G53.3500.002: Comparative Political Behavior

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Draft Syllabus: Please note that there may still be a few changes to the syllabus, but this should give you a very good flavor of the course now. You should also feel free to purchase any of the books at this point, as they will not change

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In this course we examine the role played by the masses in politics. More specifically, we consider the following four topics: voting and elections; partisanship and party identification; public opinion formation; and social movements and mass protest. The course will consider both theoretical and empirical work that will be drawn from studies of politics in a variety of different political contexts, including but by no means limited to American politics.

Requirements

The course meets once a week (Tuesdays, 2:00 – 4:00). Grading is based on class participation (20%) response papers during the semester (20%) and a term paper (60%). Please note that all page lengths refer to double-spaced pages with 1 inch margins.

Class Participation: This is a graduate seminar, and all students will be expected to have done the required reading before each week’s seminar and contribute to the class discussion.

Response Papers: The course features 12 weeks of seminar discussion. For two (2) of these weeks, students will be required to write a 5 page paper identifying the most important themes in that week’s readings. The students writing these papers each week will also be responsible for kicking off discussion that week with approximately five minutes of introductory comments. In weeks when more than one student is writing these papers, students should coordinate with one another regarding their introductory remarks.

For four (4) of the other weeks, students will be required to write a 2 page response paper addressing one of the readings. The topic of this paper is entirely up to the student: it could focus on a particularly compelling argument, raise points about the research design of an article, address issues related to the data analysis, etc.

Additionally, every student that is writing a weekly paper (either long or short) is also required to submit 3 potential discussion questions for the seminar along with their paper. Students not writing a paper that week are welcome to submit discussion questions as well, but are not required to do so.
We will assign the weeks that each student will be required to write papers at the first session of this course. You can therefore plan ahead when considering when to write your papers.

All response papers must be submitted by email to Professor Tucker no later than 7:00 PM the Monday night before class.

**Term Paper:** Each student is required to write a term paper for this course. There are three options for doing so:

1) **Literature Review:** Literature reviews are designed to provide insight into a given body of work. They do not merely summarize what has been written, but in addition point out themes, major findings, controversies, and directions for future research. Most published articles contain short literature reviews; most dissertations contain longer literature reviews. Literature reviews will be focused on a theme, and can also have a regional dimension if desired (e.g., work on public opinion formation in Africa). Literature reviews are particularly appropriate for students that have some idea about the general topic on which they are hoping to write their QP and/or dissertation, but not enough familiarity with the literature to have identified a specific topic yet OR for students who have a very specific topic in mind, but little knowledge about the related literature. Literature reviews will be between 18-20 pages.

2) **Research Proposal:** A research proposal will look like an empirical journal article, only without the actual analysis. Thus it will include a statement of a research question or puzzle, a review of the literature related to the topic, theoretical arguments that can be used to provide an answer to the question, hypotheses drawn from these theories that can be tested empirically, and a description of what empirical evidence and methods will be used to test these hypotheses (including how the hypotheses could be falsified); it can of course also contain some initial analysis of the data. Research proposals are particularly appropriate for students who have a good idea of a particular question that they would like to explore in greater detail in the future, either in another seminar, for their QP, or dissertation. Writing a research proposal give you a chance to really explore the important questions in writing a paper (a good question, relationship to the literature, research design, appropriate and available data) without the pressure of also having to complete the data analysis. Research proposals will be between 18-20 pages.

3) **Research Paper:** Research papers are to be written with the goal of submitting the paper to a journal for publication after the course is completed. They will have all of the components of the research proposal, but will also complete the empirical analysis and a discussion of the implications of the findings. Research papers for this class are ONLY to be written by a collaboration of two co-authors, and the paper will be between 30-35 pages. Research papers are appropriate for people with a strong desire to produce a publishable piece of work by the end of the semester and who can come up with a very clear and specific idea of what they would like to write about within the first month of the course. Both authors will receive the same grade for the paper.
All term papers have the following deadlines:
Friday, February 16th: 1-2 paragraph description of the paper, including chosen option
Friday, April 6th: Detailed outline of the paper; you should be able to write a draft on the basis of this outline
Friday, May 6th: All papers due by 3:00 PM.

No incompletes are permitted on term papers for this class except in the case of extremely extenuating circumstances.

**Books for Purchase**

Even in a field as quantitative as political behavior, major contributions have been, are, and will likely continue to be made by books. This is not to say that journal articles are not important – they are, and we will read many of them. But we will also read a number of books. And since many of you will go on to write books during your academic careers, it can be useful to see what important books look like. I have made all of the following books available for purchase at the NYU book store, and in an ideal world you would purchase all of them. If funds are limited, however, please know the following

We will read the following books almost in their entirety:


We will read significant portions of the following books:


We will read multiple chapters from the following books:


And we will read one chapter from:


We will also read multiple chapters from Fiorina’s *Retrospective Voting*, which is unfortunately out of print. If you can get your hands on a used copy of the book, I would recommend purchasing it. Bobst has four copies of it. I am also willing to lend someone my copy of the book to copy if you would like.

Please note that I am not preparing a course pack, as my assumption is that you can download journal articles from various electronic sources.

**Office Hours**

Professor Tucker will hold office hours on Thursdays from 10:30 – 12:00 in his office. If you need to schedule a time to meet outside of the scheduled office hours, please email Professor Tucker directly.

**Class Schedule and Reading Assignments**

**Week 1, January 16: Introduction and Logistics** (no readings assigned)

**Week 2, January 23: Voting: Michigan School / Sociological Approaches**


McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal, 2006, Ch.3, “Income Polarization and the Electorate,” p.71-113

Week 3, January 30: Voting: Downs, Fiorina, and Spatial Models


Week 4, February 6: Economic Voting I: The American Politics Classics

*Economic Voting Classics:*


*Further Reading:*


Week 5, February 13: Economic Voting II: “Conditional” Economic Voting


Tucker, Joshua A. 2006. *Regional Economic Voting: Russia, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic, 1990-99*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Read Chapters 1, 2, 8, 9 (If curious about statistical method, read first half of chapter 4, although this is not required. If interested in background on elections, read ch.3. If Ch.8 is unclear, skim relevant sections of Ch.5, 6, 7)

*Further Reading:*


**Week 6, February 20: Strategic Voting**

Cox, Gary W., (1997) *Making Votes Count: Strategic Coordination in the World's Electoral Systems*, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 7, 10, 11 (p.1-69, 139-150, 181-224)


**Week 7, February 27: Turnout**

Franklin, Mark N. 2004. *Voter turnout and the dynamics of electoral competition in established democracies since 1945*. Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press. (pages tba)


**Week 8, March 6: Party ID: Michigan School, Political Psychology, and Early Classics**

Campbell et al. 1960, Chapters 6-10 (p.120-265)


**Week 9, March 20: Party ID: Rational Revisionists**


*Further Reading:*


**SPRING BREAK**

**Week 10, March 27: Party ID: Current Research**


**Week 11, April 3: Public Opinion Formation**


**Week 12, April 10: Public Opinion Case Study: Attitudes Towards the EU**


**Further Reading:**


Week 13, April 17: Applied Collective Action Problems: Social Movements and Protest


*Further Reading:*


Week 14, April 24: Student Presentations (No readings assigned)