Using Cognitive Biases in the Teaching of Introduction of Politics

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Abstract

Understanding how individuals make decisions is an increasingly important topic in today's political world. Teaching political science students different cognitive biases and how they impact decision making is important. This paper discusses eight cognitive biases taught in an Introduction to Politics course. Students were pre-tested and post-tested on their self-reported biases and their perceptions of the bias of another person who they disagree with. Our findings show that while students increase their own understanding of their self-bias, they become more aware of the bias of the other person. We discuss the importance of these findings for teaching cognitive bias in the political science classroom as well as education and other social science classrooms and call for more attention to this important teaching theme.

Keywords: cognitive bias, debiasing, teaching, politics

1. Introduction

Our students come into our classrooms with ideas about politics. Of course, faculty often complain that much of our students' preexisting political knowledge is wrong. Our students are constantly inundated with political information, with much of it in the form of narratives that originate in social media and cable news. Yet, students might not recognize that their political decisions and thinking have been dominated by these questionable social media and cable narratives. Though critical thinking in political science is sometimes hard to define, Souva (2007) explains critical thinking largely means helping students correct flaws and fallacies in their thinking. Debiasing or teaching students about how to recognize cognitive biases is a form of critical thinking. Our goal in this article is to encourage faculty in introductory political science classrooms to more fully embrace the "cognitive revolution" in human decision making. In a post-fact political environment, such an embrace is important given the global political polarization that currently threatens western democracies. The ability for young people to think critically about bias in their own decision making seems important for democracy's future. We hope to start a pedagogical discussion about teaching cognitive biases as a core element of an introductory political science course.

2. Cognitive Biases and Political Science

Decision making is an important part of political science. The use of heuristics in decision making and cognitive biases have been a focus of study since the 1970s (Tversky and Kahneman, 1974). Herbert Simon did much of the early work on decision making and problem solving and argued that cognitive psychology helps us understand human information processing (1985, 295). Simon writes of cognitive psychology that "we need to understand the conditions that predispose human beings to impulsive action that disregards much of the potential relevant reality" (302).

Most recently, Kahneman (2011) popularized an understanding of cognitive biases with his distinction between System 1 thinking (fast, emotional, impulsive) and System 2 thinking (slower, rational, deliberative). Individuals rely on System 1 thinking, and this makes sense. Rationality is not practical in all decisions and emotions are important. In fact, we know that emotions and cognition are not separate processes. Instead, emotion is involved in cognition and cognition involved in emotion (Immordino-Yang 2016). We also know that an individual's "gut feelings" and heuristics are important in making decisions (Gigerenzer 2007). However, System 1 thinking also leads to cognitive biases or mistakes.

Political science has paid attention to cognitive processes. Cognition in the form of schemas (a mental model of how we think the world is organized) has long been important in political science literature (e.g., Axelrod, 1973) involving information processing and in such areas as gender bias (e.g., Sanbonmatsus 2002), racial belief systems (e.g., Allen, Dawson, and Brown, 2014), and foreign policy (e.g., Larson, 1994). Additionally, there are specific examples of other cognitive bias research in political science (e.g., Hafner-Burton, Hughes, and Victor, 2013; Arceneaux, 2012; Jenke and Huettel, 2016). We seek to show the use of cognitive biases in the classroom.

3. Pedagogy and Debiasing

There are pedagogical advantages to using cognitive biases in the classroom. Teaching cognitive biases allows for active learning. We know from learning theory (Eyler, 2018; Lang, 2021) and empirical studies (Omelicheva and Avdeyeva, 2008) that students are likely to learn more from active learning. Additionally, the focus on cognitive bias provides a metacognitive basis (Pennock, 2020) to the class. The goal is to teach students to recognize and correct biases in their decision making.

Debiasing is the term used by cognitive psychologists when studying whether individuals can be taught to recognize and correct their own cognitive biases. Debiasing has generally been found to be successful in medical, legal, and other classroom settings, but there are lasting methodological concerns in measuring the impacts of debiasing. In a meta-review, Ludolph and Schultz (2018, 8) found that "69% of debiasing interventions were completely or partially successful." Despite such generally good success, two significant criticisms of debiasing studies stand out. First, there is a lack of evidence on the longitudinal effects of debiasing. Second, there is a criticism that the debiasing studies that do show success, show success in a controlled experimental situation, and it is unclear whether these outcomes transfer to real life situations (see Ludolph and Schultz, 2018 for a comprehensive review).

