

## **Political Psychology: Social Interaction in the Context of Attitudes and Ideologies**

CEU Summer University 2015

13 July – 24 July

Political psychology is the study of political behaviour of individuals and groups in the context of what we know about human psychological characteristics. It is a discipline at the intersection of political science and psychology and includes research on various topics, such as the formation and change of political attitudes and ideologies and how these relate to political behaviour (e.g. voting or political participation more broadly), the formation of group identities and intergroup conflict, including nationalism and extremism, ethnic identities, gender roles and many other essential and problematic areas of our social and political existence. All of these topics concern the attitudes, ideas and belief systems – ideologies – that people hold and which thus structure political behaviour. In this context, the substantive focus of this course is on how attitudes and ideologies structure certain critical aspects of social interaction, group formation and intergroup conflict.

### **Course Overview**

This two-week course at the CEU Summer University 2015 is oriented towards PhD (or advanced MA) students and junior researchers/faculty in the Central and East European region, although participants from all over the world are welcome. The course is intended for approximately 20 participants who are supervised by 5 faculty members. The faculty of the course includes:

- Levente Littvay (Assistant Professor, CEU), course director
- John Jost (Professor of Psychology and Politics, NYU, President Elect of ISPP)
- Aleksandra Cichocka (Lecturer in Social Psychology, University of Kent)
- Christopher Cohrs (Professor of Psychology, Jacobs University)
- Federico Vegetti (Post-Doctoral Fellow, PolBeRG, CEU)

Additional staff from PolBeRG (Political Behaviour Research Group, CEU) and the Department of Political Science will be participating in the workshop discussions and helping to organize other activities of the course. These include:

- Martin Mölder (Doctoral Candidate, Student Vice-President of PolBeRG, CEU), course coordinator
- Constantin Manuel Bosancianu (Doctoral Candidate, CEU)
- Elena Cristina Balea (Doctoral Candidate, CEU)

The course begins with an introductory block that would give an overview of political psychology through methods that are or could be used in the discipline. We will not assume that the potential participants have had extensive and advanced training in the methods of political psychology. The work in progress that is submitted with the application will give us an understanding of the methodological sophistication and range of the participants and will enable us to adjust the content of this block accordingly.

The substantive part of the course, structured in two blocks according to the expertise of the faculty, focuses on political attitudes/ideologies, social groups and on how social conflict emerges as an interplay of these. Altogether, the seminars, which involve discussions of the topics on the basis of readings provided by the instructors, will cover some of the core issues of the discipline. Since the aim of the course is to focus on the research of the participants, it will also be possible to adjust the discussions of the seminars to some extent to fit the needs of the participants once the final list of the latter is determined.

Additionally, the course contains different kinds of activities, which are all designed to give the participants multifaceted knowledge on how to both methodologically and substantively develop their research in political psychology.

For the purpose of encouraging collaboration between participants, we will organize in the beginning of the course what is called “science speed dating”, which will function to familiarise the participants with each other’s work, provide potential for collaboration, as well as an ice-breaker in the beginning of the event. In order to improve the potential of the participants for international publishing and research, we will organize two workshops on publishing and on grant writing.

The course will, to a large extent, be structured around the work in progress of the participants. Therefore, during the application process, candidate participants will submit an outline (500 words) of a research paper/thesis/manuscript draft. If they are accepted to the course, they are required to submit the full draft of the already work in progress (approx. 3000 words, see application requirements for more details), which will be at the focus of the workshops through presentations and discussion. The workshops, where participants present their works in progress, are placed in the middle of the course so that all of the faculty can be present and take part in the discussions that follow. Two weeks after the end of the course, the participants will have to resubmit an improved version of their papers, which takes into account the feedback obtained during the course and the workshops. In addition to explicit discussions during the workshops, the submitted work in progress of the accepted participants will enable us to adjust the methodological and substantive seminars of the course to a certain extent so that they would, as much as possible, meet the needs of the participants.

