POLS 3303: Political Behavior
University of North Georgia
Spring 2015
MW 2:40 pm – 3:55 pm

Professor: Glen Smith
Office: Strickland 106
Office Hours: MW (9 – 10, 12 – 1, 4 – 5), & Friday (12 – 3pm)
Email: glen.smith@ung.edu

Course Overview

This course will review the main theories explaining the behavior of individuals, social groups, and political leaders, as they relate to political processes and outcomes. The course will cover a wide range of topics including: voting behavior, participation, political discussion, and political violence. Additionally, this course has a substantial research component that requires students to find, read and synthesize scholarly literature on a specific question. By the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. Explain the main factors affecting the behavior of everyday citizens and political leaders.
2. Explain the role of emotions in persuasion and political participation.
3. Explain how social group identities affect political attitudes and behavior.
4. Articulate the main factors leading to group conflict, and how to resolve those conflicts.
5. Find and analyze high-quality research that uses experimental and survey methods.
6. Formulate new theories and hypotheses that expand on existing scholarship.

Course Requirements:

Pop Quizzes (200 Points)

There will be five quizzes held throughout the semester. Each quiz is worth 50 points, and will require you to answer one or two questions from the readings required for that week. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped. The quizzes will test reading comprehension prior to class, so it is important to keep up with the required readings listed in the course outline below. There will be no make-up quizzes, regardless of your reason for missing class.

Literature Review (200 Points)

You will write a literature review on a research topic concerning political behavior. This paper should be between 5 – 7 pages in length, double-spaced using 12-point Times font. Papers are due on Wednesday April 15th at the beginning of class. If you are unaware of the format for
literature reviews, see the assigned articles for examples. Indeed, all of the articles we read in this class have literature reviews, so there should be no confusion about the appropriate format.

**Exams (600 Points)**

There will be three exams and for each one you will answer two essays questions from a list of three or four. Grades will depend on how well you integrate course readings and class lectures. The best approach is to use the evidence provided in the articles to support the theories discussed during class lectures. Each exam is worth 200 points.

**Grading Scale**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>900-1000</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>800-899</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>700-799</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>600-699</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 600</td>
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**Other Information**

*Disruptive Behavior*: Students who exhibit behaviors that are considered to obstruct or disrupt this class or its learning activities will be considered under the Board of Regents Policy on Disruptive Behavior. Behaviors which are considered to be inappropriate in this classroom include sleeping, eating, coming in late, interrupting others, talking out of turn, inappropriate behavior during group work, verbal behavior that is disrespectful of other students or the faculty member, or other behaviors that may be disruptive. Students who exhibit such behavior may be temporarily dismissed from the class by the instructor and may be subject to disciplinary procedures outlined in the Student Handbook.

*Academic Misconduct*: Any student caught cheating or plagiarizing will fail the course and be subject to further disciplinary action by the university.

*Supplemental Course Information*: Students are responsible for accessing supplemental course information common to all courses at [http://ung.edu/academic-affairs/policies-and-guidelines/supplemental-syllabus.php](http://ung.edu/academic-affairs/policies-and-guidelines/supplemental-syllabus.php)
Course Schedule

Week 1 (1/5 – 1/7)
Introduction
-What is political behavior and why is it important?

Part I: Political Attitudes and Persuasion

Weeks 2 (1/12 – 1/14)
Issue “Opinions” and the RAS Model


Week 3 (1/21)
Impressions of Political Leaders


Week 4 (1/26 – 1/28)
How Genetics Influence Political Attitudes


Week 5 (2/2 – 2/4)
Emotions and Opinions


Week 6 (2/9 – 2/11)
Top-Down Persuasion: Why Attitudes Change

*First Exam on Monday February 16*
Part II: Voting Behavior and Participation

Week 7 (2/18)
Voter Turnout

Week 8 (2/23 – 2/25)
Predicting Voting Decisions


Week 9 (3/2 – 3/4)
Party Identification: The Unmoved Mover (Motivator)


Week 10 (3/9 – 3/11)
Interpersonal Discussion and Participation


Media Use and Political Activity


*Second Exam on Monday March 30th*

Part III: Group Conflict

Week 12 (4/1)
Social Identity Theory
Week 13 (4/6 – 4/8)
Prejudice and Tolerance


Week 14 (4/13 – 4/15)
Higher-Level Groups: Nationalism


Week 15 (4/20 – 4/22)
Political Violence: Threat, Terrorism and Genocide

Final Exam on Friday May 1st from 3pm – 5pm