

POLSCI 701: Core in Political Behavior and Identities

Tuesdays, 1:25-3:55 in Gross Hall 105

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Individual meetings by appointment, or just stop by my office!

Course Overview

This is the introductory PhD course for the Political Behavior and Identities field. **It is taught at the level, and in the style, of a PhD seminar.** It is intended to provide a broad overview of major topics in, and theoretical and methodological approaches to, the study of mass political behavior – of citizens making judgments and decisions related to politics.

Keep in mind:

- It is impossible to cover the entire field in one semester. Not only will we miss important, even foundational, articles and books, we will miss entire literatures of concern to the field. The goal is *not* to be comprehensive, but to give students a sense of the range of questions asked, and approaches taken, across various subfields.
- This is *not* a list of the readings you “need to know” for the field and would *not* serve as sufficient preparation for a comprehensive exam.
 - I have provided, on Canvas, Herbert Kitschelt’s previous syllabus for this course, on which this course is based, which provides a much longer list of readings. Even that syllabus is not comprehensive, but is a great resource if you are looking to get started on a topic.
 - Of course, your advisors and the B&I faculty are also excellent resources for recommended readings.
- Many of the readings for this course will be difficult because you are just now learning the methods they employ. I understand this! But you are expected to try your best to understand what the authors are doing and why.
 - If you get to a section you cannot understand (e.g., an advanced statistical method you have not studied), you should focus on the authors’ explanation and justification for using that method, as well as their interpretation of their results. This will help you to learn about the logic of the paper as well as the methods employed.
 - Much of your training is similar to learning a new language. Doing so requires repeated exposure to novel concepts in context. If you simply skip these sections entirely, you will miss out on valuable learning opportunities. *Expect to feel frustrated*, just as you would if you were learning a new language!

Required Readings

With a few exceptions, all readings listed in the course schedule below are available through Duke Library (articles) or posted to Canvas. All others have links provided.

Course Requirements

Course Participation (40%)

1. Attendance (10%): There are only 13 meetings of this course and you are expected to attend them all. Standard exceptions apply (i.e., illness and other significant unexpected issues, Duke sports, religious observance), but you should otherwise be in class. Unexcused missed classes will count against your final grade.
2. Weekly Questions (10%): Each week, **by Tuesday morning at 9am**, you are required to submit 2 questions about that week's readings to the relevant assignment in Canvas. These are questions regarding things you do not understand about one or more of that week's readings and which you would like to be discussed/clarified during class time. I will not typically give a standard lecture at the beginning of class. Instead, I will assume you have done the readings, and will focus my initial discussion on common questions raised here. It is thus very important that you take this seriously and ask good questions!
3. Class Participation (20%): Each week, a large portion of class time will be spent in discussion. We will often have initial “break out” sessions of small-group discussions and then bring it back to the full group to discuss together. I will monitor your engagement in both these kinds of discussions and I expect you to be an active participant.

Methods Skill Building (30%)

You are required to level-up in one methodological area during the semester through self-study. I offer several options below, but I am very open to hearing proposals from you about what you want to pursue. This will be especially true for more advanced students, some of whom may wish to go beyond the introductory material in my suggestions.

- ***Each student is required to get approval for their course of self-study by 9/13.***

As part of your proposal for self-study, you must also propose a way to be evaluated at the end of the semester. How should I decide if you took this seriously or not? I will use this framework to assess you at the end. I reserve the right to modify your proposal for evaluation!

- ***Your evaluation product is due by 12/6 at 5pm.***

Here are some options for you, but please feel free to design your own:

Experiment Design

Read:

- All of Green. 2022. *Social Science Experiments*.

Evaluation:

- Design an experiment to test one or more hypotheses of interest to you. If it is a survey experiment, you should actually construct the experiment in Qualtrics (or another relevant software). Discuss your sampling strategy (assume you will *not* have a lot of money at-hand, maybe \$5,000), design, treatment(s), and outcome measures. You don't need to discuss analysis (but can of course). The document should be detailed enough that someone could use it to actually implement the study. Make sure to explain and justify the choices you make.

