

POL 9730: Comparative Elections and Voting Behavior

University of Missouri

Spring 2020

M 3:00-5:30PM, Professional Building 104

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Course Description

This is a graduate level seminar in comparative political behavior. We will discuss a variety of topics dealing with comparative political behavior, such as the formation of partisan identification, public opinion formation, the decision to vote, party competition, and how foreign and domestic policy influence elections. The readings will introduce you to the various methodological techniques—including case studies, quantitative analysis, and agent-based modeling—used to test the empirical expectations of these theories. The goal of this course is to provide a solid foundation upon which you can build for comprehensive examinations and independent research.

Course Requirements

Class Participation and Attendance (10%)

This course is a seminar, not a lecture series. It is your responsibility, as well as mine, to come to class prepared to discuss the information and claims found in the readings and explore related research possibilities. If any of us shirk, we all lose. I expect no absences in the course, and I encourage you to discuss any circumstances with me that will preclude you from attending class. I also expect you to arrive on time. If you do need to miss class, please contact me ahead of time to let me know that you will not be able to attend and to make arrangements to complete an alternate assignment. A large portion of my overall evaluation of your performance in the course will depend on the quality of your seminar participation.

Keep in mind that the purpose of the seminar is to engage in informed group discussion: we are not interested in uninformed opinion. This means that students should closely and critically read each book or article on the reading list, and spend time thinking about what each contributes to the topic that week and to comparative politics in general. Class discussion will focus on such issues as the theoretical arguments being made (both explicitly and implicitly), the empirical evidence that is marshaled to test these arguments, weaknesses of the work, and potential directions for future study.

Grades for participation (including participation in discussion and attendance) will be assigned at the end of the semester, but you may ask for feedback on your performance at any time. If you have concerns about the quality and quantity of your participation in the course, I hope you will speak to me. Remember, this is a seminar, so just showing up to class is not enough. You must come to class prepared to participate in an informed discussion of the issues raised by the week's readings. If you just show up to class every week, but never say a word, you can expect to receive a D or lower for class participation (10% of your grade).

The following general grading scale will be used for participation and preparation:

- A: The student made a very strong contribution to the course. Class discussion, comments, and presentations reflected understanding and analysis of the material, and were constructive. Constructive means that a student does not simply identify a weakness or problem. Rather, constructive comments identify a problem and offer suggestions for how to address the weakness or problem.
- B: The student contributed meaningfully to the course. Class participation and/or presentations went beyond repeating the assigned material, perhaps identifying weaknesses in the current literature, but did not make many constructive suggestions about how weaknesses might be overcome or how the literature might be usefully extended in the future.
- C: The student did not contribute meaningfully to the seminar. Class participation and/or presentations were limited to repeating the assigned material rather than making connections or extensions.
- D or lower: The student attended class, but did not participate in discussions or present meaningful questions for academic debate.

Finally, because we will engage in vigorous academic debate during class, classroom etiquette is vital. Please work to ensure that you make comments in ways that invite discussion. Our classroom contains members with various life experiences, divergent perspectives, varying levels of experience with political science research, and different strategies for defending their views. Please state your opinions constructively and respectfully, listen carefully when your colleagues are speaking, and speak to me if you are offended by something that is said in class. If you do not follow these guidelines, your participation grade will be adversely affected.

Talking Points (20%)

For each class (excluding the Mini-Conference, instances where the student is writing an analysis paper, and when the student is the discussion leader) each student will produce three “talking points” about the readings. The discussion leader (see below) will arrange the talking points in a manner appropriate for their outline for discussing the readings and the students will read them out loud. The talking points should be in the form of a short paragraph outlining the question or argument. Students will email me these papers by noon on the Sunday before the class.

These questions are intended to improve understanding of the material and inspire discussion, so they should be the most interesting questions or arguments that the student has identified based on the week’s readings. Questions can relate to a single reading, a set of readings, or the week’s selections as a whole. Each talking point should refer to a different chapter or article from the weekly readings. You may also include questions of clarification if there are areas in the reading that you find difficult to understand. However, keep in mind that I will evaluate the quality of your questions as a critical part of this grade component. Given the size of the class, and the amount of material covered, not everybody gets an opportunity to ask every question they have. Consider this your opportunity to get your questions on record. The talking points will be graded on a 4-point scale.

This is an example of an effective talking point:

McClosky believes that economics should be more literary in its writings so that it tells a story to its readers. This argument fits with Kuhn’s point that scientists write to an audience of other scientists. Obviously, audience is important, but how important? Has the field of political science suffered from the same use of scientific jargon in the same manner as economics? Has the language that political scientists use hindered the field in accomplishing its goals of explanation and prediction of social phenomenon?

