

POLI 575: Populism and (the Backlash against) Globalization

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McGill University, Winter 2024

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Office hours: Mon, 11am-12pm, and Wed, 2-3pm

Office: Leacock 513

Schedule: Monday, 2:35pm-5:25pm

Classroom: LEA 424

Course format: in person

Course Description

The surge of populism is one of the most consequential events of our era. This seminar surveys the literature related to populism and the backlash against globalization in both Europe and North America. The large majority of the studies covered in this course is from comparative politics and international relations, though the course touches also on contributions in economics and political economy. Given that this is a burgeoning literature, many studies included in this seminar are very recent contributions to the debate on populism.

The seminar is divided into three main parts. After introducing concepts, measurements, and methodological issues, the first part of the seminar covers the demand-side explanations of populism with a focus on the debate between economic and cultural determinants. The second part surveys the supply-side explanations of populism. The third part of the seminar concludes with an exploration of the consequences of populism both at the domestic and international level.

Prerequisite

POLI 311 or an equivalent introduction to quantitative methods is *strongly recommended*, since the course covers overwhelmingly quantitative studies. Some of the methods commonly employed in this literature are introduced in the third class.

Learning objectives

The main learning objectives of this course are two-fold:

- 1) Gain a deeper understanding of the main academic debates on populism, touching on its causes, consequences, and methodological challenges in studying this phenomenon.
- 2) Improve students' research skills. Since this seminar comes at the end of undergraduate studies, students are exposed to all the components of academic research: discussion and critique of papers, presentations of your research ideas, peer-reviewing work, and developing your own project.

Course Requirements

Course discussion participation	10%
Critique paper	15%
Presentations	20%

Final project proposal	10%
Peer review of colleagues' final paper presentation	10%
Final paper	35%

You must receive a passing grade (higher than 50%) for each component of the course worth 20% of the grade or more in order to pass the course. If you receive a failing grade in course participation or any other course element, this results in an automatic maximum grade of D in the course. Note that this means regular course attendance and participation are required in order to do well in the course. Any confirmed plagiarism or cheating results in an F for that assignment and, therefore, at best a D for the class, in addition to disciplinary action. Regular unexcused absence from lectures results in doing poorly in the class. By remaining in this class, you agree to these terms.

In order to calculate your final grade, I sum all the points you have received in the class and convert the points into letter grades using the following scale:

85-100 = A
80-84 = A-
75-79 = B+
70-74 = B
65-69 = B-
60-64 = C+
55-59 = C
50-54 = D
Below 50 = F

I round up scores of 0.5 and higher and round down scores of less than 0.5. No exceptions are made to the above system of converting points into letter grades.

Students who wish to contest a grade for an assignment or exam must do so in writing (by email, sent to me) providing the reasoning behind their challenge to the grade received, within two weeks of the day on which the assignments are returned. I will re-evaluate the paper, but also reserve the right to raise or lower the grade.

Students who need to miss a class due to a religious holiday should notify me at least fourteen days prior to the holiday. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you are given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Late penalties. Assignments are penalized $\frac{2}{3}$ of a letter grade if they are turned in within 24 hours after the deadline, and an additional $\frac{2}{3}$ of a grade for every 24 hours thereafter. Assignments are not accepted after 72 hours, resulting in failing the paper, which means failing the course. Documented illnesses or family emergencies are the only grounds for exceptions or extensions.

Description of Grade Components

Class participation (10%)

Each week there are between 100-200 pages of reading. You are expected to come to class prepared and having done the reading. In every class session, students discuss the readings. Participation entails thorough knowledge of the studies covered in class as well as ability to criticize the arguments put forward by the authors, to raise questions, and to compare different readings on the same topic. Participation in the class comprises 10% of the course grade.

