
POLS-Y490

Political Behavior Around the World

Course Overview

This seminar provides an introduction to some of the major themes in political behavior, including partisanship, elections, political attitudes, information, ideology, participation, and the role of the mass media in shaping the public's political beliefs and orientations. We will consider how well our theories explain political outcomes in both democracies and autocracies.

Instructor

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Requirements and Grading

Students are expected to regularly attend class, actively contribute to class discussions, and complete the reading assignments. In addition, each student will be assigned the task of introducing and briefly critiquing the readings during one week of class. In these overviews, students should highlight the question, theory, research design, results, and implications of the week's readings as well as note any major flaws.

There will be a weekly reading quiz, starting the second week. The two lowest grades will be dropped, but no make-up quizzes are allowed.

For the writing component of this course, students will be required to write a research paper which identifies an important research question, surveys the relevant literature, synthesizes the available evidence, and presents a theoretical argument.

A topic, research question, and brief description of the motivation (1 page) is due on September 18, while a literature review and a revised description of the topic (6 pages) are due on October 16. The final paper (13 pages) will be due on December 18.

- Participation: 20%
- Reading Quizzes: 20%
- Research Paper: 50%
- Presentation: 10%

Week 1: Introduction and Political Culture

August 28

- Ann Swidler. Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies. *American Sociological Review*, 51(2):273, 1986
- Robert D Putnam. *Making Democracy Work*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1993, Chapters 5-6.

Week 2: Ideology

September 4

- Angus Campbell, Philip Converse, Warren E Miller, and Donald E Stokes. *The American Voter*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1960, Chapter 10.
- Yotam Margalit. Explaining Social Policy Preferences: Evidence from the Great Recession. *American Political Science Review*, 107(1):80–103, 2013
- Jennifer Pan and Yiqing Xu. China's Ideological Spectrum. *The Journal of Politics*, 80(1):254–273, 2017
- Michael Barber and Jeremy C Pope. Does Party Trump Ideology? Disentangling Party and Ideology in America. *American Political Science Review*, 113(1):38–54, 2019.

Week 3: Information

September 11

- John Zaller and Stanley Feldman. A simple theory of the survey response: Answering questions versus revealing preferences. *American Journal of Political Science*, 36(3):579–616, 1992.
- Michael X Delli Carpini and Scott Keeter. *What Americans Know about Politics and Why It Matters*. Yale University Press, New Haven, 1996, Chapter 2.
- Samuel L Popkin. *The Reasoning Voter*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1994, Chapters 1, 4.

Week 4: Motivated Reasoning and Conspiracy Theories

September 18

- **Research paper topic and question due today**

- Charles S Taber and Milton Lodge. Motivated Skepticism in the Evaluation of Political Beliefs. *American Journal of Political Science*, 50(3):755–769, 2006.
- Haifeng Huang. A War of (Mis)Information: The Political Effects of Rumors and Rumor Rebuttals in an Authoritarian Country. *British Journal of Political Science*, 47(2):283–311, 2015.
- Cass R Sunstein and Adrian Vermeule. Conspiracy Theories: Causes and Cures. *The Journal of Political Philosophy*, 17(2):202–227, 2009.
- J Eric Oliver and Thomas J Wood. Conspiracy Theories and the Paranoid Style(s) of Mass Opinion. *American Journal of Political Science*, 58(4):952–966, 2014.
- Reply All, The QAnon Code. Copy available at <https://gimletmedia.com/shows/reply-all/n8homa>

Week 5: Socialization and Influences

September 25

- John R Alford, Carolyn L Funk, and John R Hibbing. Are Political Orientations Genetically Transmitted? *American Political Science Review*, 99(02):153–167, May 2005.
- Jonathan Haidt. *The Righteous Mind*. Random House, New York, 2012, Chapters 1, 5-8.
- Samuel Greene and Graeme Robertson. Agreeable Authoritarians: Personality and Politics in Contemporary Russia:. *Comparative Political Studies*, 50(13):1802–1834, 2017.

Week 6: Spatial Approaches

October 2

- Anthony Downs. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. Harper & Row, New York, 1957, Chapters 3 and 8.
- George Rabinowitz and Stuart Elaine Macdonald. A Directional Theory of Issue Voting. *American Political Science Review*, 83(1):93–121, 1989.
- Richard R Lau and David P Redlawsk. Voting Correctly. *American Political Science Review*, 91(3):585–598, 1997.
- Jason Wu. A Spatial Valence Model of Political Participation in China. *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 31(2):244–259, 2019.

Week 7: Partisanship

October 9

- Angus Campbell, Philip Converse, Warren E Miller, and Donald E Stokes. *The American Voter*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1960, Chapter 7.
- Ted Brader and Joshua A Tucker. The Emergence of Mass Partisanship in Russia, 1993-1996. *American Journal of Political Science*, 45(1):69–83, 2001.
- Shanto Iyengar and Sean J Westwood. Fear and Loathing across Party Lines: New Evidence on Group Polarization. *American Journal of Political Science*, 59(3):690–707, July 2015.
- Christopher H Achen and Larry M Bartels. *Democracy for Realists*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2016, Chapter 9.

