

PSC 213: Political Socialization  
Spring 2019

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**Professor:** Dr. Molly W. Andolina

• Contact Info:

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• Office Hours:

Thursdays: 2:30-4:00 & by appt  
990 W. Fullerton, 2101

• Class Meets: A&L 306, ; TTh 11:20-12:50

**Course**

**Description:** In the world of politics and government, pundits spend a lot of time discussing fluctuations in public opinion, the habits and ideas of key groups, or the escapades of political personalities. There is much less time devoted to how such political attitudes, behaviors or beings were developed, inculcated or shaped. In this class, we are going to rectify this omission by looking at the process by which we become who we are – political or apolitical, liberal or conservative, activist or bystander, and everything in between.

We will begin the class with an overview of how political scientists have framed the study of political socialization, including the lessons they have learned (borrowing heavily from other disciplines) and the problems and assumptions associated with socialization research. We will then move to a discussion of the aging process and examine how individuals change and grow (or stay the same) over time, including a look at what encourages growth and what reinforces preexisting habits. Next, we will move to the heart of the study, tracing some of the traditional “agents” of socialization – the family, schools and peers – and spending some time with additional influences of class, gender and immigrant status. We will finish up with a look at the role of American culture and the unique conditions that create political activists.

This course will combine two different approaches to studying political socialization. First, we will focus on the level of a single individual, beginning with yourself. Throughout this course, and in a particular assignment, you will reflect on your own experiences to date. In addition, we will look at various individuals and their personal stories. However, a key component of this class is to move beyond single cases to an understanding of larger trends. Thus, the second approach is to focus on generalizations. This means that you will learn about what we know about patterns in political socialization influences, processes and outcomes. We will discuss and evaluate various research methodologies, comparing quantitative and qualitative techniques for their strengths and weaknesses. You are not required to accept these studies whole-heartedly, but you are required to know the key conclusions so that you can critique them.

This course satisfies the Social, Cultural and Behavioral Inquiry (SCBI) domain requirement for the Liberal Studies core. As such, it is designed to require you to think about the relationship between individuals and broader society, to evaluate the differential power accorded various individuals (or groups), to contemplate the role of culture in shaping our political socialization, and to discuss the variety of ways in which our diversity affects our political outlooks and behavior. You will be required to think critically about these key constructs, which includes evaluating the data used as evidence and critiquing the methods used to collect such data. Finally, you will personally reflect, in writing, about your own political socialization.

**Grades:** 10% Participation  
25% Term Paper (due May 14<sup>th</sup> in class)  
30% Pop Quizzes (average across the quarter with lowest score dropped)  
35% Take Home Final Exam (due June 11<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 noon)

**Readings:** There are no books assigned for this course. Instead, our readings are a selection of book chapters and journals articles available via D2L. All of these are required.

**You will be expected to discuss reading assignments in class.** The only way to do so, of course, is to actually read the assignment and attend each class meeting.

While there is a lot of reading in this class, much of it is enjoyable. (Some would describe it as fascinating!) Moreover, it is a manageable load, *if you stay on schedule*. There is a reading assigned for almost every day (except the day your paper is due). Some readings are short, but dense. Others are longer, but more accessible. Plan accordingly. If you fall behind, you will fail the quizzes and it will be very difficult to prepare for the final exam. If you stay on top of the reading and are an active member of the class, the quizzes will be easy and the final will be quite manageable.

**Please note that you are responsible for accessing the readings from D2L.**

While all the links should work, occasionally electronic technology is not reliable. There is a word document that contains a list of all readings for the class posted on D2L. This document has a full bibliographic citation for each assignment, which means that if you have trouble accessing the material via the hyperlinks, you will have enough information to find the material through alternative routes. *I expect you to always complete the reading before arriving in class.*

**Participation:** Participation is a key element of this class. Participation does not simply mean showing up, although in order to discuss reading assignments, you have to actually attend class. Simply showing up regularly earns a “C” – to earn a higher grade, you need to actively and meaningfully participate in the discussion. I will note when your participation is substantively grounded in the readings and when it is not.

If you miss a class, you are responsible for the material covered, including any changes to the schedule. You are allowed two absences, excused or unexcused. I do not want to know why you missed or evaluate the worthiness of your absence. You

simply get two missed appearances for free. After that, all absences will have a negative impact on your grade.

Class discussion—and opinions in general—are a vital part of the learning experience of this course. Questions are welcomed. Students are expected to come to class prepared to share their questions, comments, criticisms, and insights with others. We will all gain more from the class if there is a wide breadth of opinion that is shared. Please do so.

