

Introduction to Political Science

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Fall 2022, Bocconi University

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Course Description

What explains the rise of populism? How do authoritarian regimes hold onto power? Who opposes migration and why? When is the public more likely to hold political leaders accountable for poor governance? This course introduces the academic discipline of political science by exploring what its literatures have to say about these topics and others with substantive importance to global politics. We will read and discuss recent academic work utilizing a variety of methodological tools to answer these questions. In addition, the course is designed to help students navigate practical issues related to the effective conduct of political and social science research. We will review research practicalities ranging from choosing a research question to finding data and submitting articles to journals. Throughout the course, students will prepare a research proposal on a topic of their choice, which they will present to the class and submit in written format at the conclusion of the term.

Course Objectives

Throughout the course, students should expect:

- To develop knowledge about several major literatures in political science, gaining familiarity with ongoing debates and established findings.
- To acquire familiarity with a variety of primarily quantitative research methods used in political science and other social science disciplines.
- To develop understanding of how to consume and evaluate academic research, including how to recognize positive contributions, identify weaknesses, and provide constructive feedback in oral and written forms.
- To develop familiarity with practical aspects of the research process, including giving presentations, writing research articles, and submitting work for publication.
- To begin developing a research project that can be used as the basis of an academic article or as a component of the dissertation.

Course Structure

At the beginning of the session, I will give a brief overview of major concepts and questions relating to each topic. In some sessions, we will then have an author of one of the readings present their work and take questions from you, so please prepare something to ask. You should also complete all the required readings and be prepared to discuss them in detail with your classmates, as much of the course will revolve around these discussions. We will talk about what we can learn from the work, what its weaknesses are, and what further research could do to build on it. In the last part of each

session, we will discuss a practical research issue, for which optional readings are listed on the syllabus.

Required Materials

All readings will be made available online.

Attendance

Attendance in all sessions is mandatory, as students will gain most from the class by engaging in discussion about the materials. If a student needs to miss a class for any reason, please talk to me beforehand. Attendance and participation will be part of the course assessment.

Assessments

Attendance and Participation (10 percent)

Participating in discussion each session is a core component of the course. As a result, students will be graded on attendance and participation. Full marks can be gained by attending each session and contributing to the class discussion; however, please note that you do not need to speak more than others to do well. If a student needs to miss a session, please speak with me beforehand.

Review Memo of Required Reading (15 percent)

Students must write one review memo about one of the required readings during the course. This memo should be approximately 1,000 words. It should be structured as follows: a brief introduction summarizing the reading's research design and findings, a discussion of its strengths, and then a discussion of its weaknesses that includes suggestions for improvements. This assignment is intended to give students familiarity with writing journal reviews and providing constructive feedback to colleagues. Students should expect to lead the discussion of the article they review, which will be chosen during the first session of the course.

Research Proposal (50 percent)

The primary course assessment will be based on a research proposal. This proposal is intended to provide students with the opportunity to begin developing a project that can be published as a journal article or included as part of the dissertation. The project will be coordinated with your other fall PhD classes, so please await further details.

Presentation of Proposal (25 percent)

In the last session of the course, students will present their research proposals to the class. These presentations will be coordinated with your other PhD classes, so please await further details.

Course Policies

During Class

Always be respectful of others, taking special care to keep discussions courteous and feedback constructive. Do not talk over others and pay attention to what they are saying. Do your best to contribute to a collaborative research environment.

Academic Integrity and Honesty

Students are required to comply with the university policy on academic integrity found in the Code of Academic Integrity for Bocconi Students.

Accommodations for Diversity

I am committed to running a course that is free from all forms of discrimination based on race, religion, gender, national origin, age disability, or sexual orientations. If you feel uncomfortable at any point during the course, please feel free to reach out to me directly. In addition, any person who feels that they have been subjected to prohibited discrimination, harassment, or retaliation should contact the Student Ombudsman at garante.studenti@unibocconi.it.

Course Schedule

November 2:

Populism and the Far Right (Required Readings)

- Italo Colantone and Piero Stanig. 2018. "Global Competition and Brexit." *American Political Science Review* 112 (2): 201-218.
- Catherine E. De Vries and Sara B. Hobolt. 2020. *Political Entrepreneurs: The Rise of Challenger Parties in Europe*. Princeton University Press. [Chapter 1](#).
- Vicente Valentim. 2021. "Parliamentary Representation and the Normalization of Radical Right Support." *Comparative Political Studies*.
- **Gloria Gennaro, Giampaolo Lecce, and Massimo Morelli. 2021. "Mobilization and the Strategy of Populism: Theory and Evidence from the United States." Working Paper.**

Presenting and Reading Academic Work (Optional Readings)

- Sarah Knowles. 2015. "How to win at academic presentations: top tips on what to say and how to say it." *LSE Blogs*. February 20.
<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2015/02/20/how-to-win-at-academic-presentations/>
- David T. Smith and Rob Salmond. 2011. "Verbal Sticks and Rhetorical Stones: Improving Conference Presentations in Political Science." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 44 (3): 583-588.