Critique (15%)

Students will submit one 3-page (max) critique of a selected reading (Times New Roman, 12 font, 1.5 line spacing, and normal margins). This critique must critically engage with the reading and must take a stance. The critique must have an argument and defend that argument. It should also raise questions that are then discussed in class. I expect that students who submit critiques on a particular topic/class to take a leading role in discussing the material of that particular topic/class. The critique is worth 15% of the final grade. Note that you *are not allowed to* submit the critique in the same week in which your presentation is scheduled. **The critique is due on Monday morning (by 10am) of the week in which we discuss the specific topic and should be uploaded on Mycourses.**

Presentation of one the readings

Each student will present one of the readings highlighted in the syllabus (see below). The presentation should provide a summary of the main argument and findings, but also some criticisms. It should end with some questions to discuss in the Q&A. The presentation should not be longer than 15 minutes. Note that presentations on readings that rely on statistical analysis are marked with *. **Presentations should be uploaded on Mycourses before class.** This accounts for 10% of the final grade.

Peer review of colleagues' final paper presentation

Each student must submit a 2-page (max) report (Times New Roman, 12 font, 1.5 line spacing, and normal margins) with comments and suggestions on the final paper proposal of another student (see below). The peer-review process is one of the crucial components of the academic profession. Comments and suggestions should be constructive, i.e. if you criticize point X, provide a suggestion on how to improve point X. Keep it short and simple and focus on first-order issues. The report accounts for 10% of the final grade. **The report is due on March 22 and should be uploaded on Mycourses.**

Final Project (55%)

1. Each student has three grades associated with their final project. You should write a short final project proposal including research question, relevant literature, summary of the argument, and methodology. The proposal should not be longer than 3 pages, including bibliography (Times New Roman, 12 font, 1.5 line spacing, and normal margins) The final paper proposal accounts for 10% of the final grade. **The final paper proposal is due on March 8 and should be uploaded on Mycourses.**

2. You will give an oral presentation about the final project in one of the three last weeks of the course. The presentation should include a research question, a literature review of the topic, and the theoretical framework used to answer the research question. Including some preliminary findings is recommended but not necessary. It should end with issues on which you would like to receive feedback. The presentation should not be longer than 10 minutes. **Presentations should be uploaded on Mycourses before class.** The presentation accounts for 10% of the final grade.
3. The final paper comprises 35% of the grade. **The final paper is due on April 26 and should be uploaded on Mycourses.**

Final paper

In this research paper, you write an analysis of the determinants or the consequences of populism. This article must be 4,000 words (max) excluding bibliographic material (Times New Roman, 12 font, 1.5 line spacing, and normal margins). Please put the word count at the top of the paper.

- Start soon to think about the topic of the final project.
- Please consult me when choosing a topic to make sure that it is in line with the course goals.
- Try to start with a puzzle. Don't choose a topic because it catches your eye, but rather because you think there is an interesting puzzle to solve.
- Apply a theory to the puzzle and discuss its observable implications for the puzzle at hand
- Answer the question: Does the evidence support the theory or not?
- Conclude by discussing what you have learned and what other applications there may be for your findings.

Course Books

There are no required books. All materials are made available through MyCourses. The following studies address all the components of the seminar and provides an excellent support/complement to the material covered:

Guriey, S., & Papaioannou, E. (2020). The political economy of populism. *Available at SSRN 3542052*.

Norris, Pippa and Ronald Inglehart. 2019. *Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit, and Authoritarian Populism*. Cambridge University Press.

Rodrik, D. (2020). Why does globalization fuel populism? Economics, culture, and the rise of right-wing populism. *Annual Review of Economics, 13*.

Course and University Policies

Integrity: McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the

Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/integrity for more information).

L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/).

Special Needs: As the instructor of this course I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and the Office for Students with Disabilities, 514-398-6009.

Language: In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

Conformément à la Charte des droits de l'étudiant de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l'un des objets est la maîtrise d'une langue)

Course-Evaluations

End-of-course evaluations are one of the ways that McGill works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience. You are notified by e-mail when the evaluations are available. Please note that a minimum number of responses must be received for results to be available to students.

Classroom Etiquette

I want to create a nice and stimulating learning environment for you and your peers. To do this, I ask that you respect a few basic ground rules:

1. I start the class on time and expect you to arrive to class on time. People coming in late disrupt the professor and their fellow students.
2. Please remember to silence your cell phones.