We use eight cognitive biases in class and in studying these biases, we seek to teach students to recognize not only the biases of others, but also their own biases. It is the latter question of understanding one's own bias that is the main focus of this study. As Kahneman (2011, 103) argues, humans struggle with self-criticism (103). Thus, our research question is: "Does learning about cognitive biases help students recognize their own biases?"

4. Using Cognitive Bias in an Introduction to Politics Course

The Introduction to Political Science course is taught at a US based, regional public institution in a primarily rural and politically conservative state. The course is a required political science major course but is also a general education objective (in critical thinking) and introduces students to political science concepts and how political scientists think. The course covers traditional introductory politics material including power, democracy, philosophies of consent, why government is necessary, and the changing role of young people in democracy. The focus of the course is on the individual as a decision maker in politics which plays to the critical thinking requirement of general education. We have found that some of the most valuable cognitive biases to teach students about political decision making include confirmation bias, the framing effect, inattentional blindness, blind spot bias, sunk cost fallacy/loss aversion bias, overconfidence bias, negativity bias, and myside bias. We briefly discuss these biases below.

4.1 Confirmation Bias

Confirmation bias (Taber and Lodge, 2006) occurs when we seek out information that confirms our beliefs and it mainly occurs when we are confronted with evidence that might challenge our beliefs. Individuals try to avoid cognitive dissonance (Festinger, Riecken, and Schachter, 1956) and one way of doing so is to seek out information that confirms one's bias. Confirmation bias is discussed throughout the semester, but it has particular relevance in our discussions of political polarization.

4.2 The Framing Effect and Narrative

The framing effect (Kahneman, 2011) is first illustrated with examples such as if we are told by a doctor that we have a 75% chance of a surgery being successful, we will think that the odds are good, and we will go ahead with the surgery. But if we are told by a doctor that there is a 25% chance of the surgery failing, we are going to be much more worried about the surgery. We then discuss various ways that politicians or news media might frame political issues in different ways. This leads us into a larger discussion of narrative (Jones et al. 2023) and how political actors can influence our choices based on how information is presented and how narrative is often more powerful in forming opinion compared to evidence (Tamul et al., 2021).

4.3 Inattentional Blindness

Inattentional blindness occurs when we fail to see something that is obvious because we are not looking for it (Simons and Chabris, 1999). The concept was popularized in the book The Invisible Gorilla (Chabris and Simons, 2010). In politics, we often do not see what we don't expect to see. For example, we might ignore obvious problems with a politician that we support.

4.4 Blind Spot Bias

The blind spot bias (Pronin, Lin, and Ross, 2002) demonstrates how we see the world through our own eyes and often cannot see how others might view the world differently. This bias is first introduced during the course section on political tolerance and is used throughout this section to help students understand the difficulty of seeing how others might view things differently. In blind spot bias, while an individual can see biases in others, they don't necessarily see bias in themself (Scopelliti et al., 2015; Frantz, 2006).

4.5 Sunk Cost Fallacy/Loss Aversion

In utilitarian logic (Mill, 1998), individuals seek to maximize benefits and minimize costs. While it is possible to use this logic to understand some political decision making, a major point of the class is that individuals are not always utilitarian maximizers. After giving examples of how sunk costs apply to individual decisions, Tavris and Aronson (2015) argue that sunk costs occur when individuals refuse to cut their losses and "hopes of recouping those losses and justifying their original decision" (19-20). Similarly, loss aversion is simply where individuals tend to worry more about losing than they do winning (Kahneman and Tversky, 1979).

4.6 Overconfidence Bias

Kahneman (2011) writes that overconfidence bias is "our excessive confidence in what we believe we know, and our apparent inability to acknowledge the full extent of our ignorance and the uncertainty of the world we live in" (13-14). Students are also introduced to hubris and how this has negatively impacted political leaders throughout time. We also discuss the Dunning-Kruger Effect or the fact that individuals who are the least knowledgeable tend to be the most confident in their knowledge (Kruger and Dunning, 1999). All of this leads to discussions about individual knowledge of politics and the difficulty of convincing some people that they are wrong about the facts of political issues.

4.7 Negativity Bias

This demonstrates that individuals often put more emphasis on negative information compared to positive information (Rozin and Royzman, 2001). This bias is initially used in the course in discussions about whether the world is getting better or worse as students are introduced to the debates surrounding the work of Steven Pinker (2018). We spend considerable time discussing how the bias might impact democracy and political polarization.

