

McGILL UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

POLI-632 VOTING BEHAVIOUR AND PUBLIC OPINION

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Office Hours: Thursday 2:00-4:00 or by appointment

This course will critically examine a number of the major debates in the comparative literature on voting behaviour and public opinion. The works discussed draw primarily on research conducted in North America and Western Europe. You are welcome to write papers on countries in other regions.

Course Requirements

If you are not clear about the expectations for any of the assignments, be sure to consult with me.

Research Paper

The main course requirement is a 20 to 25 page research paper on a topic of your choice related to voting behaviour and/or public opinion. The paper is worth 60% of your grade. You must consult me about your choice of topic. If you wish to count this course as a Canadian politics course, your paper must focus on Canada or compare Canada with another country or countries. You are strongly encouraged to conduct original research with a view to writing a paper that could potentially be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal. You will formulate a research question, develop one or more hypotheses and then conduct original research in order to come up with an answer. Your research method could involve the analysis of existing data (e.g. from the Canadian Election Studies or other national election studies or crossnational studies) or the analysis of statistics from official sources or the collection of your own data through e.g. a content analysis of election coverage, or it could involve a combination of methods. Your paper must identify the research question and must include a review of the relevant academic literature, an explanation of your research methods, an analysis of your findings and a concluding discussion (including possible limitations and future research directions). If you do not have adequate training in conducting research, you may instead write a paper that addresses a clear question, synthesizes the academic literature on the topic and develops a well-reasoned response to your motivating question. You will present your research paper in the final two classes. You will also act as a discussant for another student's presentation. The oral presentation and

discussant comments will count for 5% of your grade. You will have the opportunity to revise your paper in response to my feedback and comments from the discussant and other students. The final paper will be due one week after your presentation. There will be a penalty of two marks per weekday for late submission..

Paper Proposal

A two-page paper proposal is due on **February 14, 2019**. It should outline your proposed topic, pose your research question or motivating question and describe your proposed data source(s) (if applicable). A preliminary bibliography should be attached. The proposal is worth 3% of your grade.

Short papers

You will choose any **two** of the following three options. Each short paper is worth 15% of your grade. The paper should be five pages in length, double-spaced. For all three options, you may want to consult additional sources.

Research Design Paper

For this option, you will prepare a five-page paper relating to one of the weekly topics. The paper will discuss the key empirical challenges involved in testing the validity of the core concept (e.g. party identification), the central hypothesis (e.g. economic voting) or the main argument (e.g. cognitive heuristics can compensate for shortfalls in political knowledge), as appropriate. If you are not sure what the focus should be, you are welcome to consult me in advance. You will also briefly sketch a suggested way of addressing the challenges e.g. using panel data, taking advantage of a natural experiment, conducting a survey or lab experiment, etc. Be sure to acknowledge the limitations of your proposed design e.g. limited external validity (i.e. limited ability to generalize beyond the cases studied) or internal validity (i.e. limited ability to infer a causal relationship), possible measurement biases, etc.

Article Review

In consultation with me, you will choose a peer-reviewed journal article relating to one of the weekly topics. If you wish to count this course as a Canadian politics course, your article must focus on Canada or Canada in comparative perspective. The article can be comparative or country specific but it must illustrate, extend or challenge the required readings for that topic. In addition to discussing how the article does so, you should critically address the research design and assess the validity of the conclusions drawn e.g. How appropriate are the data used? How valid are the indicators used? Is the sample adequate? Have alternative explanations been adequately tested? How generalizable are the results? Etc.

Reflection Paper

For this option, you will focus on the normative implications of the topic under discussion in a given week. For example, does it matter whether or not people vote on how they think the economy has been doing or whether they understand ideological terminology or whether they are well informed about politics, etc.?

Due Date

Your paper should be posted in the discussion forum on MyCourses on the Monday preceding the class dealing with the topic in question. Everyone is expected to read the paper and be prepared to discuss it in class. You will make a brief oral presentation, followed by class discussion.