**Pop Quizzes:** Although the readings are compelling and important and worthwhile, even the most well-meaning student can let an “untested” assignment fall by the wayside of the many obligations that you have on your time. To help you stay on task, I will randomly quiz you about the readings. These pop quizzes are not designed to punish you, but are created as opportunities for you to illustrate your understanding of the readings and your attention to the assignments. They are **open note**, which means that if you take notes on the readings, you will be well prepared for the quizzes. And, there is the added bonus of having a great set of materials to help you prepare for and complete the final exam.

**Term Paper: Political Autobiography; Due May 14<sup>th</sup> in class; hard copies only.**

Young people today are often described as lacking political ideas and political convictions. Yet, much of my own research suggests that this is not the case; many of today’s youth feel strongly about particular issues, even if they aren’t overtly political. Your assignment is twofold: First, describe your own political outlook and ideology as well as your level of activism and explain how you came to be who you are. Second, place this discussion in the larger framework of the scholarly literature on political socialization.

In order to describe your own political outlook, you will need to place your opinions and behavior in some sort of framework (probably revolving around key questions or values) for evaluating questions facing us as a society. This should be more than the simple “Democrat” or “Republican” label. Think about how the general values that you hold can be applied to questions of public policy.

The second component should describe and evaluate what influences have contributed to these key values and the related opinions. These may fall within the traditional three agents of family, school and peers (and you should describe any and all influences here), but you should also move beyond this to religious leaders or teachings, a book you read, a political event, a personal experience, the broader American culture, or your personal ethnic heritage, to name a few examples. The crucial element is to develop the causal connection—how these influences have created your outlook.

Good writing will be concrete and illustrative. Do not write, “I am against the death penalty because I was raised as a Catholic.” Talk about going to mass as a child and listening to the homilies, or discussions that you had in your classrooms, or the ways in which your parents talked about religion and politics around the dinner table.

The stories of individuals we have studied can serve as guidance and reference points for your own story. You must also incorporate the research we have reviewed. These works will provide a broader framework for understanding and describing your own experiences.

**The papers will be evaluated in terms of how well students document and explain connections between their socialization processes and their current ideologies, as well as how these processes compare to the political socialization literature. The best papers will make these connections clear and will use the course readings to illustrate key points.**

The paper should be 10-12 double-spaced pages, with standard one inch margins and 12 point font.

If you are having trouble with the assignment (because you don't have a sense of what your ideology is, or you can't seem to trace the influences, or you are unsure about how to describe the process), or if you just want to talk about it, please come see me.

**Final Exam:** The final exam will consist of essay assignments and will cover material from readings, movies, class discussions, and lectures. They will test both your mastery of important concepts and your ability to think analytically.

**Class policies:**

All written assignments must be turned in on *hard copy* to me in class. No electronic submissions will be accepted. Anything received late receives a *one letter grade deduction for every calendar day that it is late*.

**Grading Criteria:**

You will be graded on the structure, style and substance of your argument. If you have any questions about the assignment, or about these criteria, do not hesitate to come to me.

A A paper that earns an "A" is truly exceptional. There is a thesis paragraph that provides a road map for the rest of the paper, which ends with a meaningful conclusion. Statements are supported by evidence, which is judiciously assembled to make a case. The writing is clear and concise; the analysis is sophisticated and thoughtful. The argument (e.g., personal political outlook and the various influences) is logically developed and well organized. The various complexities associated with the process of political socialization are recognized and addressed. Supporting sources from the assigned readings are smoothly integrated into the body of the text. There is mature sentence variety and paragraph development. They address all elements of the assignment (moving beyond description to make clear causal connections, for example) and use appropriate citations. It is grammatically flawless; there are no spelling errors. "A minus" papers do much of this, but have some slight weaknesses.

- B B papers represent strong, solid work. They are well organized, comprehensive, and clear, but may have a few grammatical errors. A multifaceted socialization process is described, with attention to various influences. Primary and secondary sources are incorporated, but not always paraphrased. There may be slightly less development of one's political ideology, or only a superficial discussion of the influences. Although reflective, it may not delve as deeply as would be required for a truly thoughtful look at one's socialization. There is adequate sentence variety and paragraph development. These B papers address all elements of the assignment, but are probably stronger on some parts than others. Low B papers attempt to do this, but fall quite short in one or more areas. In general, "B minus" papers make a fair attempt to fulfill the assignment, but are weakened by incoherent writing, incomplete analysis, or reducing complex issues to overly simplistic assessments.
- C C papers meet the minimum requirements, low Cs barely do. They are often poorly organized, which prevents a clear argument. They fail to make strong connections between their opinions and the different influences. They have grammatical and spelling errors and may provide only passing reference to supporting work. While they may have a thesis, it is not well developed and there is often no clear purpose or conclusion. They may fail to address key elements of the assignment. There are organizational and argumentative weaknesses. Citations may be used, but inconsistently or incorrectly.
- D D papers fail to make an argument, or do so in such a confusing, disorganized way that the meaning is lost on the readers. They are replete with errors. The arguments provided are often ambiguous. There is usually only superficial discussion of the issues.