Survey Design

Read:

- Dillman et al. 2014. *Internet, Phone, Mail, and Mixed-Mode Surveys (4th Edition)*. Chapters 1-5.

Evaluation:

- Design a survey to test one or more hypotheses of interest to you. You should actually construct the survey in Qualtrics (if you are going to use something else, let me know what and why). Discuss your sampling strategy (assume you will not have a lot of money at-hand, maybe \$5,000). You don't need to discuss analysis (but can of course). The document should be detailed enough that someone could use it to actually implement the survey. Make sure to explain and justify the choices you make.

Measurement

Read:

- Allen and Yen. 1979/2002. *Introduction to Measurement Theory*. Chapters 1-6.

Evaluation:

- Design an instrument to measure a construct of interest to you. Write an introduction that describes the construct of interest, why it is interesting, and why a new instrument is needed to measure it. Then describe your proposed instrument and how you plan to evaluate it for quality. For example, if you are designing a survey instrument, you might have a battery of questions that you will eventually winnow to a final instrument – explain how you will do it. Make sure to explain and justify the choices you make.

Qualitative Research

Read:

- Saldaña and Omasta. 2022. *Qualitative Research (2nd Edition)*. Chapters 1-5.

Evaluation:

- Design a qualitative research study to gather data on a question of interest to you. Carefully articulate the research question. Then, provide as much detail as possible on (1) what data you intend to gather, (2) how you intend to gather it, and (3) how you plan to analyze it. Make sure to explain and justify the choices you make.

Mathematical and Agent-Based Modeling -----

Read:

- Smaldino. 2023. *Modeling Social Behavior*. Chapters 1-7.

Evaluation:

- Build a model of your own to explore a research question of interest to you. This should be something new, but it can be an extension of a previously analyzed model, either from Smaldino or the broader academic literature. There just needs to be something uniquely yours (something that makes a difference) in the model. Make sure to explain and justify the choices you make. Provide at least some analysis of the model's implications, but you don't need to fully analyze it. If your model is a computer program, you should turn in the code as part of your submission.

Critical Literature Review (30%)

Pick a topic in the field of Political Behavior and Identities, critically review the literature on that topic, and propose a new research project to address the gaps you identify. The paper should be between 3,000 and 5,000 words.

What is a “topic”?

A “topic” should be broad enough that there are big, interesting questions to be asked within it, but narrow enough that a review is feasible and likely to generate ideas for a research paper. For example, “voting behavior” is too broad and “voting for Trump in the 2020 U.S. Presidential Election” is too narrow.

- ***You must get your topic approved by me by 9/13!***

What is a “critical” review?

A “critical” review is not just a summary of each article in the literature – I do *not* want an annotated bibliography! You can do that for yourself, but I don’t need to see it.

First, it is a summary of the overall literature which is *narrative* rather than comprehensive: you are not expected to summarize every article ever published, but to describe (relevant) previous work in a way that draws out the major themes/conflicts/turning points/etc., and that gives your reader an understanding of that literature without having read the individual articles (as you have). For example, you do not need to summarize each of several articles to make a point – often, it will be enough to simply make the point in your own words with the appropriate citations, or give just one or two examples, as needed.

Second, its summary is *goal-directed*: specifically, your goal is to arrive at and justify a perspective on the gaps and shortcomings of the literature so that you can make your own contribution to it. In this sense, your review should be making an argument about the weaknesses of the existing literature and what still needs to be done.

Third, you are proposing something *new*: a new (well-defined) research question, a new empirical project, a new theory, etc. – *something* intended to fill the gaps or solve the problems you have identified. I do *not* expect a fully fleshed out research design. What I want is a clear description of what needs to be done next, given the critical review you have developed.

Overall, you are trying to make a case for a particular perspective (your own) on the existing literature. You are then proposing a new line of work, the pursuit of which would be a valuable addition to that literature.

- *Your final paper is due 12/6 by 5pm.*

Missed Work

Late critical literature review/methods level-up evaluation: If you turn in either of these assignments after the due date without previously consulting with me to see if it is ok, I will first grade as-if it were turned in on time. I will then deduct one full letter grade for each 24-hour block that the assignment is late. That is, after missing the deadline you lose 10 points automatically; you then have 24 hours to turn in the assignment before losing another 10 points, and so on. For example, if your grade would have been a 90, and you turn in the assignment 50 hours late, you will receive a 60. If there is any confusion about this, please email me and I will clarify the policy. If for some reason you anticipate difficulties in completing an assignment on time, come see me ASAP and we can discuss options.

