PS9567B: Comparative Political Behaviour

Department of Political Science – Western University, Winter 2020
Thursday 1:30-3:30pm, SSC 4105

Instructor: Dr. Mathieu Turgeon (mturgeo4@uwo.ca)
Office hours: Tuesday from 10am-12pm or by appointment

Course description

This course introduces students to the study of political behaviour in a comparative perspective. Scholars of political behaviour conduct research on many different topics, including, but not limited to, public opinion, vote choice, participation, communication, tolerance, and many others. This course focuses on two important topics of interest to scholars of political behaviour, namely, civic competence and racial prejudice and stereotyping.

Civic competence refers to the ability of citizens to meaningfully participate in democratic life. We will focus on one particular aspect of civic competence: political knowledge. What constitutes political knowledge? How to measure political knowledge? And, how does political knowledge affect people's policy preferences, vote choices, and ability to process new information? In this section, we will also discuss misinformation, that is, false or inaccurate information and explore how people come to hold either accurate or inaccurate political information and beliefs. Finally, special attention will be given to conspiracy beliefs and thinking.

Racial prejudice and stereotyping concerns the study of how race shapes how we view and interact with the world. In particular, it is concerned with how people form images or perceptions about out-group members—members that do not belong to one's racial group—and how those perceptions affect their attitudes and behaviours.

The first two weeks of the course will brush a broad overview of political behaviour and present the tools commonly used by political behaviour scholars to conduct their research. Next, we will delve into the study of civic competence and racial prejudice and stereotyping.

Student responsibilities and assessment

There will be 5-7 assigned readings per week. Students are expected to read all assigned material and turn in five 2-page, single-spaced discussion papers on weekly readings of their choosing (5% each, total 25%). Discussion papers should address theoretical or methodological aspects or both of the assigned readings. Discussion papers have to be printed (preferably double-sided) and turned in at the beginning of class. Students will also be responsible to lead class discussions (25%). Class responsibilities will be assigned at the beginning of the semester depending on the number of registered students. Finally, students will be required to produce a research paper (50%) due at the end of the semester (April 17). The research paper is expected to have an empirical component, no matter how sophisticated. Students should discuss with the instructor what they intend to do for their research paper at some point during the semester.

Topics and readings

Week #1 (January 9): Course Introduction

Review of syllabus and class organization.

Week #2 (January 16): Introduction to the study of political behaviour

1. Krosnick et al. 2010. "The Psychological Underpinnings of Political behaviour" In S. T. Fiske et al., eds., *Handbook of Social Psychology*. 5th Edition, Wiley.

2. Kalin, M. and Sambanis, N., 2018. "How to think about social identity." *Annual Review of Political Science*, 21, pp.239-257.
3. Hatemi, P.K. and McDermott, R., 2016. "Give me attitudes." *Annual Review of Political Science*, 19, pp.331-350.
4. Druckman, J.N. and Lupia, A., 2016. "Preference change in competitive political environments." *Annual Review of Political Science*, 19, pp.13-31.
5. Grofman, B., 2016. "Perspectives on the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems." *Annual review of political science*, 19, pp.523-540.

Week #3 (January 23): Methods primer

1. Druckman, J. N., Green, D. P., Kuklinski, J. H., & Lupia, A. (Eds.). 2011. *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1-3.
2. Berinsky, A.J., 2017. "Measuring public opinion with surveys." *Annual review of political science*, 20, pp.309-329.
3. Lupu, N. and Michelitch, K., 2018. "Advances in survey methods for the developing world." *Annual Review of Political Science*, 21, pp.195-214.
4. Mutz, D.C., 2011. *Population-based survey experiments*. Princeton University Press. Chapter 1.
5. Gerber, A.S. and Green, D.P., 2012. *Field experiments: Design, analysis, and interpretation*. WW Norton. Chapter 1.
6. Dunning, T., 2012. *Natural experiments in the social sciences: a design-based approach*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1.

Week #4 (January 30): Political knowledge: definition, measurement, and distribution

1. Converse, P.E., 2000. "Assessing the capacity of mass electorates." *Annual review of political science*, 3(1), pp.331-353.
2. Barabas, Jason and et al. 2014. "The Question(s) of Political Knowledge." *American Political Science Review* 108: 840-855.
3. Luskin, R.C. and Bullock, J.G., 2011. "'Don't know' means 'don't know': DK responses and the public's level of political knowledge." *The Journal of Politics*, 73(2), pp.547-557.
4. Lee, S. and Matsuo, A., 2018. "Decomposing political knowledge: What is confidence in knowledge and why it matters." *Electoral Studies*, 51, pp.1-13.
5. Vegetti, F., Fazekas, Z. and Méder, Z.Z., 2017. "Sorting your way out: Perceived party positions, political knowledge, and polarization." *Acta Politica*, 52(4), pp.479-501.
6. Lupia, A., 2006. "How elitism undermines the study of voter competence." *Critical Review*, 18(1-3), pp.217-232.