Participation

You are expected to come to class having done the readings and thought about them critically. Participation in class discussions is required. Class participation is essential and will account for 7% of your grade. Ahead of each class, possible discussion questions will be posted on MyCourses. You should think about these questions as you do the readings and come to class prepared to discuss them. You are, of course, encouraged to come up with other questions that we could discuss as a class.

Summary of Grade Breakdown

Participation	10%
Short papers (15% each)	30%
Research proposal	5%
Research paper	50%
Oral presentation and discussant comments	5%

Please note that a grade of 'K' (incomplete) will only be permitted under exceptional circumstances (e.g. illness). If there are any special circumstances of which I should be aware, you should speak to me as soon as possible

Academic 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/students/srr/honest/ for more information).

Language Rights

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 Outline

NOTE: I reserve the right to modify the syllabus timeline or specific readings as needed.

All readings are either on reserve in the Library, available online or posted on MyCourses. Should any reading not be available, please let me know without delay.

JANUARY 10: Introduction

No readings

JANUARY 17: Back to Basics

Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet (1948) *The People's Choice*, Preface to the 2nd Edition, pp. 25-27, 56-61, 94-96, 151-52. JK524 L38 1968 [MyCourses]

Bernard R. Berelson, Paul F. Lazarsfeld, and William McPhee (1954) *Voting*, pp. 296-304, chapter 14. JK526 1948 B4 [MyCourses]

Angus Campbell, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes (1960) *The American Voter*, pp. 24-37, chapter 6, 7. JK1976 M5 [MyCourses]

Warren E. Miller and J. Merrill Shanks (1996) *The New American Voter*, chapter 8. JK1976 M55 1996 [MyCourses]

Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (1957), chapters 1, 3, 8 and 16. JF1351 D65 1957 [On Reserve]

Note: We will not be discussing Downs in this class but it is important that you read these chapters now to provide context for later discussions

JANUARY 24: Is Party Identification Meaningful?

Angus Campbell, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes (1960) *The American Voter*, chapter 6, 7. JK1976 M5 [MyCourses]

Morris P. Fiorina (1993) "Explorations of a political theory of party identification." In Richard G. Niemi and Herbert F. Weisberg (eds.), *Classics in Voting Behavior*, chapter 24. JK1967 C4 1993 [MyCourses]

Steven Greene (1999) "Understanding party identification: A social identity approach" *Political Psychology* 20: 393-403 http://www.jstor.org/stable/3792082?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

Donald Green, Bradley Palmquist and Eric Schickler (2002) *Partisan Hearts & Minds: Political Parties and the Social Identities of Voters*, chapters 1 and 2.
<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/mcgill/detail.action?docID=10170806>

Sören Holmberg (2007) "Partisanship reconsidered." In Russell J. Dalton and Hans-Dieter Klingemann (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior*
<http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199270125.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199270125-e-029>

January 31: It's the Economy, Stupid!

Michael Lewis-Beck and Mary Stegmaier (2018) "Economic voting." In Roger D. Congleton, Bernard N. Grofman and Stefan Voigt, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Public Choice*. To be published January 19, 2019. Link to be supplied.

Suzanne Linn, Jonathan Nagler and Marco A. Morales (2010) "Economics, elections, and voting behavior." In Jan E. Leighley, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of American Elections and Political Behavior*
<http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199235476.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199235476-e-20>

Richard Nadeau, Michael S, Lewis-Beck and Éric Bélanger (2012) "Economics and Elections Revisited." *Comparative Political Studies* 46(5): 551-73.
https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0010414012463877?casa_token=kkhYHNaPHGUAAAAA%3AQqV0Ddvz3JQHIGLyRA043Y-QzyPhQOPUO8_uzJrCng2RfdOBlvOSKesviwgFfSpvqk89VcVY4drs8

Catherine E. De Vries, Sara B. Hobolt and James Tilley (2018) "Facing up to the facts: What causes economic perceptions?" *Electoral Studies* 51: 115-122.
<https://reader.elsevier.com/reader/sd/pii/S0261379416304619?token=71A36BC62D2500B16FF582FC8718B7A8ACC6E1D03CC5F87C3D8AFF48D544319D5AA3F0473F3B8FCFCF4C9D23CCEB875>