4.8 Myside Bias

Finally, myside bias (Toplak and Stanovich, 2003) demonstrates how we see the world from our group's political identity. This is used in our discussions surrounding political polarization, political tolerance, and other issues where our political identity seems to override our ability to see things from the vantage of others.

4.9 Using Cognitive Biases in the Classroom

These biases are introduced over the course of the first few weeks of the semester. Each bias is paired with an in-class discussion case where students apply the bias to a simulated political problem. Students spend at least 30 minutes a week in class in teams where they discuss and debate how the bias impacts political decision making. Additionally, assignments and exams focus heavily on the biases even as the course moves into more traditional political science concepts such as political tolerance, democracy, political polarization, philosophies of political consent, the role of government, trust in government, and the development of public policy. The idea is to introduce the narratives in the first few weeks of the class but come back to then again and again throughout the semester.

5. Methods

A cognitive bias pre-test and post-test was administered over three semesters to students enrolled in an *Introduction to Politics course taught by one of the co-authors*. The survey instrument (available upon request) was reviewed and ruled exempt by the university's Institutional Review Board, and all participants provided informed consent prior to participation. To avoid priming effects and maintain the validity of responses, the stated purpose of the study was intentionally framed in general terms about

"understanding political attitudes," thereby disguising the specific research objective of examining improvements in students' recognition of their own cognitive biases.

The survey design focused on three key dimensions. First, the Overall Assessment of Self and Other Bias asked students, using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree), to evaluate their own political biases and then to assess the perceived biases of another person they know well who holds opposing political views. Second, the Awareness of Self-Bias section included eight statements corresponding to the eight cognitive biases discussed in class allowing for direct measurement of students' self-perceived bias recognition. Third, the Awareness of the Bias of Another Person repeated these same eight statements but instructed students to apply them to an individual who was politically opposite of themselves.

A total of 42 respondents completed the pre-test and 33 completed the post-test. While the response attrition of nine students represents a limitation of the study, the overall sample provides a useful snapshot of cognitive bias recognition in a lower-division political science context. A second limitation is that the data rely on self-reported perceptions, which may be subject to social desirability or introspective accuracy biases. Nonetheless, the pre-post design enables meaningful comparison and offers valuable insight into how structured instruction in cognitive bias can shape students' political self-awareness and metacognitive reflection over time.

6. Findings

Table 1 shows some representative student qualitative comments concerning which bias was most important. Across the student reflections, several recurring themes emerged regarding how cognitive biases hinder critical thinking in political contexts. Confirmation bias was the most frequently cited and personally impactful bias. Many students described an "aha moment" upon realizing how deeply the bias shapes their engagement with political information. A smaller group emphasized inattentional blindness, highlighting how individuals "fail to see what [they] are not looking for." Students reflected that this bias explains why people overlook contradictory evidence or moral inconsistencies, even when striving to think critically. Other students pointed to Kahneman's System 1 and System 2 thinking as a framework explaining why critical thinking is effortful and often avoided. Several reflections also revealed that students found it easier to recognize biases in others than in themselves. This qualitative data provides some context for understanding the larger framework developed in the class to teach biases and sets the stage for the data results that follow.

The data presented in Table 2 which asks a general question about bias reveals that during the semester, students did become more aware of their own biases. In Table 2, between the pre-test and post-test, students had a 13.63% increase in their own bias recognition and 18.83% increase between the pre-test and post-test in the awareness and recognition of the bias of others.

Table 1. Comments About Cognitive Biases

Student #1: "The most helpful cognitive biases for me was the confirmation bias and the overconfidence bias. When first learning about them both, it was like a lightbulb went off in my head. I think the confirma0on bias is a huge thing with my genera0on in social media. You really do get a burst of dopamine when you seek our information and successfully find the information that support your biases."
Student #2: "There were a lot of different cognitive biases that helped me recognize why it is so hard to be a critical thinker, but I think one that stood out was inattentional blindness. With this we fail to see what we are not looking for so when trying to think critically it is hard when you are looking for one specific answer or solution, you are not seeing that there may be more than one because you are focused on just one idea/answer. I think confirmation bias also helped me realize how hard it is to be a critical thinker because we tend to always seek information that we agree with rather than trying to understand information we do not agree with. Being a critical thinker means understanding different perspectives and with confirmation bias we only look at the information that we already agree with, this makes it difficult to really understand outside perspectives."
Student #3: "The cognitive bias that was the most helpful in explaining why it is so hard to be a critical thinker was Kahneman's system one and system two thinking. Individuals don't take the time to

engage in logical thinking because their gut feelings instead take over. System two takes more time and energy and, oftentimes, individuals don't know when they are engaging in system one rather than system two. It is incredibly hard to overcome this bias and be a critical thinker when people don't understand Kahneman's system one and system two."

