

POLC40H3F Topics in Politics: “Culture Wars”

Tuesday 1-3pm, Rm: AA209 / Arts and Administration Building

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1 Course Description

Why do people disagree about abortion rights, same-sex marriage, wealth redistribution, environmentalism, and immigration policy? Why do people get angry when their core beliefs are challenged? This course examines the major social science theories of why people disagree about political issues. We will explore the ideas and empirical evidence behind the 'end of history,' 'clash of civilizations' and 'culture war' hypotheses, as well as the ongoing debates surrounding sociological, psychological, and genetic sources of variation in political opinions. *Prerequisites: One B-Level full credit in Political Science*

2 Assessment

2.1 Schedule and Weighting

Participation	10%	
Writing Assignment#1	10%	Due October 4th
Midterm Exam	20%	October 25th
Writing Assignment#2	25%	Due November 22nd
Final Exam	35%	Final Exam Period

2.2 Participation

The participation component of your grade is based on the quality and quantity of your contributions to in-class discussion, as well as your contributions to questions, answers and discussions on the class blackboard page, via twitter, or otherwise.

2.3 Essay Assignments

The essay assignments in this class do not involve outside research. Instead, they require a demonstrated understanding of the course readings and an ability to synthesize these readings into a coherent analytical argument.

2.3.1 Essay Grading Criteria

- Style (10%): The essay follows perfectly the formatting guidelines laid out in the APSA Style Manual for Political Science or, equivalently, the author-date style in the 15th edition of the Chicago Manual of Style. The essay is devoid of typographical errors.
- Writing (15%): The essay is well-written. It is grammatically sound and easy to read. Each paragraph contains a single major idea. There are no run-on or incomplete sentences. Punctuation is used properly. The writing is succinct: it is creative, but not wordy. All quotations are properly introduced by preceding text.

- **Demonstrated Understanding (35%):** The essay demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the relevant course readings. The essay cites the relevant readings but is not stacked with general citations to irrelevant sources. The in-text citations to specific arguments from sources include at least one exact page number on which the argument appears.
- **Argument (40%):** The essay analyzes and synthesizes the arguments in relevant course readings to support the development of a single central thesis. This thesis is creative. It is stated clearly at the outset of the essay, and the remainder of the essay is organized explicitly and logically around supporting this thesis. The essay does not rely heavily on quotations or on tight paraphrasing of wording from sources. Rather, the essay uses original language to characterize the main points from relevant sources.

2.3.2 Essay Late Penalties

The essay assignments are due to turnitin.com by the beginning of class on their respective due dates. The late penalty is 5% for each day, or part thereof, that the work is late (including weekends).

2.3.3 Extensions for Illness

Students who are ill, or who have dependents who are ill, are entitled to a combined maximum of 7 days of undocumented extension, provided that they notify me *by telephone or in person*, and *by the assignment due date*, that their work will be late. This is an 'honor system.' I do not normally require a letter from a doctor to substantiate an illness.

2.3.4 Extensions for Personal Distress

Students who are dealing with exceptional personal circumstances may be granted one undocumented seven day grace period for assignment due dates, provided that they contact me, by telephone or in-person, to inform me of their situation. Decisions about granting extensions in these cases will be made compassionately on a case-by-case basis, but extensions will not be granted for workload issues. Students who are uncomfortable discussing with me the details of their circumstances can receive an extension by providing appropriate documentation from a university counselor. Please see the Health / Wellness Center for more information.

2.3.5 Extensions Requiring Documentation

In the interests of fairness, students who require more than 7 days worth of extension over the course of the semester will have to provide documentation, as per University policy, to justify the extra time.

2.3.6 Statement on Academic Integrity

Students who work hard and play by the rules will not come out of this course with a lower grade than someone who cheats. As the University Handbook on Student Rights and Responsibilities points out:

Honesty and fairness are considered fundamental values shared by students, staff and faculty at the University of Toronto. The University's policies and procedures that deal with cases of cheating, plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct, are designed to protect the integrity of the institution and to maintain a community where competition is fair. As a result, U of T treats cases of academic misconduct very seriously. If it has been alleged that you committed an academic offense, you will find that the allegation is dealt with formally and seriously, and that the penalties can be severe if it is determined that you did cheat. All of the policies and procedures surrounding academic offenses are dealt within one policy: The Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (the 'Code'). This booklet on Academic Integrity is intended to supplement the Code, but not to take its place as the official

document on these matters. Nor does this booklet take the place of legal counsel. The full text of the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters can be found in your Faculty Calendar or online at www.utoronto.ca/govcncl/pap/policies/behaveac.html.... **Ignorance of the rules does not excuse cheating or plagiarism.**

All instances of academic misconduct will be forwarded to the University for further review and discipline. For more information, please visit the website of the Center for Teaching Support and Innovation at the University of Toronto: Academic Integrity at the University of Toronto. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please do not hesitate to ask me.