McGill University is on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee Nations and a place which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst various Indigenous nations.

Class Schedule

INTRODUCTION

Week 1, Jan 8: What Is Populism? Concept and Measures

Part of this class is devoted to discussing the logistics of the course. Then, we introduce the concept of populism, which is fuzzy and controversial, and discuss how to best measure it. Exceptionally, there are no presentations in week 1.

Canovan, M. (1999). Trust the people! Populism and the two faces of democracy. *Political studies*, 47(1), 2-16.

Mudde, C. (2004). The populist zeitgeist. *Government and opposition*, 39(4), 541-563.

Norris, P. (2020). Measuring populism worldwide. *Party politics*, 26(6), 697-717.

Week 2, Jan 15: The Rise of Populism in Western Democracies

The class discusses the rise of populism in Europe and North America. We devote special emphasis to Brexit in the UK and Trump's victory in the US.

Bonikowski, B., & Gidron, N. (2016). The populist style in American politics: Presidential campaign discourse, 1952–1996. *Social Forces*, 94(4), 1593-1621.

Norris, P., & Inglehart, R. F. (2018). Understanding Brexit: Cultural resentment versus economic grievances. *Paper for presentation at the Panel on 'Populism in Advanced Capitalist Democracies', Thursday, 30, 4-00.*

Oliver, J. E., & Rahn, W. M. (2016). Rise of the Trumpenvolk: Populism in the 2016 Election. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 667(1), 189-206.

Presentations:

1. Presentation: Compare Presidents Obama's and Trump's inaugural speeches, highlighting their populist content.
 - a. <https://www.nytimes.com/video/us/politics/100000004863342/donald-trump-full-inaugural-address-2017.html>
 - b. <https://www.nytimes.com/video/us/politics/1231545769118/barack-obama-s-inaugural-speech.html>
2. Presentation: Present and discuss the following paper, “Antonucci, L., Horvath, L., Kutiyanski, Y., & Krouwel, A. (2017). The malaise of the squeezed middle: Challenging the narrative of the ‘left behind’ Brexiter. *Competition & Change*, 21(3), 211-229.”

Week 3, Jan 22: Stats Primers

This class covers three methodological techniques, which are widely used in the studies covered in this course: fixed effects, difference-in-differences (DiD), and instrumental variables. These techniques are introduced in an intuitive way. The goal is to reach a basic knowledge of these methods to make it easier for students to read the material of the course. Exceptionally, this week is more lecture-based than discussion-based. The two readings are not related to populism, but they are seminal cases of DiD and instrumental variables. The two presentations allow us to discuss papers that introduce important debates addressed in the next part of the course as well as to explore how DiD and instrumental variables are employed to answer research questions related to populism.

Acemoglu, D., Johnson, S., & Robinson, J. A. (2001). The colonial origins of comparative development: An empirical investigation. *American economic review*, 91(5), 1369-1401.

Card, D., & Krueger, A. B. (2000). Minimum wages and employment: a case study of the fast-food industry in New Jersey and Pennsylvania: reply. *American Economic Review*, 90(5), 1397-1420.

Presentations:

1. Presentation*: Present and discuss the following paper, “Rickard, S. J. (2019). Incumbents Beware: The Impact of offshoring on elections. *British Journal of Political Science*, 1-23.” Great example of an application of DiD.
2. Presentation*: Present and discuss the following paper, “Dehdari, S. H. (2019). Economic distress and support for radical right parties-Evidence from Sweden. Forthcoming in *Comparative Political Studies*.” Great example of an application of instrument variables.

Note: Presenters should focus on the argument and main findings, whereas we will discuss the details of the DiD and instrumental variables approach in the Q&A.

DEMAND-SIDE EXPLANATIONS

Week 4, Jan 29: Economic Grievances: The Role of the China Trade Shock

This class explores the effect of the China Trade Shock, which generates large economic losses among (especially) manufacturing workers, on the surge of populism in Europe and in the US.

