

## The psychology and neuroscience of politics

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<b>Start date</b>	5 May 2018	<b>End date</b>	5 May 2018
<b>Venue</b>	Madingley Hall Madingley Cambridge		
<b>Tutor</b>	Dr Lee de-Wit	<b>Course code</b>	1718NDX029

**Interim Co-Directors of Public  
and Professional Programmes**Dr Liz Morfoot  
Dr Tom Monie**For further information on this  
course, please contact**Public Programme Coordinator, Clare Kerr  
[clare.kerr@ice.cam.ac.uk](mailto:clare.kerr@ice.cam.ac.uk) or 01223 746237**To book** See: [www.ice.cam.ac.uk](http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk) or telephone 01223 746262

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**Tutor biography**

Lee de-Wit teaches neuroscience and political psychology at University College London. He has a background in experimental psychology and neuroscience. He studied at the University of Bristol, and Durham University, and has worked at the University of Leuven, the University of Cambridge and University of Oxford. His current research focuses on individual differences in beliefs and cognitive biases underpinning differences in attitudes towards immigration and capitalism.

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## Course programme

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09:30	Terrace bar open for pre-course tea/coffee
10:00 – 11:15	<b>Emotion in political decision making</b>
11:15	Coffee
11:45 – 13:00	<b>Morality in political decision making</b>
13:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:15	<b>Perception in political decision making</b>
15:15	Tea
15:30 – 16:45	<b>Voter turnout, and nudging political decisions</b>
16:45	Day-school ends

## **Course syllabus**

### **Aims:**

This course aims to provide an insight into how human psychology can shape political decision making. More specifically it aims to explore how individual differences (in personality, beliefs, moral values, genetics, brain structure and activity), can help us to understand political differences. It also aims to provide an insight into some of the key cognitive (confirmation bias, cognitive dissonance, etc.) and perceptual (voice preferences, first impressions of faces) biases that play a role in political decision making.

### **Content:**

The day will focus on empirical research in political psychology. In particular focusing on the individual differences (in moral values, personality profiles, cognitive biases etc.), between people with different political leanings, and the psychological mechanisms that can help us to understand political decision making (cognitive dissonance, confirmation bias, cognitive heuristics etc.). It will also explore the biological basis of political decision making, and introduce students to some of the key neuroscience methods and findings in political psychology. Finally it will explore voter turnout, and how behavioural insights might be used to influence whether people turn out and vote.

The topics covered will include:

- Moral Foundation Theory
- Personality Psychology
- Evolutionary and cross cultural psychology
- Emotional biases in political decision making
- Neuroscience and genetics in political decision making
- Perceptual process in political decision making
- Behavioural insights in changing voter behaviour

### **Presentation of the course:**

The course will involve 4 lectures, with time for questions and discussion.

**As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:**

- understand how empirical scientific methods can be applied to complex voting behaviour
- understand some of the key psychological mechanisms that influence how we vote
- understand some of the key individual differences that shape people's voting decisions
- understand how psychological insights might be applied to change voting behaviour

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## Reading and resources list

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Listed below are texts that might be of interest should you wish to supplement your learning on the course. Any essential reading is marked with an asterisk \*

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Author	Title	Publisher
Lee de-Wit	Whats your bias the surprising science of why we vote the way we do	Elliot and Thompson, 2017
Jonathan Haidt	The Righteous Mind	Penguin, 2013
Huddy, Sears, Levy	The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology	Oxford University Press, 2013

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## Additional information

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### Venue

Details of how to find Madingley Hall can be found on our website: <http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk/who-we-are/how-to-find-the-institute>

### Refreshments

Tea and coffee and lunch will be provided. If you have any specific dietary requirements or allergies and have not already advised us, please inform our Admissions Team on [ice.admissions@ice.cam.ac.uk](mailto:ice.admissions@ice.cam.ac.uk) or +44 (0)1223 746262.

**Note** Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

*Information correct as of:* 24 April 2018