This example highlights the main argument of the author (*economics should be more literary*) and relates it to readings from previous weeks (*Thomas Kuhn*). The talking point then presents a question that pits the

two arguments against one another, thereby creating points for discussion. Note that this is only one of the many ways to produce a quality talking point. I will provide examples of others early in the semester.

Weekly Analysis (20%)

At four points throughout the semester students will write a 2-3 page analysis of the week's readings. The primary goal of the papers is not to earn grades but to provide you with an opportunity to reflect on the readings and develop critical thinking and writing skills. Feel free to use these papers as an aid in class discussion. Students will email me these papers by noon on the Sunday before the class. **Late papers will not be accepted.**

Keep the following questions in mind when crafting your analysis paper:

- *Theory*: Does the work make original contributions to the current state of theory on the topic being addressed? Are the assumptions and causal mechanisms elaborated clearly? Are the assumptions plausible? Is the theory internally consistent? Do the hypotheses follow logically from the theory?
- *Empirical Design*: Is the research design used by the author(s) suitable for testing the theoretical hypotheses? If not, how might this problem be resolved? Are there other relevant empirical issues the work has failed to consider?
- *Data*: Do the measures of the dependent and independent variables adequately correspond to the theoretical concepts of interest? Are better measures possible? Are more reliable data available to test the hypotheses? Are the data and construction of measures described in sufficient detail so as to permit replication?
- *Findings*: Have the results been interpreted correctly? Are the interpretations substantively interesting? How well do the findings fit with theoretical expectations? Are there other possible explanations of the phenomenon of interest that need to be considered? Are there other testable implications arising from the theory that might give us greater leverage on the posited relationships?

Be sure that your analysis is a coherent whole. In other words, you should not haphazardly offer answers to all of these questions, but use them as a guide to develop an original argument for your paper. You should have an introduction that sets out the thesis or primary argument of your analysis paper, a body that develops your thesis/argument citing the readings as needed to support your points, and a conclusion that rounds out your analysis paper. This is an opportunity to go beyond restating key points from the readings and think intelligently and originally about what they mean, what they tell us about comparative politics, and what concerns you about them. The best papers will be those that take up a single point or small issue and develop a thoughtful analysis of that point. Do not try to cover too much in the paper.

Discussion Leader (20%)

Each student will serve as the discussion leader for one class. The primary task is to lead the collective discussions related to the readings for that week. The discussion leader is encouraged to generate their own questions aimed at stimulating thoughtful discussions, as well as use other students' talking points and analysis papers (distributed on that Sunday by me). The discussion leader can arrange the discussion of the talking points and analysis papers in any way that he/she wants according to their plans for discussion, and the discussion leader can use all or none of the talking points and papers. This discussion should not only provide a deeper understanding of the readings and how they relate to the broader literature on that topic, but they should also suggest questions, identify puzzles, and stimulate ideas for independent research projects. I would be happy to meet with the discussion leader before class to answer any questions he/she might have about the structure of the course's discussion.

Since the discussion leader relies on the active participation of all the graduate students in the seminar, it is important that none of the students shirk. Come to class with a strong understanding of the important concepts, theories, and tests of each reading so that you can contribute in a meaningful way to the course discussion.

Research Paper (30%)

Another requirement is the development of an original research paper, involving the development and empirical testing of one or more hypotheses on one of the broad substantive topics that we cover in the seminar. This paper may be quantitative or qualitative in nature, depending on the nature of the question and the student's methodological training, but in any case it must be analytical and theoretical in nature rather than descriptive.

The research paper should discuss the theoretical motivation for the proposed research, citing the relevant literature (at least 20 sources) to which the research seeks to contribute. It should clearly explain the original theoretical argument made and explicitly posit the key testable hypotheses derived from this theory. The paper should also discuss the dependent variable(s) and central explanatory variables that would be employed in an empirical investigation of these hypotheses. In addition to submitting a written version, students will make an 12-15 minute presentation of their research paper to the class at the mini-conference.

The final paper must be 25-30 pages in length, and should be comparable to an academic journal article in style. Please note that this must be an original paper for this course, and can not overlap in any substantial way with a paper written for another course; if there is any question please talk to me about it and bring me a copy of the other paper. I strongly encourage students to use \LaTeX . More information will be provided later in the semester.