Failure to submit weekly questions: A failure to submit your two weekly questions by Tuesday 9am will result in a zero for that week's assignment. You can, of course, still participate meaningfully in the class discussion.

Notification policy for missed course work: You should make every effort to be in class when this does not place other course participants at risk of illness. If you are suffering from short-term illness that prevents you from completing work or attending class, you must notify me before the missed class or, if that is not possible, as soon as possible. If you have missed course work, you must contact me within 48 hours (or as soon as possible) to discuss how you will make up the work. If you will miss course work, or be absent from class, for any other reason (such as religious observance), you must let me know at least 2 weeks in advance, or as soon as possible. I will generally follow University guidelines for approved absences and missed course work.

Plagiarism

In cases of plagiarism, you will fail the assignment and I will refer your case to the Office of Student Conduct.

Schedule

- ❖ Indicates that the reading is on Canvas
- Indicates reading is available online, either at provided link, or otherwise through Duke Library

8/27: Rationality and Behavior

- ❖ Chong. 2023. “Rational Choice as an Empirical and Normative Model.” *Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology (3rd edition)*.
- ❖ Elster. 2015. *Explaining Social Behavior*. Chapter 14.
- Tversky and Kahneman. 1974. “Judgment under Uncertainty.” *Science*.
- Gigerenzer and Gaissmaier. 2011. “Heuristic Decision Making.” *Annual Review of Psychology*.

9/3: “Paradox” of Voting and Participation

- ❖ Kitschelt and Rehm. 2016. “Political Participation.” In Caramani (ed.), *Comparative Politics*.
- Aldrich. 1993. “Rational Choice and Turnout.” *American Journal of Political Science*.
- ❖ Aytaç and Stokes. 2019. *Why Bother?* Chapter 2.
- ❖ Brennan and Lomasky. 1993. *Democracy and Decision*. Chapter 2.
- Brady, Verba, and Schlozman. 1995. “Beyond SES.” *American Political Science Review*.

9/10: Attitudes, Non-Attitudes, and Constraint

- Converse. 1964/2006. “The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics.” *Critical Review*
- Ansolabehere et al. 2008. “The Strength of Issues.” *American Political Science Review* **[READ ONLY 215-219]**
- Baldassarri and Gelman. 2008. “Partisans without Constraint.” *American Journal of Sociology*.
- Malka et al. 2017. “Are Cultural and Economic Conservatism Positively Correlated?” *British Journal of Political Science*.
- Pan and Xu. 2018. “China’s Ideological Spectrum.” *The Journal of Politics*.

9/17: Cognitive Models

- ❖ Zaller. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Chapters 2-3.
- ❖ Lodge and Taber 2013. *The Rationalizing Voter*. Chapter 2.
- Murphy. 2010. “What are Categories and Concepts?”
<https://nobaproject.com/modules/categories-and-concepts>
- Bordalo et al. 2016. “Stereotypes.” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*.
- Boyer and Petersen. 2018. “Folk-Economic Beliefs.” *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*.

9/24: Groups and Identities

- ❖ Tajfel and Turner. 1986. “The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior.” In *Political Psychology*, Eds. Jost and Sidanius.
- Hale. 2004. “Explaining Ethnicity,” *Comparative Political Studies*.
- McClain et al. 2009. “Group Membership, Group Identity, and Group Consciousness.” *Annual Review of Political Science*.
- Sambanis and Shayo 2013. “Social Identification and Ethnic Conflict.” *American Political Science Review*.
- Carvalho and Sacks. 2021. “The Economics of Religious Communities.” *Journal of Public Economics*.

10/1: Partisanship

- ❖ Mason. 2023. “Political Identities” *Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*.
- ❖ Green et al. 2002. *Partisan Hearts and Minds*. Chapters 1-2.
- Lupu. 2013. “Party Brands and Partisanship.” *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Laebens and Öztürk. 2021. “Partisanship and Autocratization.” *Comparative Political Studies*.
- ❖ Druckman et al. 2024. *Partisan Hostility and American Democracy*. Chapters 1, 2, & 8.