Guy D. Whitten and Harvey D. Palmer (1999) "Cross-national analyses of economic voting." *Electoral Studies* 18: 49-67
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0261379498000432>

FEBRUARY 7: The "Gender Gap"

David DeVaus and Ian McAllister (1989) "The changing politics of women: Gender and political alignment in 11 nations", *European Journal of Political Research* 17: 241-62
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/doi/10.1111/j.1475-6765.1989.tb00193.x/epdf>

Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris (2000) "The developmental theory of the gender gap: Women's and men's voting behavior in global perspective." *International Political Science Review* 21(4): 441-63
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0192512100214007>

Nathalie Giger (2009) "Towards a modern gender gap in Europe? A comparative analysis of voting behavior in 12 countries." *The Social Science Journal* 46: 474-92.
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0362331909000329>

Karen M. Kaufmann and John R. Petrocik (1999) "The changing politics of American men: Understanding the sources of the gender gap." *American Journal of Political Science* 43: 864-87.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/2991838.pdf>

FEBRUARY 14: Are Voters "Ideologically Innocent"?

Note: paper proposal due in class

Philip E. Converse (1964) "The nature of belief systems in mass publics." In David E. Apter (ed.), *Ideology and Discontent* JC311 A74 1964 [MyCourses]

James H. Kuklinski and Buddy Peyton (2007) "Belief systems and political decision making." In Russell J. Dalton and Hans-Dieter Klingemann, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior*
<http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199270125.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199270125-e-003>

Shawn Treier and D. Sunshine Hillygus (2009) "The nature of political ideology in the contemporary electorate." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 73(4): 679-703.
<https://academic.oup.com/poq/article/73/4/679/1829142>

Ronald Inglehart (2007) "Postmaterialist values and the shift from survival to self-expression." In Russell J. Dalton and Hans-Dieter Klingemann, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior*
<http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199270125.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199270125-e-012>

FEBRUARY 21: Making Do with Less

Anthony Downs (1957) *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, pp. 234-47. JF1351 D65 1957 [MyCourses]

James H. Kuklinski and Paul J. Quirk (2000) "Reconsidering the rational public: Cognition, heuristics, and mass opinion." In Arthur Lupia, Matthew D. McCubbins and Samuel L. Popkin, eds., *Elements of Reason: Cognition, Choice, and the Bounds of Rationality*. JA74.5 E434 2000 [MyCourses]

Benjamin I. Page and Robert Y. Shapiro (1992) *The Rational Public*, pp. 1-27, chapter 10.
<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/mcgill/detail.action?docID=10402605>

Samuel L. Popkin (1991) *The Reasoning Voter*, chapters 1 to 4. JK524 P64 1991 [On Reserve]

Paul M. Sniderman, Richard A. Brody, and Philip E. Tetlock (1991) *Reasoning and Choice* chapters 1, 2, 5, and 9. HN90 P8 R43 1991 [On Reserve]

FEBRUARY 28: The Impact of the Media

Renita Coleman, Maxwell McCombs, Donald Shaw and David Weaver (2009) "Agenda Setting". In Karin Wahl-Jorgensen and Thomas Hanitzsch, eds., *The Handbook of Journalism Studies*. London: Routledge, pp. 147-60. [MyCourses]

Larry M. Bartels (2006) "Priming and persuasion in presidential campaigns." In Henry E. Brady and Richard Johnston, eds. *Capturing Campaign Effects*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. <http://muse.jhu.edu/chapter/143359>

Shanto Iyengar and Donald R. Kinder (1987) *News that Matters*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, chapters 3, 6, 7, and 12 (pp.112-20). PN4888 T4 I94 1987 [On Reserve]

Gabriel S. Lenz (2009) "Learning and opinion change, not priming: Reconsidering the priming hypothesis." *American Journal of Political Science* 53: 821-37.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/20647953.pdf>

David Nicholas Hopmann, Rens Vliegenhart, Claes De Vreese and Erik Albaek (2010) "Effects of election news coverage: How visibility and tone influence party choice." *Political Communication* 27(4): 389-405
<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/10584609.2010.516798?needAccess=true>

MARCH 7: Study Break

MARCH 14: Do Campaigns Matter?

