

C O U R S E G U I D E

Introduction to Political Psychology

Gerda Lederer

White Plains, NY 10607

DIAL  
The New School  
Summer '95

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### Course Description

Political Psychology promotes an interdisciplinary understanding of political processes and human relationships, drawing not only on psychology and political science but also on the fields of sociology, history, economics and anthropology. It is the goal of this course to help students view the world from this interdisciplinary perspective.

Following a historical overview we will focus on the individual and his attitudes, his values and his leaders. From the plethora of themes, students will select a subject for further exploration and as the focus of a term paper.

### Course Syllabus

(Summer Courses are on-line June 12th to August 5th, 1995.)

Regarding the reading assignments:

Our text will be W.F.Stone and P.E.Schaffner, The Psychology of Politics, Second Edition, Springer-Verlag, New York: 1988.

\*Reading assignments marked with an \* are required. The other listings are supplementary and recommended.

#### Week 1: June 12-18

Topic: What is political psychology?

Readings: \*"Politics and Psychology: A Two-Way Street."  
Stone and Schaffner, Ch.2, pp. 23-45.

#### Week 2: June 19-25

Topic: The individual and his attitudes.

Readings: \*"Character, Attitudes and Socialization"  
Stone and Schaffner, Ch.3, pp. 49-75.  
\*"Psychology and Ideology"  
Stone and Schaffner, Ch.4, pp. 76-100.

#### Week 3: June 26- July 2 and

#### Week 4: July 3-9

Topic: Authoritarianism, Dogmatism and Machiavellianism

Readings: \*"Authoritarianism and Machiavellianism"  
Stone and Schaffner, Ch.6, pp.133-158.  
\*"Formation of In-Groups", Allport, Ch.3,  
pp.29-47.  
\*"The Prejudiced Personality", Allport, Ch.25,  
pp.395-409.  
"Authoritarian Personality in Contemporary  
Perspective", Sanford in Handbook of Political  
Psychology, pp.139-170.  
"A Fundamental Distinction between Open and  
Closed Systems," Rokeach and Restle in "The  
Open and the Closed Mind", Rokeach pp.54-70.

Week 5: July 10-16

Topic: Political Socialization, Conformity and Role Playing

Readings: \*"Political Socialization", Niemi in Handbook of Political Psychology, Ch.5, pp.117-138.  
 \*"Behavioral Study of Obedience", Milgram in Aronson, ed. Readings about The Social Animal, Section II; pp.23-36.  
 \*"The Study of Prisoners and Guards in a Simulated Prison", Haney, Banks, and Zimbardo in Aronson, ed. Readings about The Social Animal, Section II; pp.52-67.

## COURSE EVALUATION

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Week 6: July 17-23

Topic: Psychohistory - Socialization for Leadership

Readings: \*"Adolf Hitler's Childhood: From Hidden to Manifest Horror", Alice Miller in For Your Own Good, pp.142-197.  
 "Obedience - To Whom?" Erikson in Young Man Luther, pp.49-97.

Week 7: July 24-30

Topic: Political Action

Readings: \*"Protest Movements as a Form of Political Action", Lederer in Political Psychology, pp.355-378.  
 "Relative Deprivation and the Impetus to Violence", Gurr in Why Men Rebel, pp.22-50.

Week 8: July 31 - August 6

Topic: Crimes of Obedience

Readings: \*"The My Lai Massacre: A Military Crime of Obedience" Ch.1 in Kelman and Hamilton, Crimes of Obedience, pp.1-22.  
 \*"On Breaking the Habit of Unquestioning Obedience", Ch.13 in Kelman and Hamilton, Crimes of Obedience, pp.307-338.  
 "The Origins of Genocide and Mass Killing: Core Concepts" Ch.2 in Staub, The Roots of Evil, pp.13-34.

## Course Requirements and Criteria for Grading

### Class Participation

Students are expected to log-on regularly (three times a week if possible, but at least once a week) and to keep current on all assigned required reading. Class participation consists of weekly responses to the subject under discussion. These may consist of a short paragraph or be as long as a page or two. You can report on some optional reading you have done on the subject, you can respond to the instructor's text or to a fellow student's comment, or to a point in the assigned reading. Your participation can be in the form of questions, comments, or examples. (35%)

### Term Paper

Students are expected to select one of the subjects under scrutiny in this course (or possibly one of special interest to the student, subject to instructor's approval) for a term paper. By the fourth week students are expected to write briefly on the reasons for their choice and the tentative hypotheses to be explored. (10%) An outline of the readings they will undertake and the structure of the paper is required by the sixth week (10%), the completed term paper (between 10 and 15 pages in length) is to be submitted by mail to the DIAL Office) by the end of the term. (25%)

### Course Evaluation

As we travel along in this DIAL On-Line course we will have critical thoughts about our progress. Not only the course content but the technology and the interaction will be new to many students - and to this instructor. By the fifth week of the semester, each student is expected to comment on her/his experience, offering examples and suggestions for the students and the instructor if possible. This comment can take the place of that week's participation if the student desires. (20%)

### Instructor's Biography

Gerda Lederer was born in Vienna and spent a year in Paris before emigrating to the United States. In 1974, a year spent working in Germany proved to be a pivotal life experience that turned her interest from physics and mathematics to the social sciences, particularly to political psychology.