### **Assessment**

There will be no formal assessment of the performance of participants. Attendance of the seminars and workshops is a prerequisite for receiving the certificate of the class.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

### **WEEK 1**

13-17 July 2015

#### **MONDAY**

9.00 – 9.30 **Orientation**, Location: Auditorium, 30 min

10.00 – 10.30 **Library tour**, 30 min

14.00 – 15.00 **Welcoming lecture** (Levente Littvay), 60 min (lecture)

15.30 – 17.30 **Science speed dating** (Federico Vegetti), 120 min (workshop)

18.00 **SUN Opening Party**, Location: Oktober Hall

### **Block I: Introduction to Political Psychology**

This block is devoted to an introduction to Political Psychology. We will discuss the subject first from the two most common approaches used to do empirical research in Political Psychology: survey designs and experiments. First, a short introduction to how experiments work and how they are used in Political Psychology is provided. Thereafter, we will take a look at surveys, which are probably nothing new to anyone interested in Political Psychology. But have you ever thought about the psychology of how people respond to surveys. Finally, Q methodology will be introduced as one useful, but perhaps underutilized approach to empirically study socially shared beliefs.

#### **TUESDAY**

10.00 – 12.00 **Introduction to political psychology** (Levente Littvay), 100 min (seminar)

13.30 – 15.30 **Introduction to experiments** (Levente Littvay), 100 min (seminar)

*The goal of this session is to communicate the basic logic of experimental design to the few who might not have been exposed to it in the past. More importantly, it will review more complex designs for experiments and extend the logic of experimental research to observational studies. We will review lab, field, natural and quasi-experiments alike.*

16.00 – 18.00 **Psychology of survey response** (Levente Littvay), 100 min (seminar)

*The goal of this session is to communicate the basics of survey based research and how it can be used for studies in political psychology. We will be discussing basics such as sampling, data collection modes and questionnaire design while we move towards covering more advanced topics such as survey experiments and the assessment of cognitive biases introduced under various conditions within a survey setting.*

### WEDNESDAY

13.30 – 15.30 **Introduction to Q methodology** (Christopher Cohrs), 100 (seminar)

*In this session Q methodology will be introduced as a method that combines qualitative and quantitative elements. Although it is not used very frequently, it offers a few attractive features that make it appealing from both a more qualitative and a more quantitative angle. The method is particularly well suited to understand socially shared perspectives and to study how people make sense of complex issues – which abound in political psychology. We will not only cover the theoretical and conceptual basics, but will also simulate the entire research process through a practical example.*

### **Block II: Group Membership and Conflict**

Political psychology is about human beings not only as individuals, but also as group members and members of societies. These three seminars introduce a perspective on intergroup conflict that pay particular attention to societal dynamics and to socially shared belief systems. We will cover two complementary approaches: D. Bar-Tal's concept of ethos of conflict and the theory of social representations (introduced by S. Moscovici). Subsequently, these will be theoretically connected.

16.00 – 18.00 **Intergroup conflict: societal dynamics** (Christopher Cohrs), 100 (seminar)

*This session will cover Daniel Bar-Tal's concept of 'ethos of conflict' as well as the broader social psychological model of intergroup conflict which it is part of. Ethos of conflict refers to the socially shared belief system that develops in societies that have been affected by severe intergroup conflict for a long time and that serves to sustain the conflict. Particular emphasis will be given to the interplay of psychological and social processes at the individual and the collective level of analysis.*

### THURSDAY

13.30 – 15.30 **Introduction to social representations** (Christopher Cohrs), 100 (seminar)

*In this session Serge Moscovici's social representations approach will be introduced, along with some newer theoretical developments of this approach. The approach is generally concerned with the development and interplay of different systems of knowledge, which mediate between the socio-political reality and people's sense-making processes. We will also review some of the methods commonly used in research on social representations.*

16.00 – 18.00 **Social representations of conflict** (Christopher Cohrs), 100 (seminar)

*In this session both strands of research will be brought together by focusing on how social representations of conflict develop, how they influence and shape each other, and how they may also influence the actual course of a conflict. We will also link these theoretical considerations back to Q methodology by looking at a research program on representations of the Kurdish conflict in Turkey.*

## ***Workshops and presentations***

### FRIDAY

10.00 – 12.00 **Workshop on publishing** (chaired and moderated by Manuel Bosancianu and Elena Cristina Balea with participation from Levente Littvay, John Jost, Christopher Cohrs, Aleksandra Cichocka, Federico Vegetti, Martin Mölder), 120 min (workshop, roundtable discussion)