Student #4: "The most helpful confirmation bias in explaining why it is difficult to be a critical thinker when it comes to politics is inattentional blindness. To be human, it is normal to want to only see things for how you want to see them. Often times we overlook things that we aren't looking for, or that we don't even want to see. That makes it difficult to engage critically with information and we strictly see things that we are looking for."

Student #5: "A cognitive bias that revealed why it is so difficult to be a critical thinker is confirmation bias. As humans, we will seek information that confirms our previous beliefs because we do not want to receive information that will contradict our beliefs. If we do accept the new information, our brain will reject it and go into distress. Recognizing one's own biases can help overcome them by using system 2 thinking. However, it is hard to recognize their own biases instead of the biases of others. According to the end-of-the-year data, at the end of class 100% saw the biases of others, but only 62.50% saw their own biases. Self-judgment is hard to do because we don't want to recognize we are wrong and go into mental distress. This causes people to find it difficult to be a critical thinker when it comes to politics because they only want to use their emotions. People do not want to sit down and collect all of the evidence before meaning a political decision."

Student #6: "Confirmation bias was more helpful to me because in the past I did not realize how much I would seek out information that confirms my beliefs. I did it a lot of social media and when something did come up that was against my beliefs I would ignore it and make an excuse for why it is not real. Now that I am aware of this bias I am more able to be aware of it and hopefully not fall victim to it as often. This bias does make it especially hard to be a critical thinker because it becomes more difficult to see both sides of a story or a new report. When it comes to fairness this bias makes it hard to view something as fair for the other side. It has become much easier to see others' biases mainly because they are not my own. However, it makes it so that if I can see someone else's then maybe I can point out my own."

Student #7: "I noticed that when I understood what confirmation bias was I understood a lot more about myself. Just coming out of my teenage years I used to think that just about everyone agreed with me, but the idea of confirmation bias made me realize that everyone agreed with me because I only looked to find people and evidence that agreed with me. When it comes to politics it is hard to find the other side of things and see another's point of view because you are too focused on proving your side."

 Student #8: "For me specifically I resonated deeply with inattentional blindness. I really like trying to put myself in others' shoes and think the way that they would, but even doing so, at an alarming rate I miss something that is obvious just because I wasn't really looking for it. I particularly have a hard time with this when listening to a speaker that I like, I simply do not notice anything wrong with anything they are saying because I am not looking for mistakes."

Student #9: "For me specifically I resonated deeply with inattentional blindness. I really like trying to put myself in others' shoes and think the way that they would, but even doing so, at an alarming rate I miss something that is obvious just because I wasn't really looking for it. I particularly have a hard time with this when listening to a speaker that I like, I simply do not notice anything wrong with anything they are saying because I am not looking for mistakes."

Table 2. Overall Student Assessment of Self and Other Bias

Statement	Pre-Test % Agreeing (n = 42)	Post-Test % Agreeing (n = 33)	Bias Recognition Change
When it comes to making decisions about politics, I have significant biases	50.00%	63.63%	+13.63%
When it comes to making decisions about politics, others that I know have significant biases	69.04%	87.87%	+18.83%

Note. Data were collected using a five-point Likert scale. Percentages are collapsed for presentation purposes.

Table 3 reveals a modest but meaningful increase in students' awareness of their own cognitive and affective biases in political reasoning following the course. On average, self-recognition of bias rose by 10.71% from pre- to post-test. The largest change was observed in the statement "When it comes to politics, I don't like to lose more than I like to win," which increased by 51.51%, suggesting heightened awareness of loss aversion and the emotional investment that shapes political identity and partisanship. Students also showed greater recognition that they are influenced by narratives over evidence (+23.81%) and that they prefer information confirming their existing beliefs (+19.48%), both classic indicators of confirmation and affective biases. Interestingly, little change occurred in students' ability to see the other side's perspective (+0.44%) or notice things they should see (–1.30%), reflecting the persistence of inattentional blindness and perspective-taking challenges. Meanwhile, self-perceptions of humility ("I can be wrong") and partisan attachment declined slightly (–6.93% and –6.95%, respectively), suggesting that greater self-awareness may coexist with a more critical stance toward one's own political alignment.