2.3.7 Statement on the Use of *Turnitin*

To deter and detect academic misconduct, this course uses, among other things, *turnitin.com*, a tool which facilitates an analysis of textual similarities between sources. Thus,

students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.

2.4 Exams

The examinations in this class will be comprised of short answer and essay questions, with approximately equal weight assigned to both types of questions in the midterm, and 2/3rds weight assigned to the essay questions in the final exam.

2.4.1 Missing the Midterm

Students who do not write the midterm exam will have to provide appropriate documentation, as per University policy. University policy stipulates, for example, that

petitions based on medical grounds must be supported by an original medical certificate stating both that the student was examined and diagnosed at the time of illness and was examined on the day of the exam or immediately after (i.e. the next day). A statement from the physician that merely confirms a report of illness and/or disability made by the student will not be acceptable to justify the absence.

If you are experiencing family or personal difficulties that you are not comfortable discussing with me, I can also accept documentation from the Health & Wellness Center.

2.4.2 Missing the Final

For information about missing the final exam, which is not handled at the course level, please see The Office of the Registrar.

3 Texts and Materials

The required and recommended readings for this course are available on-line, using University of Toronto resources.

4 Class Schedule

Class Attendance: In the event that you have to miss a class, please use the discussion board on the class website to catchup. I encourage you to use this board whenever you have a question, and to monitor this board regularly for an opportunity to answer the questions of others. I will monitor the discussion and interject when absolutely necessary, though, ideally, I would encourage you to answer each other's questions to the best of your abilities.

4.1 September 13: Introduction

4.1.1 Lecture

Political Disagreement in the 21st Century

4.2 Discussion

Introduction

4.2.1 Readings

- POLC40H3F Course Syllabus.

4.3 September 20: The End of History?

4.3.1 Lecture

History and political disagreement.

4.3.2 Discussion

What theory of human motivation underlies Fukuyama's thesis? Do you agree with the end of history thesis? Why or why not?

4.3.3 Readings

- Fukuyama, Francis. 1998. "The End of History?" The National Interest 16(Summer): 3-18.
- Bloom, Allan, Pierre Hassner, Gertrude Himmelfarb, Irving Kristol, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Stephen Sestanovich. 1998. "Responses to Fukuyama." The National Interest 16 (Summer): 19-35.

4.3.4 Assignment

Writing Assignment#1 Begins (10

4.4 September 27: A Clash of Civilizations?

4.4.1 Lecture

The Clash of Civilizations as description, as explanation, and as self-fulfilling prophecy.

4.4.2 Discussion

Is Huntington's Clash of Civilizations thesis meant to explain or describe political conflict? In either case, how would you go about assessing this thesis?

4.4.3 Readings

- Huntington, Samuel P. 1993. “The Clash of Civilizations.” *Foreign Affairs* 72(Summer): 22-49.
- Huntington, Samuel P. 1993. “If Not Civilizations, What? Paradigms of the Post-Cold War Period.” *Foreign Affairs* 72(Winter): 186-194.
- Barber, Benjamin R. 1995. Jihad vs. McWorld. *The Atlantic* 269(March): 53-59.
- Kurtz, Stanley. 2002. “The Future of ‘History’”. *Policy Review* 113(June & July): 43-58.
- Perry, Glenn E. 2002. “Huntington and his Critics: The West and Islam.” *Arab Studies Quarterly* 24(Winter): 31-48.

4.5 October 4: Culture War?

4.5.1 Lecture

The politics of people who lead.

4.5.2 Discussion

What do these readings reveal about the level of analysis problem as it applies to political disagreement?

4.5.3 Readings

- Hunter, James Davidson. 1991. *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America*. New York: Basic Books, 42-51.
- Frank, Thomas. 2004. *Whats the Matter with Kansas? How Conservatives Won the Heart of America*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 1-27. [quick read]
- Gelman, Andrew, David Park, Boris Shor, Joseph Bafumi, and Jeronimo Cortina. 2008. *Red State, Blue State, Rich State, Poor State: Why Americans Vote the Way They Do*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 3-23.
- Fiorina, Morris, with Samuel J. Abrams, and Jeremy C. Pope. 2005. *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*. 2nd Edition. New York: Longman, 1-32. [quick read]

4.5.4 Assignment

Writing Assignment#1 Ends - Due at the Beginning of Class

4.6 October 11: A Worldwide Left/Right Divide?

4.6.1 Lecture

Political disagreement in one, two, and more dimensions of “issue space”

4.6.2 Discussion

Why is the language of left/right used to describe political disagreement in so many different countries? How effectively do the categories of left/right describe the patterns of political disagreement at the national level in Canada? What about at the individual level?