There will be four components of the research paper:

1. A two page proposal that is due by the beginning of class on Monday, March 16 (worth 5% of the course grade). An effective proposal will include the following sections: Background/literature in which the student identifies gaps in the literature and introduces the research question, Theory and Hypothesis where the student identifies the credible mechanism, develops the theory and derives testable hypotheses, Research Design where the student discusses possible data sources and potential methods, and finally Potential Problems/Obstacles where the student can discuss areas in which he/she needs help.
2. A first draft of the paper submitted via email by the beginning of class on Monday, April 20 (worth 5% of the course grade). I will distribute the drafts to the rest of the class.
3. Participation in the Mini-Conference on April 27 and May 4. Each student will make a presentation and serve as a discussant/reviewer for one or two other student presentations (worth 10% of the course grade). An effective presentation will include the following elements:
 - introduce research question
 - place your research in the context of the literature
 - derive hypotheses
 - describe your research design
 - present your empirical results
 - list major conclusions and implications.

I will provide more in-depth description of the requirements for the Reviews at a later date, but they should include an overall summary and then comments/criticisms arranged into three topics: aesthetics, empirical and theoretical.

4. A revised final version of the research paper submitted via email by 3:00pm, May 11. Additionally, if quantitative methods were used, the student must email me the data set and replication materials by the due date (altogether, this component is worth 20% of the course grade).

The paper will be graded on the clarity and contribution of the theory as an addition to the literature on comparative political behavior, as well as on the appropriateness of the empirical analysis proposed to test the theory.

Grammatical mistakes in the weekly analysis papers or in the research paper will NOT be tolerated. Any student turning in an assignment with grammatical mistakes will have the assignment returned without a grade. The student will have one opportunity to improve and resubmit the work with a grade penalty in a time frame decided by me.

Final class grades will be assigned with the following grading scale:

A+ = 97.0 - 100
A = 90.0 - 96.99
B+ = 87.0 - 89.99
B = 80.0 - 86.99
C+ = 77.0 - 79.99
C = 70.0 - 76.99
D+ = 67.0 - 69.99
D = 60.0 - 66.99
F = 0 - 59.99

There are no required textbooks. All required readings will be available on electronic course reserves or through jstor.

Other Considerations

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. In this course, you are expected to submit original work and behave in a respectful manner toward both the professor and other students in the class. Breaches of the academic integrity rules are extremely serious matters. Sanctions for such a breach range from instructor-imposed academic sanctions, such as a failing grade for the course, to University-imposed disciplinary sanctions, such as probation or expulsion. If you have questions, please consult the University's academic integrity website, <http://academicintegrity.missouri.edu/>, and the University M-book, www.missouri.edu/~mbook.

Plagiarism (or cheating in any way) will not be tolerated. Any student plagiarizing will receive an automatic 0% for that assignment, no exceptions!

I strongly encourage you to come and talk to me if you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism.

ADA Statement

If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need to make arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please let me know as soon as possible. If disability related accommodations are necessary (for example, a note taker, extended time on exams, captioning), please register with the Disability Center (<http://disabilitycenter.missouri.edu>), S5 Memorial Union, 573- 882-4696, and then notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. For other MU resources for persons with disabilities, click on “Disability Resources” on the MU homepage.

Class Schedule:

We will spend as much time as necessary on each topic for this course. Because I am unable to predict in advance how long each topic will take, the schedule below is only a rough guideline.

Methodological and Theoretical Foundations

January 27: NO CLASS

February 3: Public Opinion and Attitude Formation

- Zaller, John. 1991. “Information, Values, and Opinion”. *American Political Science Review* 85: 1215-37.
- Bartels, Larry. 1996. “Uninformed Votes: Information Effects in Presidential Elections.” *American Journal of Political Science* 40: 194-220.
- Gordon, Stacy, and Gary Segura. 1997. “Cross-National Variation in the Political Sophistication of Individuals”. *Journal of Politics* 59: 126-47.
- Palmer, Harvey, and Raymond Duch. 2001 “Do Surveys Provide Representative or Whimsical Assessments of the Economy?” *Political Analysis* 9: 58-77.
- Andersen, Robert, James Tilley, and Anthony F. Heath. 2005. “Political Knowledge and Enlightened Preferences: Party Choice through the Election Cycle.” *British Journal of Political Science*. 35: 285-302.