Week #5 (February 6): Political knowledge and its effects

1. Althaus, Scott. 1998. "Information Effects in Collective Preferences." *American Political Science Review* 92: 545-558.
2. Gilens, M. 2001. "Political Ignorance and Collective Policy Preferences." *American Political Science Review* 95: 379-396.
3. Bartels, L.M., 2005. "Homer gets a tax cut: Inequality and public policy in the American mind." *Perspectives on Politics*, 3(1), pp.15-31.
4. Lupia, A., Levine, A.S., Menning, J.O. and Sin, G., 2007. "Were Bush tax cut supporters 'simply ignorant?' A second look at conservatives and liberals in 'Homer gets a tax cut'." Perspectives on Politics, 5(4), pp.773-784.
5. Bartels, L.M., 2007. "Homer gets a warm hug: A note on ignorance and extenuation." *Perspectives on Politics*, 5(4), pp.785-790.

6. Sides, J., 2016. "Stories or science? Facts, frames, and policy attitudes." *American Politics Research*, 44(3), pp.387-414.
7. Healy, A. and Malhotra, N., 2009. "Myopic voters and natural disaster policy." *American Political Science Review*, 103(3), pp.387-406.

Week #6 (February 13): Misinformation I

1. Jerit, J. and Zhao, Y. 2020. "Political misinformation." *Annual Review of Political Science*.
2. Mercier, H., 2017. "How gullible are we? A review of the evidence from psychology and social science." *Review of General Psychology*, 21(2), pp.103-122.
3. Bullock, J.G. and Lenz, G., 2019. "Partisan bias in surveys." *Annual Review of Political Science*, 22, pp.325-342.
4. Adam J. Berinsky (2015). "Rumors and Health Care Reform: Experiments in Political Misinformation." *British Journal of Political Science.* 47(2): 241–262.
5. Hartman, T.K. and Newmark, A.J., 2012. "Motivated reasoning, political sophistication, and associations between President Obama and Islam." *PS: Political Science Politics*, 45(3), pp.449-455.
6. Berinsky, A.J., 2018. "Telling the truth about believing the lies? Evidence for the limited prevalence of expressive survey responding." *The Journal of Politics*, 80(1), pp.211-224.

Week #7 (February 27): Misinformation II

1. Flynn, D.J., Nyhan, B. and Reifler, J. 2017. "The nature and origins of misperceptions: Understanding false and unsupported beliefs about politics." *Advances in Political Psychology*, 38, pp.127-150.
2. Lewandowsky, S., Ecker, U.K. and Cook, J., 2017. "Beyond misinformation: Understanding and coping with the 'post-truth' era." *Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition*, 6(4), pp.353-369.
3. Ecker, U.K., Lewandowsky, S., Fenton, O. and Martin, K., 2014. "Do people keep believing because they want to? Preexisting attitudes and the continued influence of misinformation." *Memory and cognition*, 42(2), pp.292-304.
4. Prior, M., Sood, G. and Khanna, K., 2015. "You cannot be serious: The impact of accuracy incentives on partisan bias in reports of economic perceptions." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, 10(4), pp.489-518.
5. Khanna, K. and Sood, G., 2018. "Motivated responding in studies of factual learning." *Political Behavior*, 40(1), pp.79-101.
6. Lewandowsky, S., Ecker, U.K., Seifert, C.M., Schwarz, N. and Cook, J., 2012. "Misinformation and its correction: Continued influence and successful debiasing." *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 13(3), pp.106-131.

Week #8 (March 5): Conspiracy beliefs and thinking I

1. Sunstein, C.R. and Vermeule, A., 2009. "Conspiracy theories: Causes and cures." *Journal of Political Philosophy*, 17(2), pp.202-227.
2. Douglas, K.M., Uscinski, J.E., Sutton, R.M., Cichocka, A., Nefes, T., Ang, C.S. and Deravi, F., 2019. "Understanding conspiracy theories." *Political Psychology*, 40, pp.3-35.
3. Oliver, J.E. and Wood, T.J., 2014. "Conspiracy theories and the paranoid style (s) of mass opinion." *American Journal of Political Science*, 58(4), pp.952-966.
4. Lewandowsky, S., Oberauer, K. and Gignac, G.E., 2013. "NASA faked the moon landing—therefore, (climate) science is a hoax: An anatomy of the motivated rejection of science." *Psychological science*, 24(5), pp.622-633.

5. Miller, J.M., Saunders, K.L. and Farhart, C.E., 2016. "Conspiracy endorsement as motivated reasoning: The moderating roles of political knowledge and trust." *American Journal of Political Science*, 60(4), pp.824-844.
6. Uscinski, J.E., Klofstad, C. and Atkinson, M.D., 2016. "What drives conspiratorial beliefs? The role of informational cues and predispositions." *Political Research Quarterly*, 69(1), pp.57-71.

