POLISCI 688: Comparative Political Behavior
Prof. Noah Nathan
Winter 2018 // Wednesdays 4–6pm
3315 Mason Hall

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Course Description
This course surveys contemporary research on political behavior from the comparative politics and political economy literatures. We focus on research that addresses three main outcome variables: (1) vote choice, (2) turnout, and (3) protest and other forms of contentious participation. Readings are drawn from all world regions, but special emphasis will be placed on political behavior in developing countries. Course discussions and assignments will focus on helping graduate students both understand the core theoretical arguments underpinning existing research on political behavior and develop actionable research designs in pursuit of their own research agendas.

Assignments and Grading

- Class participation (30% of grade) – each student is expected to attend each class and contribute actively to our discussion. Email me ahead of time if you need an excused absence.

- Journal article “reviews” (2, 10% of grade each) – each student will sign-up to write two mock journal referee reports, choosing one paper each from two separate weeks of the course. These should be 1-2 pages single spaced. All readings that are (a) not book chapters; (b) published 1990 or later are eligible. Detailed instructions on how to write these referee reports will be circulated in our first class meeting. Each review must be posted on the canvas website by 12 midnight before the class session. The next day, the student will (briefly) present his/her main comments from the referee report to the class. Late reviews will not be accepted – you need to sign up for a new week.

- Research “brainstorm” memos (2, 10% of grade each) – each student will sign-up to write two brief (2-3 pages) research “brainstorm” memos responding to course readings for the selected week. Memos can be informal (bullet points are ok). The memos will identify a new research question that arises from the issues covered in that week’s readings and brainstorm a research strategy that could be used to address that question. Each memo must be posted on the canvas website by 12 midnight before the class session. The next day, the student will (briefly) present his/her research ideas to the class at the end of our discussion. Late memos will not be accepted – you need to sign up for a new week.

- Research design and/or seminar paper (30% of grade) – students will pick one of two options for the final assignment. Students must notify me by email about which option they have chosen by March 26 and then must sign up for office hours to discuss their plans for the final project during the weeks of April 2 and April 9. The paper or design is due Wednesday, April 25. A standard late policy applies (1/3 of a grade reduction for each day late) unless a new due date is agreed upon in advance with me. Everyone will give a brief presentation about their project in our last class meeting. Details TBD closer to the date. The two options are:
– (Option 1) A 20 page research proposal that: (a) identifies an important research question in
the study of political behavior; (b) surveys the appropriate literature and identifies the potential
contributions of the study; (c) presents a compelling theoretical argument; and (d) proposes a
rigorous design for testing that argument that ideally involves the collection of original data.
The goal of this assignment is to develop ideas that you could propose as part of a dissertation
prospectus in the future.

– (Option 2) A research paper of standard length and format examining a research question in
the study of political behavior. This paper can improve upon research the student has already
begun outside of this class as long as significant new work is done for this course. I am open to
co-authored papers with other students in the course, but approval for co-authored papers must
be discussed with me in advance. The goal of this assignment is to start developing a paper that
you could eventually submit to a journal and/or turn into a dissertation chapter. While taking an
incomplete is not ideal or recommended, I am open to discussing it with you on a case-by-case
basis for Option 2 only depending on the nature of your paper.

Readings
All required readings will be posted on the Canvas webpage for the course.
1. **Introduction** (January 3)

1. Miller et al., 2013, “How to Be a Peer Reviewer: A Guide for Recent and Soon-to-be PhDs,” *PS: Political Science and Politics*

2. The Political Methodologist’s “Special Issue on Peer Review”, Fall 2015 (skim; optional)

**Outcome 1: Voting Behavior**

2. **Performance and accountability: economic voting** (January 10)

*Assigned readings:*


*Further reading:*


- Ferejohn, 1986, “Incumbent performance and electoral control,” *Public Choice* (skim the model)


• Samuels, 2004, “Presidentialism and Accountability for the Economy in Comparative Perspective,” *American Political Science Review*


NOTE: Class canceled – January 17

3. Partisanship and accountability (January 24)

Assigned readings:


5. Lupu, 2014, “Brand Dilution and the Breakdown of Political Parties in Latin America,” *World Politics*

6. Carlson, 2016, “Finding Partisanship Where We Least Expect It,” *Political Behavior*

Further reading:


- Conroy-Krutz, Moehler, and Aguilar, 2016, “Partisan Cues and Vote Choice in New Multi-Party Systems,” *Comparative Political Studies*


Schickler and Green, 1997, “The Stability of Party Identification in Western Democracies: Results from Eight Panel Studies,” *Comparative Political Studies*

4. Information and accountability (January 31)

Assigned readings:


Further reading:

- Banerjee, Green, McManus, and Pande, 2014, “Are Poor Voters Indifferent to Whether Elected Leaders are Criminal or Corrupt? A Vignette Experiment in Rural India,” *Political Communication*


5. Clientelism and accountability (February 7)

Assigned readings:


Further reading:


- Dixit and Londregan, 1996, “The Determinants of Success of Special Interests in Redistributive Politics,” *Journal of Politics*


- Kitschelt, 2000, “Linkages Between Citizens and Politicians in Democratic Politics,” *Comparative Political Studies*


- Lindbeck and Weibull, 1987, “Balanced-Budget Redistribution as the Outcome of Political Competition,” *Public Choice*

- Munoz, 2014, “An Informational Theory of Campaign Clientelism,” *Comparative Politics*

- Nathan, 2016, “Local Ethnic Geography, Expectations of Favoritism, and Voting in Urban Ghana,” *Comparative Political Studies*

- Nichter and Peress, 2017, “Request Fulfilling: When Citizens Demand Clientelist Benefits,” *Comparative Political Studies*