November 7:

Migration (Required Readings)

- Ala' Alrababa'h, Andrea Dillon, Scott Williamson, Jens Hainmueller, Dominik Hangartner, and Jeremy Weinstein. 2021. "Attitudes toward migrants in a highly impacted economy: Evidence from the Syrian refugee crisis in Jordan." *Comparative Political Studies* 54 (1): 33-76.
- Vasiliki Fouka. 2019. "How Do Immigrants Respond to Discrimination? The Case of Germans in the US During World War I." *American Political Science Review* 113 (2): 405-422.
- Rafaela M. Dancygier. 2010. *Immigration and Conflict in Europe*. Cambridge University Press. Introduction.
- **Judith Spirig. 2021. "When Issue Salience Affects Adjudication: Evidence from Swiss Asylum Appeal Decisions." *American Journal of Political Science*.**

Writing an Academic Paper (Optional Readings)

- Andrew T. Little. 2016. "Three Templates for Introductions to Political Science Articles." February. http://www.andrewtlittle.com/papers/little_intros.pdf.

November 9:

Identity (Required Readings)

- James D. Fearon. 1999. "What is Identity (As We Now Use the Word)? Unpublished Manuscript.
- **Chagai M. Weiss, Alexandra A. Siegel, and David Romney. 2022. "How Threats of Exclusion Mobilize Palestinian Political Participation." *American Journal of Political Science*.**
- Hakeem Jefferson, Fabian Neuner, and Josh Pasek. 2020. "Seeing Blue in Black and White: Race and Perceptions of Officer-Involved Shootings." *Perspectives on Politics*.
- Aalaa Abdelgadir and Vasiliki Fouka. 2020. "Political Secularism and Muslim Integration in the West: Assessing the Effects of the French Headscarf Ban." *American Political Science Review* 114 (3): 707-723.
- Salma Mousa. 2020. "Building social cohesion between Christians and Muslims through soccer in post-ISIS Iraq." *Science* 369 (6505): 866-870.

Identity in the Discipline (Optional Readings)

- Michelle L. Dion, Jane Lawrence Sumner, and Sara McLaughlin Mitchell. 2018. "Gendered Citation Patterns across Political Science and Social Science Methodology Fields." *Political Analysis* 26 (3): 312-327.
- Rebecca A. Reid and Todd A. Curry. 2019. "Are We There Yet? Addressing Diversity in Political Science Subfields." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 52 (2): 281-286.
- Colleen Flaherty. 2020. "Women Are Falling Behind." *Inside Higher Ed*. October 20.

November 16:

Social Policy and Public Goods (Required Readings)

- Alberto Alesina, Reza Baqir, and William Easterly. 1999. "Public Goods and Ethnic Divisions." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 114 (4): 1243-1284.
- Agustina S. Paglayan. 2022. "Education or Indoctrination? The Violent Origins of Public School Systems in an Era of State-Building." *American Political Science Review*.
- Kevin Croke, Guy Grossman, Horacio A. Larreguy, and John Marshall. 2016. "Deliberate Disengagement: How Education Can Decrease Political Participation in Electoral Authoritarian Regimes." *American Political Science Review* 110 (3): 579-600.
- **Carmen Jacqueline Ho. 2021. "Benevolent Policies: Bureaucratic Politics and the International Dimensions of Social Policy Expansion." *American Political Science Review*.**

Finding a Research Question (Optional Readings)

- Barbara Geddes. 2003. *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics*. University of Michigan Press. Chapter 2: Big Questions, Little Answers: How the Questions You Choose Affect the Answers You Get.
- Tom Pepinsky. 2019. "On Puzzles and Political Science." February 7. <https://tompepinsky.com/2019/02/07/on-puzzles-and-political-science/>.

November 21:

Regime Change (Required Readings)

- Barbara Geddes. 1999. "What Do We Know About Democratization After Twenty Years?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 2: 115-144.
- Daniel Treisman. 2020. "Democracy by Mistake: How the Errors of Autocrats Trigger Transitions to Freer Government." *American Political Science Review* 114 (3): 792-810.
- Carles Boix. 2011. "Democracy, Development, and the International System." *American Political Science Review* 105 (4): 809-828.
- David Waldner and Ellen Lust. 2018. "Unwelcome Change: Coming to Terms with Democratic Backsliding." *Annual Review of Political Science* 21: 93-113.
- **Aytug Sasmaz, Alper H. Yagci, and Daniel Ziblatt. 2022. "How Voters Respond to Presidential Assaults on Checks and Balances: Evidence from a Survey Experiment in Turkey." *Comparative Political Studies*.**

Giving Feedback on Research (Optional Readings)

- Beth Miller, Jon Pevehouse, Ron Rogowski, Dustin Tingley, and Rick Wilson. 2013. "How To Be a Peer Reviewer: A Guide for Recent and Soon-to-be PhDs." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 46 (1): 120-123.