Dorn, D., Hanson, G., & Majlesi, K. (2020). Importing political polarization? The electoral consequences of rising trade exposure. *American Economic Review*, 110(10), 3139-83.

Colantone, I., & Stanig, P. (2018). The trade origins of economic nationalism: Import competition and voting behavior in Western Europe. *American Journal of Political Science*, 62(4), 936-953.

Colantone, I., & Stanig, P. (2018). Global competition and Brexit. *American political science review*, 112(2), 201-218.

Presentations:

1. Presentation*: Present and discuss the following paper, “Jensen, J. B., Quinn, D. P., & Weymouth, S. (2017). Winners and losers in international trade: The effects on US presidential voting. *International Organization*, 71(3), 423-457.” This paper highlights the fact that trade liberalization generates not only losers but also winners among workers.
2. Presentation*: Present and discuss the following paper, “Scheve and Serlin. The German Trade Shock and The Rise of the Neo-Welfare State in Early 20th Century Britain.” This paper shows the positive effect of trade shocks in an historical perspective.

Week 5, Feb 5: Economic Grievances: The Role of Automation

This class explores the effect of economic insecurity in general, and automation in particular, on the surge of populism in Europe and in the US.

Im, Z. J., Mayer, N., Palier, B., & Rovny, J. (2019). The “losers of automation”: A reservoir of votes for the radical right?. *Research & Politics*, 6(1), 2053168018822395.

Wu, N. (2021). Misattributed blame? Attitudes toward globalization in the age of automation. *Political Science Research and Methods*, 1-18. doi:10.1017/psrm.2021.43.

Erica Owen. 2021. Firms vs. Workers? The Political Economy of Labor in an Era of Global Production and Automation. Mimeo.

Presentations:

1. Presentation*: Present and discuss the following paper, “Baccini, L., & Weymouth, S. (2021). Gone for good: Deindustrialization, white voter backlash, and US presidential voting. *American Political Science Review*, 115(2), 550-567.
2. Presentation*: Present and discuss the following paper, “Gidron, N., & Hall, P. A. (2017). The politics of social status: Economic and cultural roots of the populist right. *The British journal of sociology*, 68, S57-S84.
3. Zhang, B. (2022, July). No rage against the machines: Threat of automation does not change policy preferences. In *Proceedings of the 2022 AAAI/ACM Conference on AI, Ethics, and Society* (pp. 856-866).

Note on the presentations: Both papers highlight the importance of economic factors in combination with identity politics.

Week 6, Feb 12: NO CLASS

Week 7, Feb 19: The Cultural Backlash

This class explores the cultural explanations to understand the populist vote in advanced democracies. The studies covered in this class shows why economic grievances alone fall short in explaining populism.

Chan, T. W., Henderson, M., Sironi, M., & Kawalerowicz, J. (2020). Understanding the social and cultural bases of Brexit. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 71(5), 830-851.

Jardina, A. 2019. *White Identity Politics*. Cambridge University Press, chapters 2 and 7.

Margalit, Y. (2019). Economic insecurity and the causes of populism, reconsidered. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 33(4), 152-70.

Presentations:

1. Presentation*: Present and discuss the following paper, “Mutz, D. C. (2018). Status threat, not economic hardship, explains the 2016 presidential vote. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 115(19), E4330-E4339.”
2. Presentation*: Present and discuss the following paper, “Morgan, S. L. (2018). Status threat, material interests, and the 2016 presidential vote. *Socius*, 4, 2378023118788217.”

Note on the presentations: The disagreement between these two scholars is not only about methodological issues, which are less relevant for this seminar, but also about substantive issues. Presenters should focus on the latter debate.

Week 8, Feb 26: The Role of Immigration

This class explores the role of migration to understand the surge of populism in advanced democracies. The studies covered in this class shows that migration does not affect the populist vote only through economic channels, but also through cultural channels.

Dustmann, C., Vasiljeva, K., & Piil Damm, A. (2019). Refugee migration and electoral outcomes. *The Review of Economic Studies*, 86(5), 2035-2091.

