

Seminar in Political Behavior

Fall 2017

Tuesdays 6:20pm - 8:20pm

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Course Description

This course is a seminar covering research in political behavior including participation, partisanship and party identification, ideology, and the evaluation of information in order to make political choices. This course will examine both theoretical and empirical work drawn primarily from American politics. We will discuss foundational research in political behavior, however the emphasis will be on more recent work that may be viewed as pushing the literature in new and interesting directions.

Requirements

Class Participation

Since this class is a seminar it is primarily made up of discussion. Therefore, students are expected to have completed the assigned readings before each class and contribute to the discussion. I will ask students to introduce and briefly critique each of the readings. For each reading, you should come prepared to discuss the research question being explored by the authors, the research design, findings, implications, and major flaws / shortcomings. Class participation will make up 20% of your grade.

Response Papers

You are required to write 4 short 2 page “response papers” based on assigned course readings. These papers should not summarize the readings but rather critically evaluate them. This evaluation could be about the theoretical argument being put forward, the research design, sample, data analysis, etc. Each paper will be worth 10% of your grade (40% total).

Research Paper

The goal of the research paper is to complete a literature review and describe a research design for a topic related to the course that may be of interest to you. The research paper

will make up 40% of your grade. I do not expect you to collect data or conduct original analysis. However, if you would like to write a more involved paper I am willing to make it worth 60% of your grade and only write 2 response papers. Everyone will give a brief presentation of your paper in the last class meetings.

Readings

The focus of this class is on more recent research papers. However, there are some chapters from a few foundational texts that I have suggested as background reading:

Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (1957)

Angus Campbell et al., *The American Voter* (1976)

Morris Fiorina, *Retrospective Voting in American Elections* (1981)

Donald Green et al., *Partisan Hearts and Minds: Political Parties and the Social Identities of Voters* (2002)

Office Hours

My office hours are Tuesdays from 1:00pm - 3:00pm in room 325 at 19th West 4th Street. If you need to schedule a time to meet outside of the schedule office hours, please email me (cdawes@nyu.edu).

Course Schedule

Sept 5: Introduction

No reading

Mass Participation

Background

Riker and Ordeshook (1968)

Powell (1986)

Aldrich (1993)

Sept 12: Calculus of Voting

Brady and McNulty (2011)

Gerber, Huber and Hill (2013)

Biggers, Hendry, Huber and Gerber (N.d.)

Burden, Canon, Mayer and Moynihan (2014)

Sept 19: Personality / Social Preferences / Education

Gerber, Huber, Doherty, Dowling, Raso and Ha (2011)

Gerber, Huber, Doherty and Dowling (2016)

Sondheimer and Green (2010)
Holbein (2017)

Sept 26: Context

Weaver and Lerman (2010)
Gerber, Huber, Meredith, Biggers and Hendry (2017)
Enos (2016)
Potoski and Urbatsch (2017)

Elite Participation

Oct 3: Running For Office

Fox and Lawless (2005)
Dal Bó, Finan, Folke, Persson and Rickne (2016)
Gulzar and Khan (N.d.)
Lindgren, Oskarsson and Dawes (2017)

Oct 10: Representation

Butler, Nickerson et al. (2011)
Broockman (2013)
Broockman and Butler (2017)
Loewen, Koop, Settle and Fowler (2014)

Ideology / Attitudes

Background

The American Voter

Conover and Feldman (1981)
Converse (2006)

Oct 17: Personality / Biology

Carney, Jost, Gosling and Potter (2008)
Gerber, Huber, Doherty, Dowling and Ha (2010)
Alford, Funk and Hibbing (2005)
Hibbing, Smith and Alford (2014)

Oct 24: Social Policy Attitudes

Alesina and La Ferrara (2005)
Margalit (2013)
Kuziemko, Norton, Saez and Stantcheva (2015)
Newman, Johnston and Lown (2015)

Evaluation / Information Processing

Background

An Economic Theory of Democracy

The American Voter

Retrospective Voting in American Elections

Partisan Hearts and Minds

Oct 31: Information

Achen and Bartels (2004)

Healy, Malhotra and Mo (2010)

Huber, Hill and Lenz (2012)

Busby, Druckman and Fredendall (2017)

Nov 7: Partisan Bias / Affective Polarization

Bartels (2002)

Jerit and Barabas (2012)

Bullock, Gerber, Hill, Huber et al. (2015)

Iyengar, Sood and Lelkes (2012)

Nov 14: Media / Internet

Druckman, Levendusky and McLain (2015)

Lelkes, Sood and Iyengar (2017)

Martin and Yurukoglu (2017)

Barberá, Jost, Nagler, Tucker and Bonneau (2015)

Nov 21: No Class

Nov 28: Long Run

Acharya, Blackwell and Sen (2016)

