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Personality Profiles of 2016 Republican Presidential Candidates

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Thursday Forum

November 5, 2015

Gorecki 201 (President's Dining Room) – CSB

The Personality Profiles of 2016 Republican Presidential Candidates

Aubrey Immelman (with Joe Trenzeluk, SJU '16)



Aubrey Immelman and his summer research assistant Joe Trenzeluk present summaries of the psychological profiles of Republican contenders in the 2016 U.S. presidential election (including Jeb Bush, Ben Carson, Chris Christie, Ted Cruz, John Kasich, Marco Rubio, Donald Trump, and Scott Walker) and outline the leadership implications of those profiles. In addition, the presenters discuss the personality profile of Democratic front-runner Hillary Clinton and compare the candidates' scores on the Personal [Presidential] Electability Index (PEI), which has accurately predicted the outcome of every presidential election since 1996.

Forum website » http://csbsju.edu/forum

Biographical Sketch

Aubrey Immelman is an associate professor of psychology at St. John's University and the College of St. Benedict.

His research program since coming to CSB/SJU in 1991 has focused on the psychology and leadership characteristics of presidential candidates and world leaders.

Immelman's research has been published in the academic journals *Political Psychology* and *Leadership Quarterly* and he has written chapters on the psychological assessment of presidential candidates for the *Handbook of Psychology* and the *Handbook of Personology and Psychopathology*.

Immelman's research has been featured on CNN, Fox News Channel, MSNBC, the Discovery Channel, numerous radio programs, and dozens of newspapers in the United States and abroad, including the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Time* magazine, and *Psychology Today*.

Since 1999, Immelman and his students in the Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics — the faculty–student collaborative research program he established at CSB/SJU — have published approximately one hundred articles on the psychological and leadership characteristics of presidential candidates.

Prior to his academic career, Immelman underwent military training as an infantry paratrooper and served in a military psychology unit.



More recently, Immelman has served as a security consultant in the areas of psychological operations and worked with the U.S. military from 2003 to 2005 to develop a nuclear deterrence program with respect to North Korea.

Prologue: Personality Based Leadership Prediction — Two Case Studies

In a study conducted during the 1996 presidential campaign — two years before public knowledge of the Lewinsky affair — Immelman made the following worst-case prediction for President Clinton's second term, based on his psychological assessment:

Bill Clinton may commit errors of judgment stemming from a combination of strong ambition, a sense of entitlement, and inflated self-confidence. ...

Narcissistic characteristics may also predispose him to dissemble or equivocate, not only ego-defensively to protect and bolster an admirable self-image, but instrumentally to have his way with others. Concurrent outgoing features in President Clinton's profile suggest a strong need for public recognition, approval, and validation, along with a willingness to use his social skills to influence and charm others (though lacking some fidelity in consistently fulfilling his promises). ... Finally, there is a danger that outgoing [sociable, extraverted] presidents such as Bill Clinton may be oversensitive to public opinion and neglectful of role demands related to oversight. (p. 355)

In the article's abstract, the implications of President Clinton's personality profile for high-level political leadership were summarized as follows: "The profile ... is consistent with a presidency troubled by ethical questions and lapses of judgment, and provides an explanatory framework for Clinton's high achievement drive and his ability to retain a following and maintain his self-confidence in the face of adversity" (p. 335).

Source: Immelman, A. (1998). The political personalities of 1996 U.S. presidential candidates Bill Clinton and Bob Dole. *Leadership Quarterly*, *9*, 335–366.

Following a similar study of then-governor George W. Bush, conducted in 1999 — more than a year before his election as president of the United States — Immelman summarized the strengths and limitations of a prospective President Bush as follows:

George W. Bush's major personality-based leadership strengths are the important political skills of charisma and interpersonality — a personable, confident, socially responsive, outgoing tendency that will enable him to connect with critical constituencies, mobilize popular support, and retain a following and his self-confidence in the face of adversity. Outgoing leaders characteristically are confident in their social abilities, skilled in the art of social influence, and have a charming, engaging personal style that tends to make people like them and overlook their gaffes and foibles.