Week 8: Economic Evaluations

October 16

- **Research paper/proposal literature reviews due today**
- G Bingham Powell and Guy D Whitten. A Cross-National Analysis of Economic Voting: Taking Account of the Political Context. *American Journal of Political Science*, 37(2):391–414, 1993.
- Christopher H Achen and Larry M Bartels. *Democracy for Realists*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2016, Chapters 4-6.
- Haifeng Huang. International Knowledge and Domestic Evaluations in a Changing Society: The Case of China. *American Political Science Review*, 109(3):613–634, August 2015.

Week 9: Identity

October 23

- Benedict Anderson. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso, New York, 2006, Chapters 1-5.
- James Habyarimana, Macartan Humphreys, Daniel N Posner, and Jeremy M Weinstein. Why Does Ethnic Diversity Undermine Public Goods Provision? *American Political Science Review*, 101(4):709–725, 2007.
- Christopher H Achen and Larry M Bartels. *Democracy for Realists*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2016, Chapter 8.

Week 10: Authoritarianism

October 30

- John Duckitt. Authoritarianism and Group Identification: A New View of an Old Construct. *Political Psychology*, 10(1):63–84, 1989.
- Stanley Feldman. Enforcing Social Conformity: A Theory of Authoritarianism. *Political Psychology*, 24(1):41–74, 2003.
- Lasse Laustsen and Michael Bang Petersen. Perceived Conflict and Leader Dominance: Individual and Contextual Factors Behind Preferences for Dominant Leaders. *Political Psychology*, 38(6):1083–1101, December 2017.
- M Steven Fish. Islam and Authoritarianism. *World Politics*, 55(1):4–37, 2002.
- Fareed Zakaria and Lee Kuan Yew. Culture Is Destiny: A Conversation with Lee Kuan Yew. *Foreign Affairs*, 73(2):109, 1994.

Week 11: Campaigns, Media Effects, and Propaganda

November 6

- John R Zaller. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge University Press, New York, 1992, Chapter 6.
- Gary King, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret E Roberts. How the Chinese Government Fabricates Social Media Posts for Strategic Distraction, Not Engaged Argument. *American Political Science Review*, 111(3):484–501, 2017.
- Chen, Yuyu, and David Y Yang. The Impact of Media Censorship: 1984 or Brave New World? *American Economic Review*, forthcoming.
- Alcott, Hunt, Luca Braghieri, Sarah Eichmeyer, and Matthew Gentzkow. 2019. The Welfare Effects of Social Media. Working Paper.

Week 12: Turnout and Low-Risk Participation

November 13

- Henry E Brady, Sidney Verba, and Kay Lehman Schlozman. Beyond SES: A Resource Model of Political Participation. *American Political Science Review*, 89(2):271–294, 1995.
- Albert O Hirschman. *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1970, Chapters 1-4, 7.
- Lily L Tsai and Yiqing Xu. Outspoken Insiders: Political Connections and Citizen Participation in Authoritarian China. *Political Behavior*, 40(3):629–657, 2018.

Week 13: Protest, Contentious Politics, and High-Risk Participation

November 20

- Mancur Olson. *The Logic of Collective Action*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1965, Chapter 1.
- Doug McAdam. Recruitment to High-Risk Activism: The Case of Freedom Summer. *American Journal of Sociology*, 92(1):64–90, 1986.
- Timur Kuran. Now Out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989. *World Politics*, 44(1):7–48, 1991.
- Kevin J O'Brien. Rightful Resistance. *World Politics*, 49(1):31–55, 1996.

Week 14: Thanksgiving Break

Week 15: State Control

December 4

- Steven I Wilkinson. *Votes and Violence: Electoral Competition and Ethnic Riots in India*. Cambridge University Press, New York, 2004, Chapter 1.
- Peter Lorentzen. Designing Contentious Politics in Post-1989 China. *Modern China*, 43(5):459–493, February 2017.
- James C Scott. *Seeing Like a State*. Yale University Press, New Haven, 1998, Chapters 1-2.

Week 16: Historical Legacies

December 11

- Avidit Acharya, Matthew Blackwell, and Maya Sen. The Political Legacy of American Slavery. *The Journal of Politics*, 78(3):621–641, 2016.
- Noam Lupu and Leonid Peisakhin. The Legacy of Political Violence across Generations. *American Journal of Political Science*, 61(4):836–851, 2017.
- Arturas Rozenas and Yuri Zhukov. Mass Repression and Political Loyalty: Evidence from Stalin's 'Terror by Hunger'. *American Political Science Review*, 113(2):569–583, 2019.
- Wang, Yuhua. The Political Legacy of Violence during China's Cultural Revolution. *British Journal of Political Science*, forthcoming.

Final paper due December 18.