- Schaffer and Baker, 2015, “Clientelism as Persuasion-Buying: Evidence from Latin America,” *Comparative Political Studies*


6. Elite capture and influence (February 14)

Assigned readings:


Further reading:


7. Ethnicity and accountability (February 21)

Assigned readings:


Further reading:


- Dunning and Harrison, 2010, “Cross-Cutting Cleavages and Ethnic Voting: An Experimental Study of Cousinage in Mali,” American Political Science Review


- Horowitz, 1985, Ethnic Groups in Conflict, University of California Press


- Kasfir, 1979, “Explaining Ethnic Political Participation,” World Politics


Outcome 2: Turnout

8. Turnout in advanced democracies (March 7)

Assigned readings:


Further reading:

- Andersen and Beramendi, 2012, “Left Parties, Poor Voters, and Electoral Participation in Advanced Industrial Societies,” *Comparative Political Studies*
- Cox, 2015, “Electoral Rules, Mobilization, and Turnout”, *Annual Review of Political Science*

• Karp and Banducci, 2008, “Political Efficacy and Participation in Twenty-Seven Democracies: How Electoral Systems Shape Political Behaviour”, *British Journal of Political Science*

9. Turnout in developing countries (March 14)

Assigned readings:


Further reading:


- Birch, 2010, “Perceptions of Electoral Fairness and Voter Turnout”, *Comparative Political Studies*


- de Miguel, Jamal, and Tessler, 2015, “Elections in the Arab World: Why Do Citizens Turnout?”, *Comparative Political Studies*


• Szwareberg, 2012, “Uncertainty, political clientelism, and voter turnout in Latin America,” *Comparative Politics*
Outcome 3: Non-Electoral Participation

10. Theories of protest and contentious politics (March 21)

Assigned readings:


Further reading:

- Benson and Rochon, 2004, “Interpersonal Trust and the Magnitude of Protest,” *Comparative Political Studies*
- Granovetter, 1973, “The Strength of Weak Ties,” *American Journal of Sociology*
- Lipsky, 1968, “Protest as a Political Resource,” *American Political Science Review*
• McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly, 2001, *Dynamics of Contention*, Cambridge University Press


• Meyer, 2004, “Protest and Political Opportunities,” *Annual Review of Sociology*


• O’Brien, 1996, “Rightful Resistance,” *World Politics*


11. Protest, riots, and rebellion (March 28)

Assigned readings:


Further reading:

- Beissinger, Jamal, and Mazur, 2015, “Explaining Divergent Revolutionary Coalitions: Regime Strategies and the Structuring of Participation in the Tunisian and Egyptian Revolutions,” *Comparative Politics*

- Bhavnani and Lacina, 2015, “The Effects of Weather-Induced Migration on Sons of the Soil Riots in India,” *World Politics*


- Campante and Chor, 2014, “‘The people want the fall of the regime’: Schooling, protest, and the economy,” *Journal of Comparative Economics*


- Gleditsch and Rivera, 2015, “The Diffusion of Nonviolent Campaigns,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*

- Norris, Walgrave, and Van Aelst, 2005, “Who Demonstrates? Antistate Rebels, Conventional Participants, or Everyone?” *Comparative Politics*

- Pearlman, 2013, “Emotions and the Microfoundations of the Arab Uprisings,” *Perspectives on Politics*


Final Weeks: Special topics

12. Methodological challenges and innovations (April 4)

Note: Email me this week with your choice for the final assignment.

Assigned readings: (our discussion will focus on methods, not the specific substantive topics)


Further reading:
Bias in survey and interview data:


- Gonzalez-Ocantes et al., 2012, “Vote Buying and Social Desirability Bias: Experimental Evidence from Nicaragua,” American Journal of Political Science


- King, Murray, Salomon, and Tandon, 2004, “Enhancing the validity and cross-cultural comparability of measurement in survey research,” American Political Science Review
• Perez, 2011, “The Origins and Implications of Language Effects in Multilingual Surveys,” *Political Analysis*


Survey experiments:

• Blair, 2015, “Survey Methods for Sensitive Topics,” *Comparative Politics Newsletter*


• Glynn, 2013, “What Can we Learn from Statistical Truth Serum? Design and Analysis of the List Experiment,” *Public Opinion Quarterly*

• Imai, Park, and Greene, 2015, “Using the Predicted Responses from List Experiments as Explanatory Variables in Regression Models,” *Political Analysis*

• Kiewiet de Jonge and Nickerson, 2014, “Artificial Inflation or Deflation? Assessing the Item Count Technique in Comparative Surveys,” *Political Behavior*

• Kramon and Weghorst, 2012, “Measuring Sensitive Attitudes in Developing Countries: Lessons from Implementing the List Experiment,” *Newsletter of the APSA Experimental Section*


Online and lab-in-the-field experiments:

• Berisnky, Huber, and Lenz, “Evaluating Online Labor Markets for Experimental Research: Amazon.com’s Mechanical Turk,” *Political Analysis*


• Druckman et al., 2011, *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*, Cambridge University Press


• Huff and Tingley, 2015, “Who are these people? Evaluating the demographic characteristics and political preferences of MTurk survey respondents,” *Research and Politics*

Text as data:

• Grimmer and Stewart, 2013, “Text as Data: The Promise and Pitfalls of Automatic Content Analysis Methods for Political Texts,” *Political Analysis*
• Laver, Benoit, and Garry, 2003, “Extracting Policy Positions from Political Texts Using Words as Data,” *American Political Science Review*

• Lucas et al., 2015, “Computer-Assisted Text Analysis for Comparative Politics,” *Political Analysis*


14. **Student Presentations** (April 9)

*Note: Sign up for office hours this week to discuss your final assignment.*

Format TBA

**Final projects due April 25**