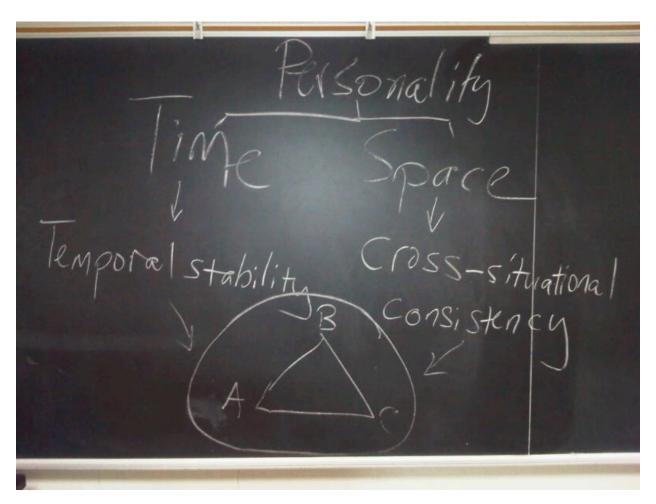
Bush's major personality-based limitations include the propensity for a superficial grasp of complex issues, a predisposition to be easily bored by routine (with the attendant risk of failing to keep himself adequately informed), an inclination to act impulsively without fully appreciating the implications of his decisions or the long-term consequences of his policy initiatives, and a predilection to favor personal connections, friendship, and loyalty over

competence in his staffing decisions and appointments — all of which could render a Bush administration relatively vulnerable to errors of judgment. (pp. 101–102)

Source: Immelman, A. (2002). The political personality of U.S. president George W. Bush. In L. O. Valenty & O. Feldman (Eds.), *Political leadership for the new century: Personality and behavior among American leaders* (pp. 81–103). Westport, CT: Praeger.

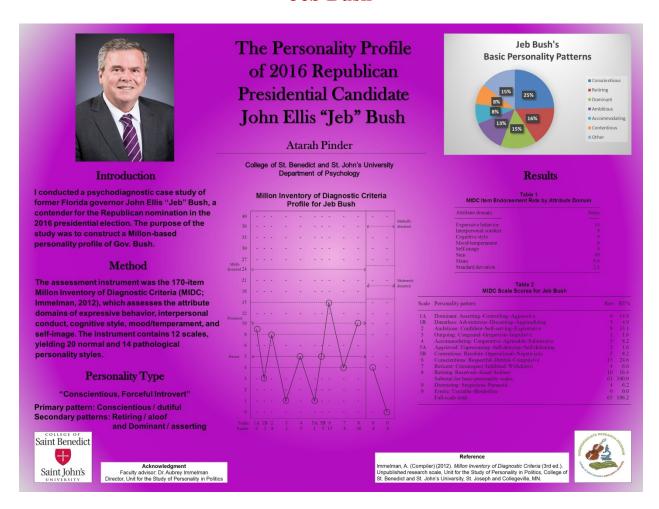
What is Personality?

Personality may be concisely defined as deeply ingrained psychological characteristics that are relatively stable over time and consistent across situations, governing an individual's distinctive pattern of thinking, feeling, acting, and relating to others.



