this ten-week term and your career here. It is important to recognize stressors you may be facing, which can be personal, emotional, physical, financial, mental, or academic.

Sleep, exercise, and connecting with others can be strategies to help you flourish at Carleton. If you are having difficulties maintaining your well-being, feel free to contact me and/or pursue other resources, such as [Student Health and Counseling](#) or the [Office of Health Promotion](#).

Carleton College seeks to provide an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you have been the victim of sexual harassment/misconduct/assault we encourage you to report this. If you report this to a faculty member, she or he must notify our college's Title IX coordinator about the basic facts of the incident (you may choose whether you or anyone involved is identified by name). For more information about your options at Carleton, please go to: https://apps.carleton.edu/dos/sexual_misconduct/.