POS 3931 - Political Psychology Analytical Essays

Directions

The essays are open note and open book, but you cannot collaborate with anyone in completing the responses. All essays must be typed in a word-processing computer program and follow specific formatting rules (12-pt. Times New Roman font, double spaced, and one inch margins on all sides). Microsoft Word .doc files are preferred. Students will be expected to avoid frequent spelling and grammatical errors when writing their essays. Each essay must have a clear beginning, middle, and end. The student should cite all resources used when constructing their responses using guidelines presented in the American Political Science Association Style Manual. Every submission must be checked for academic integrity by submitting the document to TurnItIn's plagiarism monitor via Canvas.

You must go to the "Assignments" link on Canvas, click on "Analytical Essays," and submit in a single document file your responses to the three separate prompts. The assignment is due Friday, May 2nd at 11:59 p.m. You should only be using resources assigned or discussed in class, not outside sources. That means only lecture slides and readings assigned in the course should be used in constructing responses. These essays are not intended to be full research papers. The goal is to display your mastery of the course materials.

Each prompt is worth five points. You write a separate essay response for each prompt. The best responses will accurately integrate both lecture and reading materials together.

Prompt One

What are heuristics, and what role do heuristics play in political decision-making? How does the concept of bounded rationality relate to the usage of heuristics? Using the framework established by affective intelligence theory, under what conditions would we predict the frequent usage of heuristics in political decision-making? When using the "Big Five" personality traits as our theoretical framework, which types of individuals are predicted to be more likely to use heuristics in political decision-making, and which types of individuals are predicted to be less likely to use heuristics in political decision-making? Explain your answer.

Prompt Two

Social identity theory is a prominent approach to predicting and describing political behavior that was discussed in multiple sections of the class. Explain the underlying logic of social identity theory. What is social identity theory suggesting about human behavior? How might social identity theory be used as an explanation for why people have perceptual biases about the mass media, such that they consume information from some media outlets, and disregard information from other media outlets? Why is the usage of framing so important, given that many people selectively consume mass media information?

Prompt Three

A segment of academic researchers propose the usage of brain imaging to learn about the role of prejudice in political decision-making. Given the course material we have reviewed, why might these scholars think neuroscience is an appropriate research approach to help us learn more about how prejudice influences political attitudes and behavior? What are some of the potential concerns that might arise in efforts to use brain imaging studies to learn more about a concept like prejudice?