

PO3730. Public Opinion and Political Participation

Lecturer: Dr. Gizem Arikan

Office: 4.05 (3 College Green)

E-mail: arikang@tcd.ie

Office hours: (MT & HT) Thursdays 10-12 am during teaching weeks, or by appointment

Teaching Assistant: Stefan Müller, mullers@tcd.ie

Lectures: (MT) Wednesdays 5-6 pm @ARTS 3071; Fridays 9-10 am @AP 2.03

(HT) Tuesdays 5-6 pm @ARTS 3071; Wednesdays 12-1pm @ARTS 3051

Tutorials: (MT) Mondays 3-4 pm @ARTS 5039; Weeks 3, 5, 8, 10, and 12

(HT) Tuesdays 11 am-12 pm @ARTS 3106; Weeks 4, 6, 8, and 10

Module description

This module will examine and analyse mass political attitudes and behavior from a comparative perspective. In the Michaelmas term, we will examine the nature of public opinion and key approaches and debates concerning its foundations. Topics and themes covered will include: defining, measuring, and analysing public opinion (sampling, questionnaire design, contextual sources of bias); citizen competence (information, sophistication, democratic norms and tolerance); explaining public opinion (self-interest vs symbolic approaches, group interest models, political culture and values, role of elites, ideology, media and political communication, social networks).

In the Hilary term, we will focus on political participation, and particularly voting behaviour and cover the following topics: defining political participation, major theoretical debates in political behaviour (rational choice models; social influence models; psychological models), explaining voter turnout, models of vote choice (strategic voting, sociological approaches, the Michigan model, retrospective and prospective evaluations, issue voting, candidate qualities, election campaigns and political communication), political protest, social capital and participation in voluntary organizations, social movements.

Learning aims

Students will learn about the key issues in defining and measuring public opinion, understand the foundations of public opinion and political participation, become familiar with the contemporary debates in public opinion and political behaviour research, and be able to discuss current issues concerning mass attitudes and behaviour with reference to the major theoretical approaches in the field.

Learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

1. Explain and summarise the major issues in survey research.

2. Analyse the effect of individual and contextual factors on attitude formation and conventional and unconventional forms of political participation.
3. Assess the factors contributing to voter turnout in modern political systems.
4. Develop arguments, based on empirical evidence, about the causes of recent political protests around the world.
5. Assess the role of different factors in explaining voting behaviour in recent elections and referendums.

Office hours

In case you have any questions about course content, readings, or class discussions, please come to my office hours on Thursdays between 10.00 and 12.00. In case you cannot make it to the office hours, please e-mail me to set up an appointment. I will try to respond to your e-mails within two days, but note that I may get back to you a bit later than that if I am travelling to attend academic events during the semester.

Please note that I will not be able to answer substantive questions concerning course content via e-mail. In case you have such questions, please see me during office hours or raise them during class meetings. Please bear in mind that I will not be able to cover the lecture material for you during office hours, as office hours are not intended to replace lectures. Therefore, try not to miss any classes.

Course organization

Lectures

We will have 2 one-hour lectures per week and 1 tutorial per fortnight. To facilitate class discussion, we will make use of web tools such as mentimeter. You do not need to download any application for this. Just make sure that when you come to class, your phone or tablet (or laptop) has enough battery and is connected to the internet. You can contact the [IT Services](#) in case you have problems connecting your device to the university network.

Tutorials

We will have a total of 9 tutorial sessions that will meet fortnightly through the academic year. Tutorials will meet at the following times in the following places

Michaelmas term: Weeks 3, 5, 8, 10, and 12: Mondays 3-4 pm @ARTS 5039

Hilary term: Weeks 4, 6, 8, and 10: Tuesdays 11 am-12 pm @ARTS 3106

Tutorials will be moderated by our T.A. Stefan Müller (mullers@tcd.ie) and will include in-depth discussion and analysis of the topics covered in the lectures. **Please note that there will be a separate list on Blackboard with dates and readings assigned for tutorial sessions.**

Please note that tutorials are not substitute lectures where students who did not attend a lecture can expect to be filled in on what they missed. Tutorials will give you the opportunity to ask questions and put forward your views about the topic under discussion. The tutorial moderator is not there to inform and instruct but, rather, to moderate discussion.

Note that attendance in lectures and tutorials are essential to your success in this course. Lecture slides will not be sufficient to reconstruct the content of the lectures. You will need to be able to connect the readings, lectures and tutorial discussions to be able to write good essays and get a satisfactory grade in the essays and in the final exam.

Course materials

We will draw on readings from the following books for most of the course. A number of copies have been ordered to the library, and some of the books are available as e-books.

- Asher, Herbert. 2011. *Polling and the Public: What Every Citizen Should Know*. CQ Press, 8th edition. (hereafter referred as **Asher**)
- Clawson, Rosalee A., and Zoe M. Oxley. 2012. *Public Opinion: Democratic Ideals, Democratic Practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: CQ Press, 2nd edition. (hereafter referred as **Clawson & Oxley**)
- Dalton, Russell J. 2013. *Citizen Politics: Public Opinion and Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 6th edition. (hereafter referred as **Dalton**)
- Norris, Pippa. 2003. *Democratic Phoenix: Reinventing Political Activism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

There are also other readings, which are available electronically, through the TCD journal arrangements or on the web. I will also make some readings (such as chapters from books not listed above) available through **Blackboard**. I will also post relevant blog posts, news stories, or videos to the Blackboard.