13.30 – 15.30, 16.00 – 18.00 **Student presentations**(chaired and moderated by Manuel Bosancianu and Elena Cristina Balea with participation from Levente Littvay, John Jost, Christopher Cohrs, Aleksandra Cichocka, Federico Vegetti, Martin Mölder), 240 minutes (workshop)

### SATURDAY

10.00 – 16.00 Boat Trip to Szentendre

### WEEK 2

20-24 July 2015

### MONDAY

10.00 – 12.00, 13.30 – 15.30, 16.00 – 18.00 **Student presentations** ((chaired and moderated by Manuel Bosancianu and Elena Cristina Balea with participation from Levente Littvay, John Jost, Christopher Cohrs, Aleksandra Cichocka, Federico Vegetti, Martin Mölder), 360 minutes (workshop)

### TUESDAY

10.00 – 12.00 **Student presentations** (chaired and moderated by Manuel Bosancianu and Elena Cristina Balea with participation from Levente Littvay, John Jost, Christopher Cohrs, Aleksandra Cichocka, Federico Vegetti, Martin Mölder), 120 minutes (workshop)

### ***Block III: Political Attitudes and Action***

The substantive seminars in week two will focus on examining the interplay between the individual and contextual factors that shape political attitudes and political action. We examine these factors from the perspectives of social identity theory and system justification theory. We will consider the role of personal, group and system motives in shaping political orientation and beliefs about the socio-political system, with special emphasis on regional and cultural variation.

13.30 – 15.30 **Core dimensions of left-right ideology** (John Jost, Aleksandra Cichocka), 100 min (seminar)

*This session will serve as an introduction to the study of political attitudes and political actions. We will cover basic definitions of the concept of ideology and its history. We will also examine various perspectives on how many dimensions people use to organize their political opinions.*

16.00 – 18.00 **Top-down vs. bottom-up determinants of political orientation** (John Jost, Aleksandra Cichocka), 100 min (seminar)

*The aim of this session will be to discuss the socio-psychological functions and consequences of political orientation. We will examine the links between elite political discourse and psychological motivation that influences an individual's receptiveness to specific political views.*

### WEDNESDAY

10.00 – 12.00 **Major tenets of system justification theory** (John Jost, Aleksandra Cichocka), 100 min (seminar)

*This session will cover assumptions of system justification theory, which seeks to understand how, when, and why people do and do not support existing social systems, sometimes even to their own detriment. We will discuss system justifying ideologies as well as their psychological antecedents and consequences.*

13.30 – 15.30 **Cross-cultural/national/regional variability** (John Jost, Aleksandra Cichocka), 100 min (seminar)

*The aim of this session is to examine the role of context in system justification. We will analyse cross-cultural, national and regional variation in system justification and consider different manifestations of system justifying processes.*

16.00 – 18.00 **Aspects of national identification** (John Jost, Aleksandra Cichocka), 100 min (seminar)

*This session will discuss basic models of identification with ethnic and national groups. We will focus on discussing psychological antecedents of defensive versus constructive national attachment.*

#### THURSDAY

10.00 – 12.00 **Implications for international relations** (John Jost, Aleksandra Cichocka), 100 min (seminar)

*In this session we will discuss the consequences of various modes of national attachment and system justification for intra- and intergroup relations, considering both implicit and explicit intergroup attitudes.*

13.30 – 15.30 **Disruptive vs. non-disruptive forms of protest** (John Jost, Aleksandra Cichocka), 100 min (seminar)

*The aim of this session will be to discuss ways people engage in politics. We will compare political actions that can be disruptive for the society with non-disruptive forms of protest that conform to the current norms of the socio-political systems.*

16.00 – 18.00 **Predictors of participation in collective action** (John Jost, Aleksandra Cichocka), 100 min (seminar)

*In the last session we will examine socio-psychological predictors of participation in various forms of political action. We will discuss individual and group level motivations, as well as process of system justification.*

#### **Workshop and conclusion of the course**

#### FRIDAY

11.00 – 13.00 **Workshop on grant writing** (chaired and moderated by Federico Vegetti with participation from Levente Littvay, John Jost, Christopher Cohrs, Aleksandra Cichocka), 100 min (workshop, roundtable discussion)

14.30 – 15.30 **Concluding lecture** (Levente Littvay), 60 min