4.6.3 Readings

- No'el, Alain, and Jean-Phillipe Thrien. Left and Right in Global Politics. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1-33.
- Bobbio, Noberto. 1996. Left and Right: The Significance of a Political Distinction. Cambridge: Polity Press, 30-37 & 60-79.
- Cochrane, Christopher. 2010. "Left/Right Ideology and Canadian Politics." 43:3, 1-23.

4.7 October 18: A New Politics Cleavage?

4.7.1 Lecture

The theory and methodology behind the Postmaterialism Thesis.

4.7.2 Discussion

How does Inglehart's theory of postmaterialism handle the level of analysis problem?

4.7.3 Readings

- Inglehart, Ronald. 1971. The Silent Revolution in Europe: Intergenerational Change in Post-Industrial Societies. The American Political Science Review 63(December): 991-1017.
- Kitschelt, Herbert, and Staf Hellemans. 1990. The Left-Right Semantics and the New Politics Cleavage. Comparative Political Studies 23(2): 210-238.

4.8 October 25: Midterm Exam

4.9 November 1: Political Psychology

4.9.1 Lecture

Political disagreement at the individual-level of analysis

4.9.2 Discussion

What are the benefits and challenges of explaining cultural disagreement from a psychological perspective?

4.9.3 Readings

- Sears, David O., Leonie Huddy, Robert Jervis. 2003. The Psychologies Underling Political Psychology. In Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology, ed. David O. Sears, Leonie Huddy, and Robert Jervis. New York: Oxford University Press, 3-16. ISBN: 978-0195162202 (13 of 832 pages).
- Jost, John T., Christopher M. Federico, and Jaime L. Napier. 2009. "Political Ideology: Its Structure, Functions, and Elective Affinities." Annual Review of Psychology 60: 307-37.

4.9.4 Assignment

Writing Assignment #2 Begins

4.10 November 8: Elites

4.10.1 Lecture

Cultural disagreement at the individual-level of analysis

4.10.2 Discussion

Does the information-predisposition framework resolve the level of analysis problem? Why or why not?

4.10.3 Readings

- Converse, Philip E. 1964. The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics. In *Ideology and Discontent*, ed. David E. Apter. Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 206-261. [skim middle section]
- Iyengar, Shanto, and Donald R. Kinder. 1987. News that Matters: Television and American Opinion. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1-5, 16-33, 63-72, 90-97.
- Tversky, Amos, and Daniel Kahneman. "The Framing of Decisions and the Psychology of Choice." *Science* 211(January): 453-458.
- Zaller, John R. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 6-22.

4.11 November 15: Social Networks and Deliberation

4.11.1 Lecture

Political disagreement from the group-level of analysis

4.11.2 Discussion

What are the benefits and challenges of explaining cultural disagreement from a sociological perspective?

4.11.3 Readings

- Lipset, Seymour Martin. 1960. *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 21-41.
- Huckfeldt, Robert, and John Sprague. 1987. Networks in Context: The Social Flow of Political Information. *The American Political Science Review* 81(December): 1197-1216.
- Druckman, James N., and Kjersten R. Nelson. 2003. Framing and Deliberation: How Citizens' Conversations Limit Elite Influence. *American Journal of Political Science*. 47(October): 729-745.

4.12 November 22: Behavioral Genetics

4.12.1 Lecture

The science and politics of behavioral genetics

4.12.2 Discussion

With whom do you side in this debate? Why?

4.12.3 Readings

- Fowler, James H. and Darren Schreiber. 2008. Biology, Politics, and the Emerging Science of Human Nature. *Science* 322(November): 912-914.
- Alford, John R., Carolyn L. Funk, and John R. Hibbing. 2005. Are Political Orientations Genetically Transmitted? *American Political Science Review* 99(May): 153-167.
- Charney, Evan. 2008. "Genes and Ideologies." *Perspectives on Politics* 6(June): 299-319.
- Alford, John R., Carolyn L. Funk, and John R. Hibbing. 2008. "Beyond Liberals and Conservatives to Political Genotypes and Phenotypes." *Perspectives on Politics* 6(June): 321-328.
- Charney, Evan. 2008. "Politics, Genetics, and 'Greedy Reductionism.'" *Perspectives on Politics* 6(June): 337-343.

4.12.4 Assignments

Writing Assignment#2 ends - Due at the beginning of class.

4.13 November 29: A Unified Theory of Political Disagreement?

4.13.1 Lecture

The prospects of theoretical unification.

4.13.2 Discussion

Why do people disagree about abortion rights, same-sex marriage, wealth redistribution, environmentalism, and immigration policy? Why do people get angry when their core beliefs are challenged?

4.13.3 Readings

- Downs, Anthony. 1957. "An Economic Theory of Political Action in a Democracy." *The Journal of Political Economy* 65(April): 135-150.
- Grofman, Bernard. 2004. "Downs and Two-Party Convergence." *Annual Review of Political Science* 7: 25-46.