Table 3. Student Awareness of Self-Bias

Statement	% Agree Pre-Test (n = 42)	% Agree Post-Test (n = 33)	Self-Bias Recognition Change
If given a choice, I would read political information that I agree with over political information that I disagree with.	38.09%	57.57%	+19.48%
When it comes to politics, I am more influenced by stories than I am by evidence.	9.52%	33.33%	+23.81%
When it comes to politics, I cannot normally see how the "other side" sees an issue.	23.80%	24.24%	+0.44%
When it comes to politics, I don't like to lose more than I like to win.	33.33%	84.84%	+51.51%
When it comes to politics, I find myself drawn to negative news over positive news.	42.85%	48.48%	+5.63%
When it comes to politics, I can be wrong.	85.71%	78.78%	−6.93%
When it comes to politics, I strongly identify with a certain party or group.	30.95%	24.00%	−6.95%
When it comes to politics, I sometimes don't see things that I should see.	61.90%	60.60%	−1.30%
Average	—	—	+10.71%

Note. A positive percentage change indicates an increase in the recognition of bias.

Table 4 highlights students' perceptions of bias in others who hold opposing political views and reveals both growth and persistence in how students attribute bias to out-group members. On average,

recognition of another's bias increased by 7.72% from pre- to post-test, a smaller shift than in self-bias awareness (Table 3). The largest increases were seen in the beliefs that politically opposite individuals are more influenced by stories than by evidence (+21.43%), dislike losing more than they like winning (+20.76%), and are drawn to negative news over positive news (+22.69%). These changes suggest heightened awareness of emotional and narrative-based reasoning among perceived political "others." However, agreement that the opposite person "knows they can be wrong" decreased (–8.65%). Similarly, slight declines in attributions of open-mindedness (–6.93%) and preference for confirmatory information (–8.35%) show that while students may better understand how others are biased, they continue to view those biases as more entrenched than their own.

Table 4. Student Awareness of the Bias of Another Person Who Is Politically Opposite

Statement	% Agree Pre-Test (n = 41)	% Agree Post-Test (n = 33)	Other-Bias Recognition Change
If given a choice, this person would read political information that they agree with over political information that they disagree with.	78.04 %	69.69 %	−8.35 %
When it comes to politics, this person is more influenced by stories than by evidence.	63.41 %	84.84 %	+21.43 %
When it comes to politics, this person can normally not see how the "other side" sees an issue.	85.71 %	78.78 %	−6.93 %
When it comes to politics, this person doesn't like to lose more than they like to win.	73.17 %	93.93 %	+20.76 %
When it comes to politics, this person is drawn to negative news over positive news.	56.09 %	78.78 %	+22.69 %
When it comes to politics, this person knows that they can be wrong.	23.80 %	15.15 %	−8.65 %
When it comes to politics, this person strongly identifies with a certain party or group.	80.48 %	93.93 %	+13.45 %
When it comes to politics, this person sometimes doesn't see things that they should see.	80.48 %	87.87 %	+7.39 %
Average	—	—	+7.72 %

Note. A positive percentage change indicates an increase in the recognition of bias.

Table 5 compares students' post-test recognition of cognitive bias in themselves versus in those with opposing political views, revealing a clear asymmetry: students were far more likely to perceive bias in others than in themselves. While over 90% of students attributed traits such as strong partisanship (93.93%) and emotional reactivity ("does not like to lose," 93.95%) to political opponents, far fewer acknowledged these same tendencies in themselves (24.00% and 84.84%, respectively). The largest gap appeared in recognizing the possibility of being wrong, with 78.78% admitting personal fallibility compared to only 15.15% attributing such humility to others. Similarly, while 84.84% believed others rely on stories over evidence, only 33.33% admitted doing so themselves, and 78.78% thought others could not see the opposing side compared to only 24.25% self-recognition. Collectively, these patterns demonstrate that students, even after exposure to cognitive bias instruction, maintained asymmetric attributions of rationality, perceiving themselves as more reasonable and open-minded than those on the other side of the political spectrum. This persistent self-other gap highlights the enduring challenge of fostering introspective humility in political cognition, even when individuals become more analytically aware of bias as a concept.