November 23:

Authoritarianism (Required Readings)

- Lisa Blaydes. 2011. *Elections and Distributive Politics in Mubarak's Egypt*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1.
- Erin Baggot Carter and Brett L. Carter. 2021. *Propaganda in Autocracies*. Forthcoming at Cambridge University Press.
- **Hans Lueders. 2022. "Electoral Responsiveness in Closed Autocracies: Evidence from Petitions in the former German Democratic Republic." *American Political Science Review* 116 (3): 827-842.**
- Gary King, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret E. Roberts. 2013. "How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression." *American Political Science Review* 107 (2): 1-18.

Submitting Journal Articles (Optional Readings)

- R. Michael Alvarez. 2014. "Publishing tips from a journal editor: selecting the right journal." August 17. OUP Blog. <https://blog.oup.com/2014/08/publishing-tips-journal-editor/>.
- Arthur Spirling. 2020. "Rejection." May 29. https://github.com/ArthurSpirling/Rejection/blob/master/rejection_spirling.pdf.

November 28:

Repression and Violence (Required Readings)

- Christian Davenport. 2007. "State Repression and Political Order." *Annual Review of Political Science* 10: 1-23.
- Lauren Young. 2019. "The psychology of state repression: Fear and dissent decisions in Zimbabwe." *American Political Science Review* 113 (1): 140-155.
- **Anselm Hager and Krzysztof Krakowski. 2021. "Does State Repression Spark Protests? Evidence from Secret Police Surveillance in Communist Poland." *American Political Science Review* 116 (2): 564-579.**
- Beatriz Magaloni, Edgar Franco Vivanco, and Vanessa Melo. 2020. "Killing in the Slums: Social Order, Criminal Governance, and Police Violence in Rio de Janeiro." *American Political Science Review* 114 (2): 552-572.

Going to Academic Conferences (Optional Readings)

- Victoria Reyes. 2019. "How to Navigate an Academic Conference." Inside Higher Ed. August 9. <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2019/08/09/tips-getting-most-out-academic-conference-opinion>.
- Paul Smaglik. 2018. "Conference attendance boosts authorship opportunities." Nature. December 14. <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-07772-5>.

November 30:

Representation (Required Readings)

- David E. Broockman and Christopher Skovron. 2018. "Bias in Perceptions of Public Opinion among Political Elites." *American Political Science Review* 112 (3): 542-563.

- Kimuli Kasara and Pavithra Suryanarayan. 2015. “When Do the Rich Vote Less Than the Poor and Why? Explaining Turnout Inequality across the World.” *American Journal of Political Science* 59 (3): 613-627.
- **Amanda Clayton, Diana Z. O’Brien, and Jennifer M. Piscopo. 2018. “All Male Panels? Representation and Democratic Legitimacy.” *American Journal of Political Science* 63 (1): 113-129.**
- Sarah Sunn Bush and Par Zetterberg. 2020. Gender Quotas and International Reputation. *American Journal of Political Science* 65 (2): 326-341.

Thinking About Jobs (Optional Readings)

- Chris Blattman. “Academic job market advice for economics, political science, public policy, and other professional schools.” <https://chrisblattman.com/job-market/>.

December 5:

Accountability (Required Readings)

- **Thad Dunning, Guy Grossman, and 27 additional authors. 2019. “Voter information campaigns and political accountability: Cumulative findings from a preregistered meta-analysis of coordinated trials.” *Science Advances* 5 (7).**
- Hector Solaz, Catherine E. De Vries, and Roosmarijn A. de Geus. 2019. “In-Group Loyalty and the Punishment of Corruption.” *Comparative Political Studies* 52 (6): 896-926.
- Lucy Martin and Pia J. Raffler. 2020. “Fault Lines: The Effects of Bureaucratic Power on Electoral Accountability.” *American Journal of Political Science* 65 (1): 210-224.
- Anthony Fowler and Andrew B. Hall. 2018. “Do Shark Attacks Influence Presidential Elections? Reassessing a Prominent Finding on Voter Competence.” *Journal of Politics* 80 (4).

Doing Ethical Research (Optional Readings)

- Eleanor Knott. 2019. “Beyond the Field: Ethics after Fieldwork in Politically Dynamic Contexts.” *Perspectives on Politics* 17 (1): 140-153.
- Lee Ann Fjuii. 2012. “Research Ethics 101: Dilemmas and Responsibilities.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 45 (4): 717-723.
- APSR Submission Guidelines: Ethics and Transparency in Research: <https://www.apsanet.org/APSR-Submission-Guidelines>.