Nall (2015)

Charnysh and Finkel (2017)

Rozenas, Schutte and Zhukov (2017)

Dec 5: Paper Presentations

Journal Articles

- Acharya, Avidit, Matthew Blackwell and Maya Sen. 2016. "The political legacy of American slavery." *The Journal of Politics* 78(3):621–641.
- Achen, C.H. and L.M. Bartels. 2004. "Blind retrospection: Electoral responses to drought, flu, and shark attacks." *Estudios/Working Papers* (Centro de Estudios Avanzados en Ciencias Sociales).
- Aldrich, John H. 1993. "Rational Choice and Turnout." *American Journal of Political Science* 37(1):pp. 246–278.
- Alesina, Alberto and Eliana La Ferrara. 2005. "Preferences for redistribution in the land of opportunities." *Journal of public Economics* 89(5):897–931.
- Alford, J., C. Funk and J. Hibbing. 2005. "Are Political Orientations Genetically Transmitted?" *American Political Science Review* 99(2):153–167.
- Barberá, Pablo, John T Jost, Jonathan Nagler, Joshua A Tucker and Richard Bonneau. 2015. "Tweeting From Left to Right Is Online Political Communication More Than an Echo Chamber?" *Psychological science* p. 0956797615594620.
- Bartels, L.M. 2002. "Beyond the running tally: Partisan bias in political perceptions." *Political Behavior* 24(2):117–150.
- Biggers, D., D. Hendry, G. Huber and A.S. Gerber. N.d. "Experimental Evidence about Whether (and Why) Electoral Closeness Affects Turnout." Yale University Working Paper.
- Brady, H. and J. McNulty. 2011. "Turning out to vote: The costs of finding and getting to the polling place." *American Political Science Review* 105(1):115–134.
- Broockman, David E. 2013. "Black politicians are more intrinsically motivated to advance Blacks' interests: A field experiment manipulating political incentives." *American Journal of Political Science* 57(3):521–536.
- Broockman, David E and Daniel M Butler. 2017. "The Causal Effects of Elite Position-Taking on Voter Attitudes: Field Experiments with Elite Communication." *American Journal of Political Science* 61(1):208–221.
- Bullock, John G, Alan S Gerber, Seth J Hill, Gregory A Huber et al. 2015. "Partisan Bias in Factual Beliefs about Politics." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 10(4):519–578.
- Burden, Barry C, David T Canon, Kenneth R Mayer and Donald P Moynihan. 2014. "Election laws, mobilization, and turnout: The unanticipated consequences of election reform." *American Journal of Political Science* 58(1):95–109.
- Busby, Ethan C, James N Druckman and Alexandria Fredendall. 2017. "The Political Relevance of Irrelevant Events." *The Journal of Politics* 79(1):346–350.
- Butler, Daniel M, David W Nickerson et al. 2011. "Can learning constituency opinion affect how legislators vote? Results from a field experiment." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 6(1):55–83.

- Carney, D., J. Jost, S. Gosling and J. Potter. 2008. "The Secret Lives of Liberals and Conservatives: Personality Profiles, Interaction Styles, and the Things They Leave Behind." *Political Psychology* 29(6):807–840.
- Charnysh, V and E Finkel. 2017. "The Death Camp Eldorado: Political and Economic Effects of Mass Violence." *American Political Science Review* pp. 1–18.
- Conover, Pamela Johnston and Stanley Feldman. 1981. "The Origins and Meaning of Liberal/Conservative Self-Identifications." *American Journal of Political Science* 25(4):pp. 617–645.
- Converse, P.E. 2006. "The nature of belief systems in mass publics (1964)." *Critical Review* 18(1-3):1–74.
- Dal Bó, Ernesto, Frederico Finan, Olle Folke, Torsten Persson and Johanna Rickne. 2016. "Who Becomes a Politician?" *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* .
- Druckman, James N, Matthew S Levendusky and Audrey McLain. 2015. "No Need to Watch: How the Effects of Partisan Media Can Spread via Interpersonal Discussions." *American Journal of Political Science* .
- Enos, Ryan D. 2016. "What the demolition of public housing teaches us about the impact of racial threat on political behavior." *American Journal of Political Science* 60(1):123–142.
- Fox, Richard L and Jennifer L Lawless. 2005. "To run or not to run for office: explaining nascent political ambition." *American Journal of Political Science* 49(3):642–659.
- Gerber, A., G. Huber, D. Doherty, C. Dowling, C. Raso and S. Ha. 2011. "Personality Traits and Participation in Political Processes." *Journal of Politics* 73(3):692–706.
- Gerber, A., G. Huber, D. Doherty, C. Dowling and S. Ha. 2010. "Personality and Political Attitudes: Relationships Across Issue Domains and Political Contexts." *American Political Science Review* 104(1):111–133.
- Gerber, Alan S, Gregory A Huber, David Doherty and Conor M Dowling. 2016. "Why people vote: estimating the social returns to voting." *British Journal of Political Science* 46(2):241–264.
- Gerber, Alan S, Gregory A Huber, Marc Meredith, Daniel R Biggers and David J Hendry. 2017. "Does Incarceration Reduce Voting? Evidence about the Political Consequences of Spending Time in Prison." *The Journal of Politics* 79(4):000–000.
- Gerber, Alan S, Gregory A Huber and Seth J Hill. 2013. "Identifying the effect of all-mail elections on turnout: Staggered reform in the evergreen state." *Political Science Research and Methods* 1(01):91–116.
- Gulzar, Saad and Muhammad Yasir Khan. N.d. "Why Do Citizens Become Politicians? Experimental Evidence on the Social Dimensions of Candidacy." Unpublished Manuscript.
- Healy, A.J., N. Malhotra and C.H. Mo. 2010. "Irrelevant events affect voters' evaluations of government performance." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 107(29):12804–12809.