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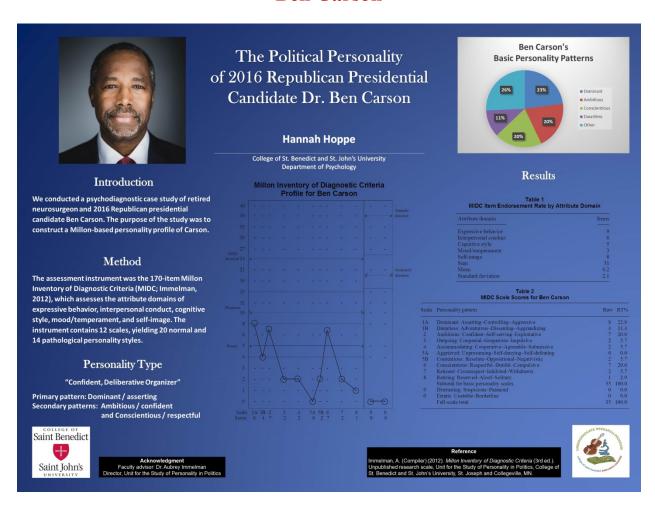
Jeb Bush



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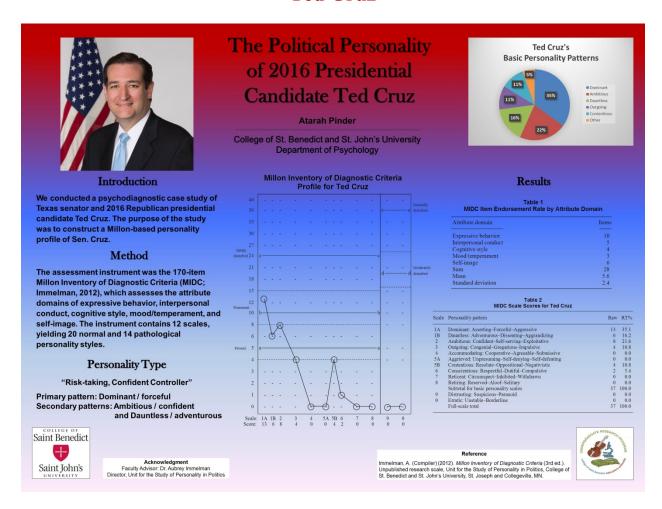
Ben Carson



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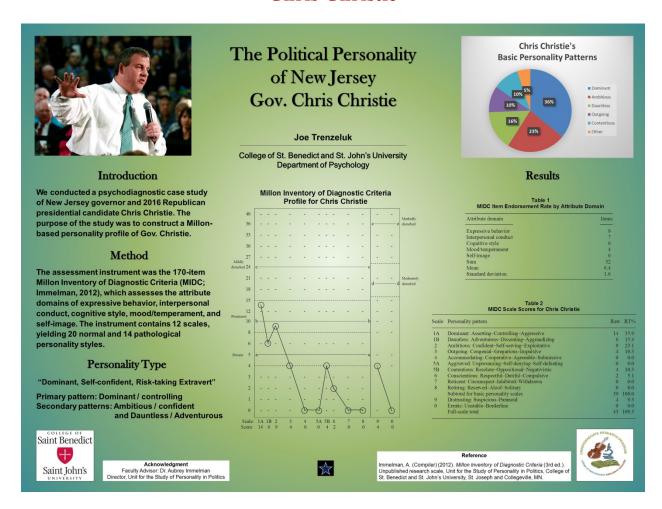
Ted Cruz



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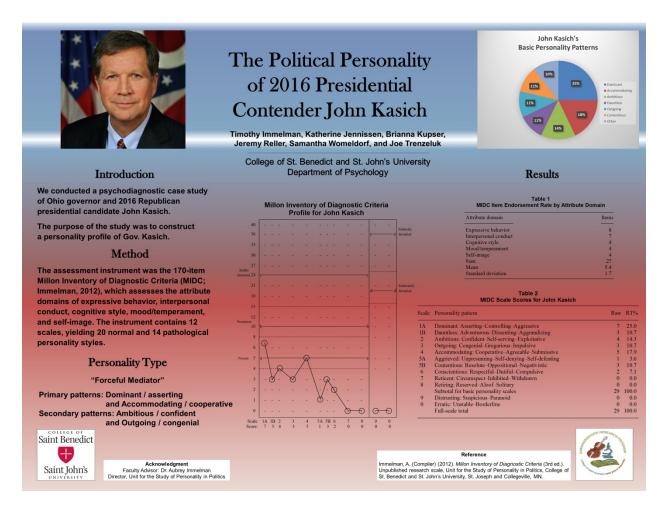
Chris Christie