Week #9 (March 12): Conspiracy beliefs and thinking II

1. Pasek, J., Stark, T.H., Krosnick, J.A. and Tompson, T., 2015. "What motivates a conspiracy theory? Birther beliefs, partisanship, liberal-conservative ideology, and anti-Black attitudes." *Electoral Studies*, 40, pp.482-489.
2. Whitson, J.A. and Galinsky, A.D., 2008. "Lacking control increases illusory pattern perception." *Science*, 322(5898), pp.115-117.
3. Van Prooijen, J.W., Krouwel, A.P. and Pollet, T.V., 2015. "Political extremism predicts belief in conspiracy theories." *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 6(5), pp.570-578.
4. Carey, J.M., 2019. "Who believes in conspiracy theories in Venezuela?" *Latin American Research Review.* 54(2): 444-457.
5. Lantian, A., Muller, D., Nurra, C., Klein, O., Berjot, S. and Pantazi, M., 2018. "Stigmatized beliefs: Conspiracy theories, anticipated negative evaluation of the self, and fear of social exclusion." *European journal of social psychology*, 48(7), pp.939-954.
6. Swami, V., Coles, R., Stieger, S., Pietschnig, J., Furnham, A., Rehim, S. and Voracek, M., 2011. "Conspiracist ideation in Britain and Austria: Evidence of a monological belief system and associations between individual psychological differences and real-world and fictitious conspiracy theories." *British Journal of Psychology*, 102(3), pp.443-463.

Week #10 (March 19): Race, race relations, and group identity

1. Richeson, J.A. and Sommers, S.R., 2016. "Toward a social psychology of race and race relations for the twenty-first century." *Annual review of psychology*, 67, pp.439-463.
2. Dixon, A.R. and Telles, E.E., 2017. "Skin color and colorism: Global research, concepts, and measurement." *Annual Review of Sociology*, 43, pp.405-424.
3. Sen, Maya, and Omar Wasow. 2016. "Race as a Bundle of Sticks: Designs that Estimate Effects of Seemingly Immutable Characteristics." *Annual Review of Political Science* 19: 499-522.
4. Kang, S.K. and Bodenhausen, G.V., 2015. "Multiple identities in social perception and interaction: Challenges and opportunities." *Annual review of psychology*, 66, pp.547-574.
5. Parker, C.S., 2016. "Race and Politics in the Age of Obama." *Annual Review of Sociology*, 42, pp.217-230.
6. Chauchard, Simon. 2014. "Can Descriptive Representation Change Beliefs about a Stigmatized Group? Evidence from Rural India." *American Political Science Review* 108: 403-422.

Week #11 (March 26): Racial priming

1. Hutchings, V.L. and Jardina, A.E., 2009. "Experiments on racial priming in political campaigns." *Annual Review of Political Science*, 12, pp.397-402.
2. Gilliam Jr., F. D. and S. Iyengar. 2000. "Prime Suspects: The Influence of Local Television News on the Viewing Public." *American Journal of Political Science* 44: 560-573.
3. Tesler, Michael. 2012. "The Spillover of Racialization into Health Care: How President Obama Polarized Public Opinion by Racial Attitudes and Race." *American Journal of Political Science* 56: 690-704.
4. Huber, Gregory A., and John S. Lapinski. 2006. "The 'Race Card' Revisited: Assessing Racial Priming in Policy Contests." *American Journal of Political Science* 50: 421-40.

5. Mendelberg, Tali. 2008. "Racial Priming Revived." *Perspectives on Politics* 6: 109-23.

6. Huber, Gregory A., and John S. Lapinski. 2008. "Testing the Implicit-Explicit Model of Racialized Political Communication." *Perspectives on Politics* 6: 125-34.

7. Mendelberg, Tali. 2008. "Racial Priming: Issues in Research Design and Interpretation." *Perspectives on Politics* 6: 135-40.

Week #12 (April 2): Racial prejudice, stereotyping, and inequality

1. Cramer, K., 2019. "Understanding the Role of Racism in Contemporary US Public Opinion." *Annual Review of Political Science*, 23.

2. Huddy, L. and Feldman, S., 2009. "On assessing the political effects of racial prejudice." *Annual Review of Political Science*, 12, pp.423-447.

3. White, Ismail K. 2007. "When Race Matters and When It Doesn't: Racial Group Differences in Response to Racial Cues." *American Political Science Review* 101: 339-354.

4. Bailey, Stanley R. et al. 2015. "Support for Race-Targeted Affirmative Action in Brazil." *Ethnicities* 18(6), pp.765-798.

5. Telles, Edward and S. Bailey. 2013. "Understanding Latin American Beliefs about Racial Inequality." *American Journal of Sociology* 118: 1559-1595.

6. Weber, Christopher R. et al. 2014. "Placing Racial Stereotypes in Context: Social Desirability and the Politics of Racial Hostility." *American Journal of Political Science* 58: 63-78.

7. White, Ismael K. et al. 2014. "Selling Out?: The Politics of Navigating Conflicts between Racial Group Interest and Self-Interest." *American Political Science Review* 108: 783-800.