February 10: Partisan Identification

- Lijphart, Arend. 1979. “Religious vs. Linguistic vs. Class Voting.” *American Political Science Review* 73: 442-58.
- Brader and Tucker. 2001. “The Emergence of Mass Partisanship in Russia, 1993-1996.” *American Journal of Political Science*. 45: 69-83.
- Bartels, Larry. 2002. “Beyond the Running Tally: Partisan Bias in Political Perceptions.” *Political Behavior* 24(2): 151-70.
- Clarke, Harold D., David Sanders, Marianne C. Stewart and Paul F. Whiteley. 2004. *Political Choice in Britain*. Oxford University Press. Chapters 1-3.

- Baker, Andy, Barry Ames, and Lucio Renno. 2006. "Social Context and Campaign Volatility in New Democracies." *American Journal of Political Science* 50: 382-99.

February 17: Participation and Voter Turnout

- Jackman, Robert. 1987. "Political Institutions and Voter Turnout in the Industrial Democracies". *American Political Science Review* 81: 405-24.
- Aldrich, John H. 1993. "Rational Choice and Turnout". *American Journal of Political Science* 37: 246-78.
- Aguilar, Edwin, and Alexander Pacek. 2000. "Macroeconomic Conditions, Voter Turnout, and the Working-class/Economically Disadvantaged Party Vote in Developing Countries". *Comparative Political Studies* 33: 995-1017.
- Gray, Mark, and Miki Caul. 2000. "Declining Voter Turnout in Advanced Industrialized Democracies, 1950-97". *Comparative Political Studies* 33: 1091-122.
- Pacek, Alexander C., Grigore Pop-Eleches, and Joshua Tucker. 2009. "Disenchanted or Discerning? Voter Turnout in Post-Communist Countries". *The Journal of Politics*, 71(2): 473-491.

Position-Based Voting

February 24: Spatial Models of Voting

- Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper Collins. Chapters 2, 7-8.
- Iversen, Torben. 1994. "Political Leadership and Representation in West European Democracies: A Test of Three Models of Voting." *American Journal of Political Science* 38: 45-74.
- Alvarez, R. Michael, Jonathan Nagler and Shaun Bowler. 2000. "Issues, Economics, and the Dynamics of Multiparty Elections: the British 1987 General Election." *American Political Science Review* 94: 131-149.
- Kedar, Orit. 2005. "When Moderate Voters Prefer Extreme Parties: Policy Balancing in Parliamentary Elections". *American Political Science Review* 99: 185-200.
- Adams, James F., Samuel Merrill, and Bernard Grofman. 2005. *A Unified Theory of Party Competition*. Chapters 2-3

Performance-Based Voting

March 2: Origins of Economic Evaluations

- Hetherington, Marc J. 1996. "The Media's Role in Forming Voters' National Economic Evaluations in 1992." *American Journal of Political Science*. 40.2: 372-395.
- Duch, Raymond M., Harvey D. Palmer and Christopher J. Anderson. 2000. "Heterogeneity in Perceptions of National Economic Conditions." *American Journal of Political Science*. 44.4: 635-652.

- de Boef, Suzanna and Paul M. Kellstedt. 2004. “The Political (and Economic) Origins of Consumer Confidence.” *American Journal of Political Science*. 48.4: 633-649.
- Evans, Geoffrey and Robert Anderson. 2006. “The Political Conditioning of Economic Perceptions.” *The Journal of Politics*. 68: 194-207.
- Fortunato, David, Clint S. Swift and Laron K. Williams. 2016. “All Economics is Local: Spatial Aggregations of Economic Information.” *Political Science Research and Methods*.

March 9: Retrospective and Prospective Economic Voting

- MacKuen, Michael B., Robert S. Erikson and James A. Stimson. 1992. “Peasants or Bankers? The American Electorate and the U.S. Economy”. *American Political Science Review*. 86: 597-611.
- Achen, Christopher H. and Larry M. Bartels. 2004. “Blind Retrospection: Electoral Responses to Droughts, Floods, and Shark Attacks.” Working Paper
- Duch, Raymond M. and Randy Stevenson. 2006. “Assessing the Magnitude of the Economic Vote over Time and across Nations.” *Electoral Studies*. 25: 528-547.
- Singer, Matthew M. and Ryan E. Carlin. 2013. “Context Counts: The Election Cycle, Development, and the Nature of Economic Voting.” *The Journal of Politics*.
- van der Brug, Wouter, Cees van der Eijk and Mark Franklin. 2007. *The Economy and the Vote: Economic Conditions and Elections in Fifteen Countries*. Chapters 1 and 2.