10/8: Mobilization

- ❖ Green and Gerber. 2019. *Get Out the Vote: How to Increase Voter Turnout*. Chapters 1-2, 11-12.
- Karp et al. 2008. “Getting Out the Vote.” *British Journal of Political Science*.
- Aggarwal et al. 2022. “The impact of digital campaign advertising during the 2020 US presidential election.” *Nature Human Behavior*.
- Kuran. 1991. “Now Out of Never. The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989.” *World Politics*.
- Chenoweth et al. 2022. “Who Protests, What Do They Protest, and Why?” *NBER*.
<https://www.nber.org/papers/w29987>

10/15: FALL BREAK

10/22: Persuasion

- Druckman. 2022. “A Framework for the Study of Persuasion.” *Annual Review of Political Science*.
- ❖ Lupia and McCubbins. 1998. *The Democratic Dilemma*. Chapters 3-4.
- Kamenica. 2019. “Bayesian Persuasion and Information Design.” *Annual Review of Economics*.
- Schwartzstein and Sunderam. 2021. “Using Models to Persuade.” *American Economic Review*.

10/29: Biases and Motivated Reasoning

- Sommer et al. 2024. “Updating, Evidence Evaluation, and Operator Availability.” *Psychological Review*.
- Kahan, Dan. 2015. “The Politically Motivated Reasoning Paradigm, Part 1.” [LINK](#)
- Tappin et al. 2020. “Thinking Clearly about Causal Inferences of Politically Motivated Reasoning.” *Current Opinion in Behavioral Sciences*.
- Bullock et al. 2013. “Partisan Bias in Factual Beliefs about Politics.” *NBER*. [LINK](#)
- Brundage et al. 2024. “Selection Neglect and Political Beliefs.” *Annual Review of Political Science*.

11/5: Spatial Theory

- ❖ Merrill and Grofman. 1999. *A Unified Theory of Voting*. Chapters 1 and 2.
- ❖ Hinich and Munger. 1994. *Ideology and the Theory of Political Choice*. Chapters 1 & 6.
- ❖ Kedar. 2009. *Voting for Policy, not Parties*. Chapters 1-2.
- Tomz and Van Houweling. 2009. “The Electoral Implications of Candidate Ambiguity.” *American Political Science Review*.

11/12: Cleavages and Political Change

- ❖ Kitschelt. 1995. *The Radical Right in Western Europe*. Chapter 1.
- Hooghe and Marks. 2018. “Cleavage Theory Meets Europe’s Crises.” *Journal of European Public Policy*.
- Rodrik. 2021. “Why Does Globalization Fuel Populism?” *Annual Review of Economics*.
- Kitschelt and Rehm. 2023. “Polarity Reversal.” *Politics & Society*.
- Kamarck and Muchnick. 2024. “The Growing Gender Gap Among Young People.” *Brookings*. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-growing-gender-gap-among-young-people/>

11/19: Low Information Rationality

- Healy and Malhotra. 2013. “Retrospective Voting Reconsidered.” *Annual Review of Political Science*.
- de Benedictis-Kessner and Warshaw. 2020. “Accountability for the Local Economy at All Levels of Government in United States Elections.” *American Political Science Review*.
- ❖ Dawson. 1994. *Behind the Mule: Race and Class in African-American Politics*. Chapters 1 and 3.
- ❖ Sniderman and Stiglitz. 2012. *The Reputational Premium*. Chapters 1-2.

11/26: Clientelism and Distributive Politics

- ❖ Kitschelt & Wilkinson. “Citizen-Politician Linkages.” In *Patrons, Clients, or Policies?* Pp. 1-49.
- ❖ Stokes et al. 2013. *Brokers, Voters, and Clientelism*. Chapters 1-3.
- Kramon. 2016. “Electoral Handouts as Information.” *World Politics*.
- Singh. 2023. “In-Group Anger or Out-Group Ambivalence?” *OSF*. [LINK](#)