

## Foreign Policy Leadership

The underlying philosophy of this course is to take education seriously. The etymology of the term “education” is latin (ex-ducere) and translates into “leading someone *out* of him or herself.” If we all participate in education – as teachers or as students – if we all are ready to go out of ourselves – sometimes – then we might at times meet somewhere out there. When we meet, we can start to talk and begin to contribute to the emergence of a “better science.” Also the etymology of the term science is latin and translated into “knowledge.” Such a step is necessary for if we remain within ourselves we are doomed to see the world from within our (self-imposed) boundaries which will prove itself insufficient.

The purpose of this course is to examine how political scientists and psychologists have led themselves out of their disciplinary boundaries and contributed together to what some say is a “better science” as they combine their knowledge into the evolving discipline of Political Psychology. It may come as a surprise to learn that political scientists, for the most part, have ignored scientific considerations of the human psyche. However, if we would ask whether psychology adds to our understanding of war and peace among nations, many psychologists would answer, of course, with an unequivocal “yes.” What could be more obvious? Psychology explores the causes of the thoughts, feelings, and actions of human beings. International relations are ultimately the products of the thoughts, feelings, and actions of human beings who decide to arm or disarm nations and to engage in war and peace processes.

Political Psychology is thus an interdisciplinary field that attempts to explain political behavior via psychological principles. It however also includes insights from sociology, biology, and anthropology to name a few. Political Psychology is an important domain of academic research; students (tend to) find it fascinating and very often troubling as they are exposed to some of the most shocking examples of political conduct; and policymakers would undoubtedly benefit greatly from a better understanding of political psychology. Understanding the psychological causes of political behavior in the realm of foreign policy (or any political realm, for that matter) is crucial if we are to affect patterns of behavior that are harmful to humanity and patterns of behavior that are beneficial to humanity.