March 16: Conditional Economic Voting I

- **Research proposal due**
- Powell, G. Bingham, and Guy D. Whitten. 1993. “A Cross-National Analysis of Economic Voting: Taking Account of the Political Context.” *American Journal of Political Science* 37: 391-414.
- Lewis-Beck, Michael S. 1997. “Who’s the Chef? Economic Voting Under a Dual Executive.” *European Journal of Political Research*. 31: 315-325.
- Gomez, Brad T., and J. Matthew Wilson. 2006. “Cognitive Heterogeneity and Economic Voting: A Comparative Analysis of Four Democratic Electorates.” *American Journal of Political Science* 50:127-145.
- Tavits, Margit. 2007. “Clarity of Responsibility and Corruption.” *American Journal of Political Science* 51: 218-29.
- Timothy Hellwig and David Samuels. 2008. “Electoral Accountability and the Variety of Democratic Regimes.” *British Journal of Political Science* 38: 65-90.
- Duch, Raymond, Wojtek Przepiorka and Randolphy Stevenson. 2015. “Responsibility Attribution for Collective Decision Makers.” *American Journal of Political Science*. 59.2: 372-389.

March 23: No Class—Spring Break

March 30: Conditional Economic Voting II

- Stevenson, Randolph, and Lynn Vavreck. 2000. “Does Campaign Length Matter? Testing for Cross-National Effects.” *British Journal of Political Science* 30: 217-35.
- Smith, Alastair. 2003. “Election Timing in Majoritarian Parliaments.” *British Journal of Political Science*. 33: 397-418.
- Singer, Matthew M. 2011. “Who Says ‘It’s the Economy’? Cross-National and Cross-Individual Variation in the Salience of Economic Performance.” *Comparative Political Studies*. 44: 284-312.
- Hellwig, Timothy. 2012. “Constructing Accountability: Party Position Taking and Economic Voting”. *Comparative Political Studies*. 45: 91-118.
- Kayser, Mark Andreas and Michael Peress. 2012. “Benchmarking across Borders: Electoral Accountability and the Necessity of Comparison.” *American Political Science Review*. 106.3: 661-684.
- Williams, Laron K. and Guy D. Whitten. 2015. “Don’t Stand So Close to Me: Spatial Contagion Effects and Party Competition.” *American Journal of Political Science* 59.2: 309-325.

April 6: War Voting

- **Research proposal due**
- Aldrich, John H., John L. Sullivan and Eugene Borgida. 1989. “Foreign Affairs and Issue Voting: Do Presidential Candidates ‘Waltz Before a Blind Audience?’” *The American Political Science Review*. 83: 123-141.
- Gadarian, Shana Kushner. 2010. “Foreign Policy at the Ballot Box: How Citizens Use Foreign Policy to Judge and Choose Candidates.” *The Journal of Politics*. 72: 1046-1062.
- Gartner, Scott Sigmund. 2008. “The Multiple Effects of Casualties on Public Support for War: An Experimental Approach.” *The American Political Science Review*. 102: 95-106.
- Clarke, Harold D., David Sanders, Marianne C. Stewart and Paul F. Whiteley. 2009. *Performance Politics and the British Voter*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 4, “Tony’s War”.
- Williams, Laron K., David J. Brule and Michael T. Koch. 2010. “War Voting: Interstate Disputes, the Economy, and Electoral Outcomes.” *Conflict Management and Peace Science*. 27: 442-460.

April 13: Party Competition

- Budge, Ian. 1994. “A New Spatial Theory of Party Competition: Uncertainty, Ideology and Policy Equilibria Viewed Comparatively and Temporally.” *British Journal of Political Science*. 24.4: 443-467.
- Meguid, Bonnie M. 2005. “Competition between Unequals: The Role of Mainstream Party Strategy in Niche Party Success.” *The American Political Science Review*. 99.3: 347-359.
- Somer-Topcu, Zeynep. 2015. “Everything to Everyone: The Electoral Consequences of the Broad-Appeal Strategy in Europe.” *American Journal of Political Science* 59.4: 841-854.

- Williams, Laron K., Katsunori Seki and Guy D. Whitten. 2016. “You’ve Got Some Explaining to Do: The Influence of Economic Conditions and Spatial Competition on Party Strategy.” *Political Science Research and Methods*. 4.1: 47-63.
- Bohmelt, Tobias, Lawrence Ezrow, Roni Lehrer and Hugh Ward. 2016. “Party Policy Diffusion.” *American Political Science Review*. 110.2.

April 20: NO CLASS

- **First Draft of Research Paper Due via Email!**

April 27: Mini-Conference I

- **Presentations**

May 4: Mini-Conference II

- **Presentations**

May 11: NO CLASS

- **Final Research Paper and Replication Materials Due by 3:00pm via Email**