**Tips for  
Success:**

This class requires you to work hard, but it also rewards you for hard, thoughtful work. The first key to success in this class is to **do all the reading**. Prepare notes for pop up quizzes or to help you when you write your paper and final exams. You need to know the central argument of the reading as well as the evidence the authors provide in order to engage in a critical assessment of the work. In general, you should spend two or three hours outside of class for every hour in class. That means that you should be spending six to nine hours a week on this class. Invest the time and you will see the results.

A second tip for success is to **engage thoughtfully in class discussions**. The quality of your contributions is as important as the quantity. Reference the text; **listen attentively** to your classmates; be willing to respectfully challenge each other and me about our assumptions, our interpretations and our conclusions. We will all gain more if we can push our discussion beyond the surface.

Finally, remember to **communicate with me**. If, at any time, you find that you are unable to complete the assignments, or it is becoming difficult for you to attend class, please contact me. Do not let this become a class you pay for but don't experience.

**Academic Integrity:**

Please note that a key element of this policy is the requirement that that you **cite your sources** of information, which also means including a bibliography. You must give attribution to any information, idea, assessment, or evaluation that you found either on the web or in another source, *even if you paraphrase the words*. Do not, under any circumstances, directly copy the writing of another individual unless you bracket the words with quotation marks. The standard citation in political science is to put the citation in parentheses at the end of a sentence. First, list the name of the author, then the year of the publication and, if you have a direct quote, then the page number. It should look like this (Andolina 2000, 50). Note the punctuation! The period comes *after* the citation, not before it. If you have any questions about what should be cited or how to do so, I'd be happy to talk to you.

*If you do not uphold these standards, you will receive a failing grade on your assignment, and I will file an Academic Integrity Violation. If the violation is particularly egregious, you will also fail the course.*

If you have any questions about academic integrity at DePaul, you can access the policy here: (<http://condor.depaul.edu/~handbook/code17.html>)

**University Resources:**

The Dean of Students Office (DOS) helps students in navigating the university, particularly during difficult situations, such as personal, financial, medical, and/or family crises. Absence Notifications to faculty, Late Withdrawals, and Community Resource Referrals support students both in and outside of the classroom. Additionally we have resources and programs to support health and wellness, violence prevention, substance abuse and drug prevention, and LGBTQ student services. We are committed to your success as a DePaul student. Please feel free to contact us at <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/dos/>.

**Students with**

**Disabilities:** Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential. To ensure that you receive the most appropriate reasonable accommodation based on your needs, contact me as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of class), and make sure that you have contacted the:

- PLS Program (for LD, AD/HD) at 773-325-1677, Student Center #370, and/or
- The Office for Students with Disabilities (for all other disabilities) at 773-325-1677, Student Center #370

**Class****Schedule:** Reading assignments are due on the DAY they are listed.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Assignment</u>
Apr 2	Welcome, Introduction and Overview	
Apr 4	Political Socialization: The Question of Persistence	Elder
Apr 9	Developmental Theory & Political Socialization	McIntosh & Youniss
Apr 11	New Concepts: Emerging Adulthood	Setterson & Ray
Apr 16	Conceptions of “Political”	Flanagan & Gally
Apr 18	The Family – Personal Stories	Trevino Roy Vance Noonan
Apr 23	The Family – Institutional & Environmental Influences	Flanagan & Tucker Dinas
Apr 25	The Family – The Impact of Class	Lareau
Apr 30	School – Building Citizens	Westheimer & Kahne Bruch & Soss
May 2	School – Inequalities in Citizenship Education	Kahne & Middaugh
May 7	School – Curriculum	Hess, Stoddard & Murto.
May 9	School – Teacher Influences	Hess & McAvoy
May 14	Gender	<b>Paper due</b>
May 16	Gender	Taft Mayer & Schmidt
May 21	Peers	Gordon & Taft
May 23	Ethnicity & Political Identity	Stepick & Stepick
May 28	Ethnicity & Political Activism	Bloemraad & Trost
May 30	Culture & Community	Gladwell

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Assignment</u>
June 4	Political Activists	Teske
June 6	Summary & Wrap Up	Handouts

**Final Exam Due Tuesday, June 11<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 noon in my box in the PSC office.**