- Hibbing, John R, Kevin B Smith and John R Alford. 2014. "Differences in negativity bias underlie variations in political ideology." *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 37(03):297–307.
- Holbein, John B. 2017. "Childhood Skill Development and Adult Political Participation." *American Political Science Review* 111(3):572–583.
- Huber, A., S.J. Hill and G.S. Lenz. 2012. "Sources of Bias in Retrospective Decision-Making: Experimental Evidence on Voters' Limitations in Controlling Incumbents." *American Political Science Review*, forthcoming .
- Iyengar, Shanto, Gaurav Sood and Yphtach Lelkes. 2012. "Affect, Not Ideology A Social Identity Perspective on Polarization." *Public opinion quarterly* 76(3):405–431.
- Jerit, Jennifer and Jason Barabas. 2012. "Partisan perceptual bias and the information environment." *The Journal of Politics* 74(03):672–684.
- Kuziemko, Ilyana, Michael I Norton, Emmanuel Saez and Stefanie Stantcheva. 2015. "How elastic are preferences for redistribution? Evidence from randomized survey experiments." *The American Economic Review* 105(4):1478–1508.
- Lelkes, Yphtach, Gaurav Sood and Shanto Iyengar. 2017. "The hostile audience: The effect of access to broadband internet on partisan affect." *American Journal of Political Science* 61(1):5–20.
- Lindgren, Karl-Oskar, Sven Oskarsson and Christopher T Dawes. 2017. "Can Political Inequalities Be Educated Away? Evidence from a Large-Scale Reform." *American Journal of Political Science* 61(1):222–236.
- Loewen, Peter John, Royce Koop, Jaime Settle and James H Fowler. 2014. "A natural experiment in proposal power and electoral success." *American Journal of Political Science* 58(1):189–196.
- Margalit, Yotam. 2013. "Explaining social policy preferences: Evidence from the Great Recession." *American Political Science Review* 107(1):80–103.
- Martin, Gregory J. and Ali Yurukoglu. 2017. "Bias in Cable News: Persuasion and Polarization." *American Economic Review* 107(9):2565–99.
- Nall, Clayton. 2015. "The political consequences of spatial policies: How interstate highways facilitated geographic polarization." *The Journal of Politics* 77(2):394–406.
- Newman, Benjamin J, Christopher D Johnston and Patrick L Lown. 2015. "False consciousness or class awareness? Local income inequality, personal economic position, and belief in American meritocracy." *American Journal of Political Science* 59(2):326–340.
- Potoski, Matthew and R Urbatsch. 2017. "Entertainment and the Opportunity Cost of Civic Participation: Monday Night Football Game Quality Suppresses Turnout in US Elections." *The Journal of Politics* 79(2):424–438.
- Powell, G. Bingham, Jr. 1986. "American Voter Turnout in Comparative Perspective." *The American Political Science Review* 80(1):pp. 17–43.

- Riker, William H. and Peter C. Ordeshook. 1968. "A Theory of the Calculus of Voting." *The American Political Science Review* 62(1):pp. 25–42.
- Rozenas, Arturas, Sebastian Schutte and Yuri Zhukov. 2017. "The Political Legacy of Violence: The Long-Term Impact of Stalin's Repression in Ukraine." *Journal of Politics* .
- Sondheimer, Rachel Milstein and Donald P Green. 2010. "Using experiments to estimate the effects of education on voter turnout." *American Journal of Political Science* 54(1):174–189.
- Weaver, Vesla M and Amy E Lerman. 2010. "Political consequences of the carceral state." *American Political Science Review* 104(4):817–833.