Henry E. Brady, Richard G.C. Johnston and John Sides (2006) "The study of political campaigns." In Henry E. Brady and Richard Johnston, eds. *Capturing Campaign Effects*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. <http://muse.jhu.edu/chapter/143355>

D. Sunshine Hillygus (2010) "Campaign effects on vote choice." In Jan E. Leighley, *The Oxford handbook of American Elections and Political Behavior*
<http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199235476.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199235476-e-18>

Thomas M. Holbrook (1996) *Do Campaigns Matter?* Thousand Oaks: Sage, chapters 1, 3 and 7. JK524 H65 1996 [On Reserve]

John R. Zaller (1992) *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion* pp. 6-28, chapter 3, 7. HM261 Z35 1992 [On Reserve]

MARCH 21: To Vote or Not to Vote?

André Blais (2000) *To Vote or Not to Vote: The Merits and Limits of Rational Choice Theory*, introduction, chapters 1 to 5, conclusion. JF1001 B5 2000 [On Reserve]

Anthony Downs (1957) *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, chapter 14. JF1351 D65 1957 [MyCourses]

John A. Ferejohn and Morris P. Fiorina (1974) “The paradox of not voting: A decision theoretic analysis.” *American Political Science Review* 68: 525-536.
http://www.jstor.org/stable/1959502?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

Cindy D. Kam and Carl L. Palmer (2008) “Reconsidering the effects of education on political participation.” *Journal of Politics* 70: 612–631.
http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1017/S0022381608080651?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

Mikael Persson (2015) “Education and political participation.” *British Journal of Political Science* 45: 689-703 <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/british-journal-of-political-science/article/div-classtitleeducation-and-political-participationdiv/D17F1067290DFBEB1EC01F8B4C166C28>

Verba, S., Schlozman, K. L., and Brady, H. E. (1995). *Voice and Equality: Civic voluntarism in American Politics*. Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, chapter 9 JK1764 V475 1995 [MyCourses]

Recommended:

João Cancela and Benny Geys (2016) “Explaining voter turnout: A meta-analysis of national and subnational elections.” *Electoral Studies* 42: 264-75
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0261379416300956>

Verba, S., Schlozman, K. L., and Brady, H. E. (1995). *Voice and Equality: Civic voluntarism in American Politics*. Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, chapters 10 to 15 JK1764 V475 1995

Kaat Smets and Carolien van Ham (2013) “The embarrassment of riches? A meta-analysis of individual-level research of voter turnout.” *Electoral Studies* 32: 344–359.
<https://www.utwente.nl/bms/csd/research/Smets%20en%20Van%20Ham%202013.pdf>

MARCH 28: Personality and Genetics

Evan Charney and William English (2012) “Genopolitics and the science of genetics.” *American Political Science Review* 106: 1-34. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1419406240?pq-origsite=gscholar>

Deppe, K. D., Stoltenberg, S. F., Smith, K. B., and Hibbing, J. R. (2013). "Candidate genes and voter turnout: Further evidence on the role of 5-HTTLPR." *American Political Science Review* 107: 375-381. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1419406253?pq-origsite=gscholar>

James Fowler and Christopher T. Dawes (2013) "In defense of genopolitics." *American Political Science Review* 107: 362-374 <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1419406252?pq-origsite=gscholar>

Alan S. Gerber et al. (2011) "The big five personality traits in the political arena." *Annual Review of Political Science* 14: 265-287. <http://www.annualreviews.org/doi/full/10.1146/annurev-polisci-051010-111659>

Jeffrey J. Mondak et al. (2010) "Personality and civic engagement: An integrative framework for the study of trait effects on political behavior." *American Political Science Review* 104: 85-110. http://www.jstor.org/stable/27798541?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

APRIL 5: No class

APRIL 12: Paper Presentations I

APRIL 15: Paper Presentations II