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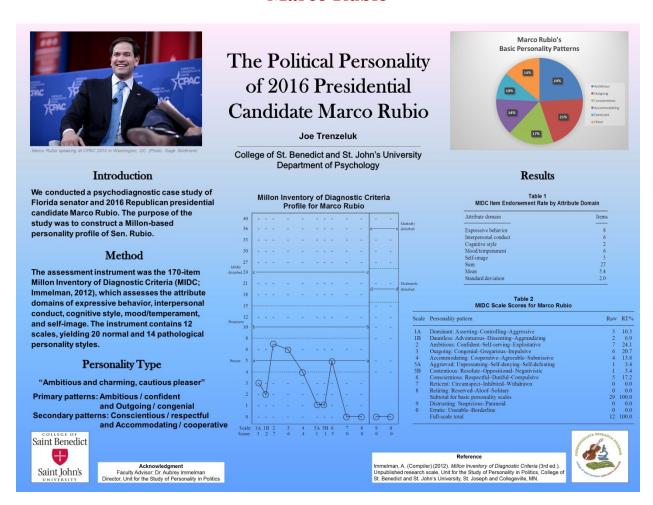
John Kasich



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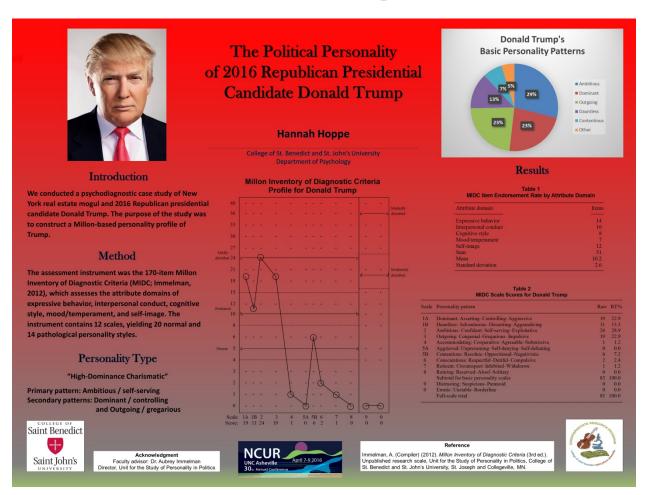
Marco Rubio



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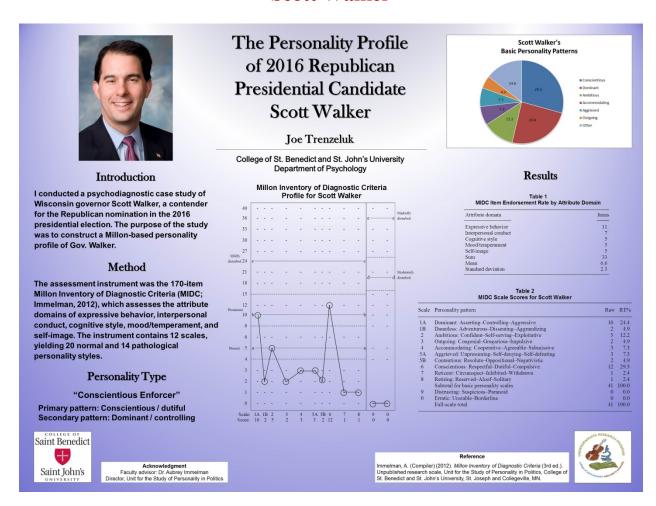
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Donald Trump



