

Day One

What is political psychology?

- A combination of psychology and political science – and other disciplines. Increasingly multi-faceted
- The psychological aspects of politics
- Puts human cognition front and centre
- To describe and explain the human dimensions of political phenomena (individuals in institutions, cultures, historical context).

Realism: international anarchic system conditions how nations interact with one another. No room for the individual – leaders become peripheral.

Political psychology; the 'Melbourne School'

Presidential Character in the US

- Personal pathology – concentrated power and how this affects politics.
- Obama election – financial crisis helped him become elected; climate of expectations, feedback in that Obama could not get a lot of what he wanted to do done because he inherited this financial situation

Freud and psychoanalysis

- Elements of your early childhood are relevant in your adult behaviour
- Impulses and unconscious drives play a large role in our actions
- *Harold Laswell* – Freud applied to political leaders. Leaders trying to overcome low estimations of themselves; leadership as a function of self-esteem

Criticisms

- Lack of evidence and access to leaders
- Not falsifiable
- Multiple interpretations possible
- Denigrating worthy public lives
- Public and private lives are sometimes very separate

Greenstein – 6 traits of presidential leadership

- Public communication
- Organisational capacity
- Political skill
- Emotional intelligence
- Vision
- Cognitive style

'Big 5 Traits'

- Extroversion
- Agreeableness
- Conscientiousness
- Emotional Stability
- Openness to experience

US PRESIDENTS

LBJ – 1963-1968

- Famous for: civil rights act, voting rights, medical insurance, Vietnam – lying about the escalation of Americas involvement