Table 5. Recognition of Bias in Self and Others in Post-Test

Concept	Self-Recognition of Bias (% Recognizing Bias)	Recognition of Other's Bias (%)
Engaging in confirmation bias	57.57%	69.69%
Uses stories over evidence	33.33%	84.84%
Cannot see the other side of an issue	24.25%	78.78%
Does not like to lose	84.84%	93.95%
Drawn to negative news	48.48%	78.78%
Knows that they can be wrong about politics	78.78%	15.15%
Strongly identifies with a political party	24.00%	93.93%
Does not see things that they should see	60.60%	87.87%

Note. Values reflect the percentage of students agreeing with each statement in the post-test.

7. Discussion

Our findings indicate that there was some success in our efforts to teach students about how cognitive biases impact political decision making. Assignments were tailored to demonstrate the biases and specific assignments and lectures stood out to students. Students were continually asked to reflect on the cognitive biases and they had weekly opportunity to discuss political issues in teams where they were asked to note and appreciate how others view political issues. After reviewing the survey data and reflecting upon the class, an honors student co-author writes:

There are two main discussions that highlighted my bias for me. The first was the study of political candidates, where supporters were shown their candidate wavering on an issue compared to the other candidate wavering on the same issue. The supporters were likely to slam the other candidate for flipping sides but would take the information about their own candidate with a grain of salt. I find myself doing this exact same thing, notably with the 2020 presidential debates. I would justify the poor debating qualities of the candidate I endorse and judge the other candidates for the same skills he portrayed. The second was the video of the Black Lives Matter protesters passing the lawn of a couple who had guns. I felt extremely passionate in my opinion of who was acting more violent, and I thought to myself, "who could ever see the other side as being the violent side." However, as the video progresses, there are people who see it differently than I did, and I tried to put myself in their positions so I could see how they believed the way they did.

We return to our central research question: "Does learning about cognitive biases help students recognize their own biases?" Over the course of the semester, students were repeatedly encouraged to identify and reflect upon cognitive biases both in themselves and in others. However, the findings suggest that the bias blind spot may be among the most difficult biases to mitigate. As shown in Table 4, when students were asked whether individuals from an opposing political ideology could see the other side of an issue, 14.29% agreed at the beginning of the semester, dropping to 0% by the end. By contrast, when students assessed their own ability to see the other side, agreement declined only modestly, from 87.5% in the pre-test to 75% in the post-test (see Table 3). These results indicate some growth in students' ability to recognize their own biases, yet this self-awareness was accompanied by a widening perception gap between themselves and others. In short, students continued to view themselves as more objective and fair-minded than those with differing political views. Thus, in response to our research question, the evidence points to limited self-debiasing among students. Moreover, the persistence of this asymmetry supports Frantz's (2006) conclusion that the bias blind spot is particularly resistant to educational intervention, even when individuals are explicitly taught about cognitive biases.

Additionally, this study provides a valuable interdisciplinary bridge between political science, education, sociology, and other social sciences by examining how cognitive biases shape individual reasoning, belief systems, and decision-making. In education courses, the findings can be used to help students

recognize and reflect on their own biases, improving metacognition, critical thinking, and civic reasoning. In sociology, the study offers insights into how social identity, group norms, and cultural schemas influence perceptions of fairness, justice, and political behavior. Beyond these fields, disciplines such as psychology, communication, and public administration can use this framework to explore how biases affect leadership, policy decisions, and discourse in democratic settings.

This study explored cognitive bias in an introductory politics course. We hope to expand this data base to make the findings more generalizable. But for now, we contend that in a time of political polarization where the foundations of democracy are being threatened that teaching students about cognitive biases is important. We want to think that learning about cognitive biases helps our students develop epistemological modesty and instead see that as humans we are error-making machines. Indeed, our data set demonstrates some student success at debiasing, but over the course of the semester, the blind spot bias (or the ability to see biases in others and not ourselves) might have unintentionally increased in the student responses. The finding is interesting and warrants more study. For now, we agree with Kahneman (2011) that self-criticism is difficult and wonder if debiasing political decision making is particularly difficult. We hope that other political science faculty will use cognitive biases in the introductory politics classroom and test the impact of such an approach on students. Democracy requires us to see our own biases as well as the biases of others. Given the political climate of 2025, there is no better time than today for political science, education, and social science faculty to explore the use of cognitive biases and debiasing in the classroom.

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