

**PS1370
COMPARATIVE POLITICAL BEHAVIOR**

Fall Semester 2009: 5200 WW Posvar Hall
Tuesday Thursday 11-12:15

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Course Description

This course is an introduction to the study of comparative mass political behavior. The course will focus on cross-national differences and similarities in public opinion, voting behavior, and other forms of political participation. We will attempt to answer several fundamental theoretical questions that have motivated nearly all research in the field: 1) What is the nature of public opinion, and how does it relate to the stability and effectiveness of democratic politics; 2) Why do individuals vote for particular candidates or parties in a given election?; and 3) Why do individuals participate at all in politics, either by voting or by taking part in other kinds of political activities? In engaging these questions, we will investigate the extent to which theories of political behavior, many of which were originally developed in the U.S., “travel well,” that is, whether they are able to account for patterns of public opinion and political participation seen in other countries around the world.

Requirements

Grades will be based on two exams, one research paper, and participation in class discussion. The exams will be held in-class, on Thursday October 15, and Thursday, December 10. The paper assignment will be a ten-twelve page paper that deals with one of the substantive areas on the syllabus or on a special topic which is agreed upon by the instructor. The first eight-nine pages will consist of a literature review that synthesizes articles relevant to the given area and ties them together into coherent themes. The last two-three pages will outline one or more ideas that you have about conducting research that would extend our knowledge in that subfield of comparative political behavior. The paper will be due Tuesday, November 24. Depending on the size of the class, there may be student presentations, either individually or in groups, during some of the class sessions as well.

Grading

Exam 1	30%
Exam 2	30%
Research Paper	25%
Participation	15%

Texts

Dalton, Russell. 2006. *Citizen Politics: Public Opinion and Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies*. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press.
Norris, Pippa. 2002. *Democratic Phoenix: Reinventing Political Activism*. Cambridge University Press.
Asher, Herbert. 2003. *Polling and the Public*. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press.

Attendance Policy

I strongly recommend that you make every effort to attend the lectures. Lectures provide the core ideas that we will explore in the class, and they are the source of many of the questions on the exams. Part of your grade will be based on your performance in class discussions as well.

Academic Honesty

Academic integrity in the university setting is vital. All students are advised to be familiar with the University of Pittsburgh's standards of academic integrity (<http://www.pitt.edu/~provost/ai1.html>). These principles will be strictly enforced in this course. Anyone thought to have violated the standards of academic integrity will face the full force of university-sanctioned penalties, including, but not limited to, failing the class.

Accommodations For Persons With Disabilities

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and the Office of Disability Resources and Services, 216 William Pitt Union, (412)648-7890/(412)383-7355 (TTY) as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course. All discussions between you and me will remain confidential.

Course Outline

Week1:

September 1: **Introduction to the Course**
September 3: **No Class**

Week 2 (September 8, 10): **Polls, Surveys and the Study of Comparative Political Behavior**

Reading: Asher, *Polling and the Public*, chapters 1,3,4, 6,7.
Ansolabahere, Iyengar, "Does Attack Advertising Demobilize the Electorate?"
American Political Science Review (1994)

Week 3 (September 15, 17): **The Nature of Mass Opinion**

Reading: Dalton, chapter 2.
Gordon and Segura, "Cross-National Variation in the Political Sophistication of Individuals: Capability or Choice?" *Journal of Politics* (1997)
Bartels, "Uninformed Votes: Information Effects in Presidential Elections,"
American Journal of Political Science (1996)
Lau and Redlawsk, "Advantages and Disadvantages of Cognitive Heuristics in Political Decision Making," *American Journal of Political Science* (2002)

Week 4-5 (September 22, 24, 29): **Sources of Public Opinion:
Values, the Media and Political Elites**

Reading: Dalton, chapters 5-6.
Zaller, "Mainstream and Polarization Effects," chapter 6 in *The Nature and Origin of Mass Opinion* (1992).
Druckman, "On the Limits of Framing Effects: Who Can Frame?" *Journal of Politics* (2001)
Freedman, Franz and Goldstein, "Campaign Advertising and Democratic Citizenship," *American Journal of Political Science* (2004)

Week 5-6 (October 1, 6): **Political Participation I: Cross-National Voter Turnout**

Reading: Norris, chapters 1-4.
Franklin, Mark, "Electoral Participation," in L. Leduc, R. Niemi, and P. Norris, *Comparing Democracies* (1996)

Week 6-7 (October 8, 20, 22): **Political Participation II: Individual-Level Models**

Reading: Norris, chapter 5.
Dalton, chapter 3.
Rosenstone and Hansen, *Mobilization, Participation and Democracy in America*, chapters 2, 5.
Kahn and Kenney, "Do Negative Campaigns Mobilize or Suppress Turnout? Clarifying the Relationship between Negativity and Participation," *American Political Science Review* (1999)

October 13: **No Class (Fall Break)**

October 15: **Exam 1**

Week 8 (October 27, 29): **Political Participation III: Social Networks and Protest**

Reading: Norris, chapters 8, 10.
Dalton, chapter 4.
Mutz, Diana "The Consequences of Cross-Cutting Networks for Political Participation," *American Journal of Political Science* (2002)

Week 9 (November 3, 5): **Voting Behavior I: Sociological Models of the Vote**

Reading: Dalton, chapters 7, 8.
Inglehart and Norris, "The Gender Gap in Voting and Public Opinion," chapter 4 in *Rising Tide* (2002)

Week 10-11 (November 10, 12, 17): **Voting Behavior II: Parties, Candidates, Issues**

Reading: Dalton, chapters 9, 10.
Clarke, et al., "Electoral Choice in 2001," chapter 4 in *Political Choice in Britain* (2005).
Clarke, et al., "The Dynamics of Party Identification," chapter 6 in *Political Choice in Britain* (2005)

Week 11-12 (November 19, 24): **Voting Behavior III: Economic Models of the Vote**

Reading: Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier, "Economic Models of the Vote." In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior*.
Lewis-Beck, "Comparative Economic Voting," *American Journal of Political Science* (1986)
Powell and Whitten, "A Cross-National Analysis of Economic Voting: Taking Account of the Political Context," *American Journal of Political Science* (1993)

November 24: **Papers Due**

Week 13-14 (December 1, 3, 8): **Public Opinion and Democratic Political Culture**

Reading: Dalton, chapter 12.
Inglehart and Wenzel, *Modernization, Cultural Change and Democracy: The Human Development Sequence* (2005), chapter 11.
Finkel, Seligson and Humphries, "Democratic Attitudes and Political Tolerance," Chapter 5 in Robinson, Shaver and Wrightsman, editors, *Measures of Political Attitudes* (1999)
Gibson, "A Sober Second Thought: Experiments in Persuading Russians to Tolerate," *American Journal of Political Science* (1998)
Finkel, "Can Democracy Be Taught?" *Journal of Democracy* (2003)

December 10: **Exam 2**