Course Description

The goal of this course is to provide students with an introduction to the theoretical arguments employed by scholars studying the biological basis of political behavior as well as the findings that have been reported by this growing literature. Along with theories from political science, we will touch on concepts from genetics, neuroscience, psychophysiology, psychology, and evolutionary theory. The course will also expose students to the methodological techniques employed by researchers doing empirical work in these fields. Finally, we will critically evaluate this research agenda and discuss how it may contribute to the future study of politics.

The assigned readings for most weeks will include background material introducing the key concepts and techniques as well as research using these concepts and tools to explain political (or related) traits. I will begin each week’s discussion with a brief introduction of the key concepts and techniques. I do not assume any background in biology and we will primarily be reading journal articles published or written for a social science audience.

Readings

We will be reading several chapters from the recently published *Man is by Nature a Political Animal: Evolution, Biology, and Politics* edited by Pete Hatemi and Rose McDermott (Chicago University Press). You can get a copy from the bookstore. Weekly reading assignments are listed below. An excellent reference *Behavioral Genetics* (Worth Publishers, 2008) is also available at the bookstore.

Office Hours

My office hours are Mondays from 1:00pm - 3:00pm in room 325 at 19th West 4th Street. I will also be in my office before and after class on Friday. If you need to schedule a time to meet outside of the schedule office hours, please email me (cdawes@nyu.edu).
Requirements

Class Participation

Students are expected to have completed the assigned readings before each class in order to contribute to the discussion (see below). Class participation will make up 20% of your grade.

Response Papers

You are required to write 4 short 2 page “response papers” based on assigned course readings. These papers should not summarize the readings but rather critically evaluate them. This evaluation could be about the theoretical argument being put forward, the research design, sample, data analysis, etc. Each paper will be worth 10% of your grade (40% total).

Research Paper

The goal of the research paper is to complete a literature review and describe a research design for a topic related to the course that may be of interest to you. The research paper will make up 40% of your grade. I do not expect you to collect data or conduct original analysis. However, if you would like to write a more involved paper I am willing to make it worth 60% of your grade and only write 2 response papers. Everyone will give a brief presentation of your paper in the last class meetings.

Course Schedule

Please be aware that this list of readings and topics may change slightly. I will give you sufficient advanced warning. The readings in italics are recommended but not required.

Week 1: Introduction

No reading

Week 2: Why Biology and Politics?

Man is by Nature Chapter 1-2
Smith et al. (2011b)
Petersen (2012)
Alford and Hibbing (2008)
Fowler and Schreiber (2008)

Week 3: Twin Design

Visscher, Hill and Wray (2008)
Hatemi and McDermott (2012)
Alford, Funk and Hibbing (2005)
Hatemi et al. (2009)
Week 4: Critiques of Twin Design and Alternatives
Perspectives on Politics Exchange
Cesarini et al. (2013)

Week 5: Molecular Genetics
Hatemi, Byrne and McDermott (2012)
Pearson and Manolio (2008)
Hatemi et al. (2011)
Dawes and Fowler (2009)

Week 6: Problems with Association Studies and Future Directions
Charney and English (2012)
Fowler and Dawes (2013)
Benjamin et al. (2012)
Chabris et al. (2012)

Week 7: Possible Mediators – Personality
Jost (2006)
Carney et al. (2008)
Gerber et al. (2010)
Kandler, Bleidorn and Reimann (2011)
Hatemi et al. (2013)
Verhulst, Hatemi and Martin (2010)
Verhulst, Eaves and Hatemi (2012)

Week 8: Spring Break

Week 9: Possible Mediators – Economic Preferences
Fowler (2006)
Blais and St-Vincent (2011)
Kam (2012)
Cesarini et al. (2009)

Week 10: Gene-Environment Correlation and Interaction
Man is by Nature Chapter 5
Boardman et al. (2008)
Settle et al. (2010)
Risch et al. (2009)
Caspi et al. (2003)

**Week 11: Neurocognitive Correlates**

Man is by Nature Chapter 10
Theodoridis and Nelson (2012)
Amodio et al. (2007)
Kanai et al. (2011)
Jost and Amodio (2012)
McDermott (2009)

**Week 12: Hormones**

Man is by Nature Chapters 8
Stanton et al. (2010)
Blanton, Strauts and Perez (2012)
De Dreu et al. (2010)
Kosfeld et al. (2005)
*Man is by Nature Chapters 9*
*Stanton et al. (2009)*
*De Dreu et al. (2011)*

**Week 13: Psychophysiology**

Man is by Nature Chapter 7
Oxley et al. (2008)
Dodd et al. (2012)
Gruszczynski et al. (2010)
*Mutz and Reeves (2005)*

**Week 14: Disgust Sensitivity**

Inbar, Pizarro and Bloom (2009)
Tybur et al. (2010)
Smith et al. (2011a)
Inbar et al. (2012)


**Week 15: Wrap Up / Paper Presentations**
Journal Articles