Mayda, A. M., Peri, G., & Steingress, W. (2018). *The political impact of immigration: Evidence from the United States* (No. w24510). National Bureau of Economic Research.

Tabellini, M. (2020). Gifts of the immigrants, woes of the natives: Lessons from the age of mass migration. *The Review of Economic Studies*, 87(1), 454-486.

Presentations:

1. Presentation*: Present and discuss the following paper, “Dinas, E., Matakos, K., Xefteris, D., & Hangartner, D. (2019). Waking up the golden dawn: does exposure to the refugee crisis increase support for extreme-right parties?. *Political analysis*, 27(2), 244-254.”
2. Presentation*: Present and discuss the following paper, “Vertier, P., & Viskanic, M. (2018). Dismantling the 'Jungle': Migrant Relocation and Extreme Voting in France.”
3. Serlin, T. (2022). The Export Boom and the Backlash. Mimeo.

Note on the presentations: The two papers show conflicting effects of migration on populist vote. The discussion should focus on ways to reconcile these conflicting findings.

SUPPLY-SIDE EXPLANATIONS

Week 9, Mar 11: The Role of the Government

This class explores if and how compensation policies help reduce populist support among the losers from globalization. We do so through the lens of the embedded liberalism paradigm.

Hopkin, J. (2020). *Anti-system politics: The crisis of market liberalism in rich democracies*. Oxford University Press. Chapter 2.

Kim, S. E., & Pelc, K. (2019). How responsive is trade adjustment assistance?. *Political Science Research and Methods*, 1-10.

Rodrik, D. (2018). Populism and the economics of globalization. *Journal of international business policy*, 1(1), 12-33. Focus on section 4.

Vlandas, T., & Halikiopoulou, D. (2021). Welfare state policies and far right party support: moderating 'insecurity effects' among different social groups. *West European Politics*, 1-26.

Walter, S. (2010). Globalization and the welfare state: Testing the microfoundations of the compensation hypothesis. *International Studies Quarterly*, 54(2), 403-426.

Presentations:

1. Presentation*: Present and discuss the following paper, “Lecce, G., Carloni, D., & Alesina, A. (2013). *13. The Electoral Consequences of Large Fiscal Adjustments* (pp. 531-572). University of Chicago Press.”
2. Presentation*: Baccini, L., & Sattler, T. (2021). Austerity, Economic Vulnerability, and Populism. Available at SSRN 3766022.

3. Gallego, A., Kuo, A., Manzano, D., & Fernández-Albertos, J. (2022). Technological risk and policy preferences. *Comparative Political Studies*, 55(1), 60-92.

Note on the presentations: The two papers show somewhat conflicting effects of austerity on voting behavior. The discussion should focus on ways to reconcile these conflicting findings.

Week 10, Mar 18: Political Entrepreneurship and Media

This class explores how the populist communication style differs from the communication style of mainstream parties and how it effects voting behavior.

De Vries, C. E., Hobolt, S., & Hobolt, S. B. (2020). *Political Entrepreneurs*. Princeton University Press. Chapter 2.

Jagers, J., & Walgrave, S. (2007). Populism as political communication style. *European journal of political research*, 46(3), 319-345.

Ochsner, C., & Roesel, F. (2017). Activated history-the case of the Turkish sieges of Vienna.

Presentations:

1. Presentation: Block, E., & Negrine, R. (2017). The populist communication style: Toward a critical framework. *International Journal of Communication Systems*, 11, 178-197. The focus of the presentation should be on how populists change the language of politics.
2. Presentation*: Wang, T. (2020). Media, pulpit, and populist persuasion: Evidence from father coughlin. *Pulpit, and Populist Persuasion: Evidence from Father Coughlin (April 22, 2020)*. This paper shows that media matter also in the past for fueling populism.
3. Guess, A. M., Malhotra, N., Pan, J., Barberá, P., Allcott, H., Brown, T., ... & Tucker, J. A. (2023). How do social media feed algorithms affect attitudes and behavior in an election campaign?. *Science*, 381(6656), 398-404.

Week 11-13, Mar 25 & Apr 8 - 11: Presentations.