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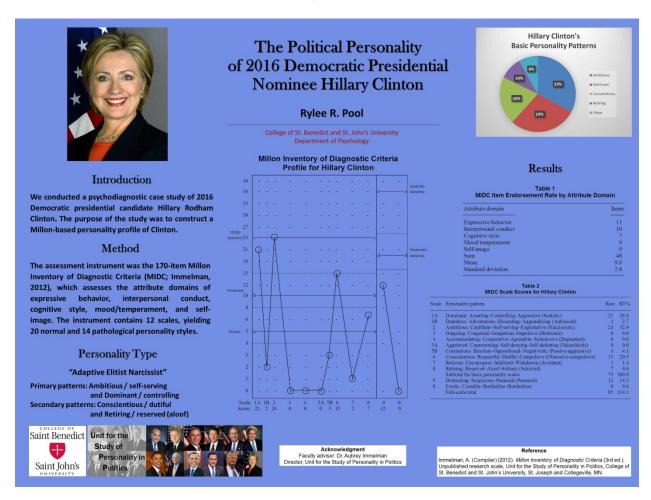
Scott Walker



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The Personality Profiles of 2016 Democratic Presidential Candidates

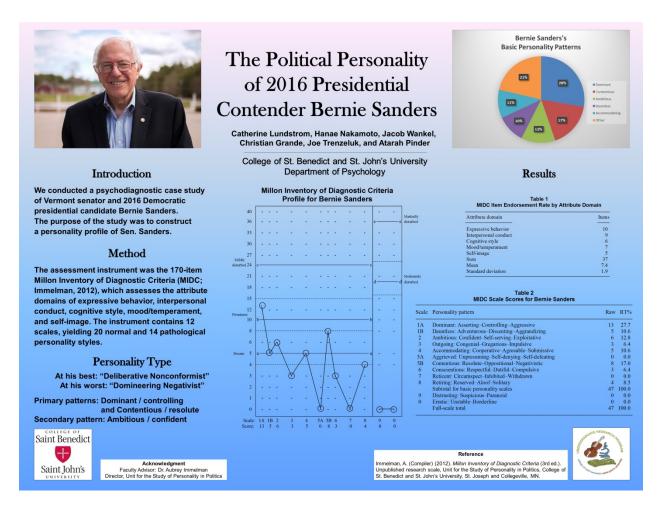
Hillary Clinton



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The Personality Profiles of 2016 Democratic Presidential Candidates

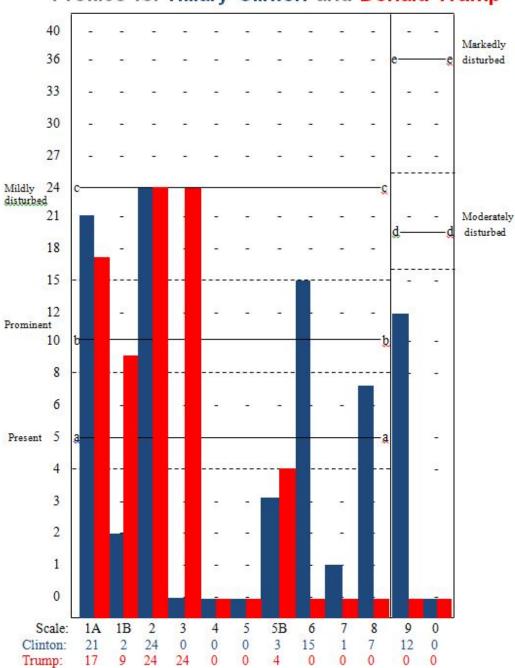
Bernie Sanders



» http://www.immelman.us/bernie-sanders/the-personality-profile-of-2016-democratic-presidential-candidate-bernie-sanders/

The Personal [Presidential] Electability Index

Millon Inventory of Diagnostic Criteria Profiles for Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump



[»] http://www.immelman.us/hillary-clinton/projecting-the-winner-of-the-2016-presidential-election-the-personal-electability-index/

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