Gerda Lederer received a Ph.D. from Columbia University in sociology and social psychology in 1980 and has since engaged in cross-cultural research on authoritarianism, dogmatism, anti-semitism and political protest behavior in East and West Germany, in Austria, in Moscow and in the United States. Her work was supported by grants from the Institute for Conflict Research in Vienna, the Konrad-Adenauer Foundation, the German National Science Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft) and the Thyssen Foundation. Her findings have been published in numerous books and articles in Germany and the United States. In 1981 her cross-cultural study on trends in authoritarianism among adolescents earned her the Erik Erikson Award of the International Society of Political Psychology, an organization she has supported actively since its inception in 1978.

### From the Instructor

Have you ever had an "aha experience" - a moment of insight when you suddenly understand how a number of factors fit together that had never come together before? For me, the introduction to political psychology was such an experience. In this course, I would like to enable you to share this insight.

To find the best way to do this, I examined a compendium of 23 courses in political psychology offered at universities throughout the country, put together and taught by members of the International Society of Political Psychology. This excursion confirmed my feeling that there is no prescribed syllabus for such a course, that the instructors focus on the parts of the field that interest them and seem most important to them.

I hope to do the same. We will look for the connection between political processes and psychological processes. We will examine political behavior from the perspective of the individual, the group, the organization, and the nation. We will examine the psychology of political leaders and the leader-follower relationship. That will lead us to examine political socialization and political identity.

I don't know yet where else the course will take us. It will depend on you and your interests - on the discussions we will have and the questions that will come up. If, by the end of the semester, you will have become aware of the reciprocal interaction between the individual and his society, if you will see these patterns in history, in current world events, and in your neighborhood, our course will have been a success. If your interest will have been aroused and you want to continue this exploration in subsequent courses, if you want to add to our knowledge by identifying problems and conducting research in the field, we will have won a true convert.

A last point: In a live classroom it has been my practice to ask course participants for comments and suggestions in our work together. This will be even more useful to our success as we interact as disembodied spirits in cyberspace. I don't like to wait with this practice until the end of the semester - then it is too late to fix problems! And we have to get to know one another and the novel communication available to us before we can judge it, I think. So - whereas you can make comments whenever the spirit moves you, both critical and complementary, be prepared for a formal request for your assessment to that point about half-way through the course!

For now, welcome aboard and I am happy that you are here!  
I look forward to meeting you on my screen!

Office Hours:

You can also reach me by telephone Tuesdays from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm (Eastern time) at 1-914-428-3404.

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In addition to the textbook, reading selections were chosen from the following:

1. G.W.Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice*, 25th Anniversary paperback edition, New York: Addison-Wesley 1988:  
     "Formation of In-Groups", Ch.3, pp.29-47.  
     "The Prejudiced Personality", Ch.25, pp.395-409.
2. J.N.Knutson, Ed. "*Handbook of Political Psychology*", San Francisco: Jossey-Bass 1973:  
     Nevitt Sanford, "Authoritarian Personality in Contemporary Perspective", Ch.6, pp.139-170.  
     R.G.Niemei, "Political Socialization", Ch.5, pp.117-138.
3. M.Rokeach, "*The Open and the Closed Mind*", New York: Basic Books 1960:  
     M.Rokeach and F.Restle, "A Fundamental Distinction between Open and Closed Systems," Ch.3, pp.54-70.
4. A. Miller, "*For Your Own Good*", New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux 1983:  
     "Adolf Hitler's Childhood: From Hidden to Manifest Horror", pp.142-197.
5. E.H.Erikson, "*Young Man Luther*", New York: Norton 1958 (reissued 1993):  
     "Obedience - To Whom?" Ch.3, pp.49-97.
6. E.Aronson, Ed. "*Readings about The Social Animal*", Fourth Edition, New York: Freeman 1984:  
     S. Milgram, "Behavioral Study of Obedience", Section II; pp.23-36.  
     C.Haney, C.Banks, and P.Zimbardo, "The Study of Prisoners and Guards in a Simulated Prison", Section II; pp.52-67.
7. T.R.Gurr, "*Why Men Rebel*", Princeton: Princeton University Press 1970:  
     "Relative Deprivation and the Impetus to Violence", Ch.2, pp.22-50.

8. M.G.Hermann, Ed., "Political Psychology", San Francisco: Jossey-Bass 1986:  
G.Lederer, "Protest Movements as a Form of Political Action", Ch.12, pp.355-378.
9. H.C.Kelman and V.L.Hamilton, "Crimes of Obedience," New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989:  
"The My Lai Massacre: A Military Crime of Obedience" Ch.1, pp.1-22.  
"On Breaking the Habit of Unquestioning Obedience", Ch.13, pp.307-338.
10. E.Staub, "The Roots of Evil," Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1989:  
"The Origins of Genocide and Mass Killing: Core Concepts" Ch.2, pp.13-34.