If you are not sure how to find the books in the stacks or use Library's electronic services and databases, you may attend the Library training sessions, or get in touch with our subject librarian, David Macnaughton: david.macnaughton@tcd.ie

Assessment

As with many Junior Sophister courses in our department, for full-year students, assessment is based on two essays which account for 25% of the overall grade for the course (12.5% per essay) and an annual exam at the end of the second semester (Hilary Term) which accounts for 75% of the overall grade.

In the case of one-term visiting students (PO373B and PO373C), the course is evaluated through two essays (50% each).

Essay format and guidelines

In line with departmental guidelines, all essays:

- must be within the word limit (Full-year students: no longer than 1,500 words including notes or footnotes, but excluding bibliography. One-term only visiting students: : no longer than 3,000 words including notes or footnotes, but excluding bibliography),
- must be submitted in Word or PDF format,
- use double or 1.5 line spacing and leave a margin of at least one inch at the left-hand side,
- must be numbered,
- state the final word count,

- use proper citation and referencing, (You can use the referencing format of your choice as long as it is consistent across the essay.)
- must be submitted via turnitin.com, the plagiarism detection software (see course ID and password below).
- As per Trinity policy, all essays should begin with the essay cover sheet, affirming that the essay is all the student's own work. The cover can be downloaded from the [department web site](#).

For the essays, you are required to (i) draw on academic literature (academic articles and/or books) and (ii) properly cite the academic literature you use to prepare your essay. You should cite coherently and attach an ALPHABETISED bibliography to your essay. Students should read beyond the reading list for the essays. If you require information on proper citation style, please refer to one of the following books:

- The University of Chicago Press. 2010. *The Chicago Manual of Style: The Essential Guide for Writers, Editors and Publishers*. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 16th edition.
- [APSA](http://www.apsanet.org/media/PDFs/Publications/APSASStyleManual2006.pdf) Committee on Publications. 2006. Style Manual for Political Science: <http://www.apsanet.org/media/PDFs/Publications/APSASStyleManual2006.pdf>.

The library also provides training sessions for properly citing sources as well as sessions on reference management software, Endnote. The library also has a lot of resources and training sessions on conducting literature reviews, essay writing, and avoiding plagiarism. Please visit [this link](#) to see the updates on training topics and sessions taking place in the library:

Please read the [department's undergraduate handbook](#), which contains a lot of useful information about submission of written assignments and guidelines on writing essays:

I will also post essential information about the essays and a grading rubric to the Blackboard. If you have any questions about or need any suggestions with regards to your essays, you may come to my office hours to contact Stefan. In general, it is a good idea not to skip the tutorials, as they will help you acquire the critical thinking and reflection skills necessary to write good essays.

Essay topics and deadlines

Full-year students will submit two essays: The first one is due on no later than **5pm on 12 December 2017**. Please choose one of the following questions for your essay:

If most citizens are disinterested in politics or unknowledgeable about political affairs, what is the analytical and practical benefit of conducting public opinion polls? Are there any reasons for policy-makers to take polls seriously?

Students of public opinion usually identify self-interest, symbolic attachments, and principles as primary ingredients of opinion. From what we know about research on public opinion, what are the relative potency of these three factors?

The second essay is due no later than **5 pm on 27 March 2018**. Please choose one of the following questions for your essay:

Some scholars contrast the traditional individual-level model of political participation that emphasizes individual resources, interest, beliefs and identifications with models that emphasize the role of strategic mobilization. Discuss the relative strengths and weaknesses of two explanations. How do

networks and social and political organizations overcome the problems of ignorance, lack of interest or efficacy?

Is class politics dead? Some scholars argue that class cleavages no longer play a significant role in voting behavior and have been taken over by symbolic attachments and moral issues. Are they correct in their assertion? Discuss the reasons that lead these scholars reach this conclusion.

Michaelmas Term-only students will be writing two essays. Each essay should be around the 3,000 word limit (note that 3,000 words is the upper limit). The first essay will be due no later than **5 pm on 14 November 2017**. The topic of their first essay is as follows:

How can we evaluate the competence of ordinary citizens? Is holding a belief system or knowing too much about politics necessary or sufficient to adequately understand politics? What are the practical implications of citizen ignorance for public opinion polling?

Hilary term-only students will also be submitting two essays, both of which should be around 3,000 words (Note that maximum words should not be more than 3,000). The first essay for HT only students is due no later than **5 pm on 20 February 2018**. These students will submit an essay on the following question:

Do social media and non-traditional mobilization tactics resolve or contribute to the inequalities in participation?

The second essay topics and deadlines for MT-only and HT-only students are the same as full-year students in the respective term, but would have a longer word limit (3,000 words maximum). Thus, MT-only students will submit their essays on **12 December 5 pm**, and HT-only students will submit their second essays on **27 March 2018 5pm**.

Turnitin information

All students should have a turnitin.com account and submit their essays using the following information:

Class ID: 16330045

Enrollment key: pp7590go

Academic integrity

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity free from fraud and deception. Academic dishonesty, including, but not limited to, cheating on an exam or assignment, plagiarizing, representing someone else's work as your own, submitting work previously used without the informing and taking the consent of the instructor, fabricating of information or citations, etc. will not be tolerated. Plagiarism will lead to automatic failure and the matter will be reported to the student's tutor and the dean of the faculty; severe penalties are likely to ensue, including possible exclusion from the exam or even the College, in accordance with College policy.

- Please read pp. 45-47 of the [College Calendar](#) for University's plagiarism policy.
- General guidelines for students on avoiding plagiarism could be found in the [Library's online tutorial](#).
- The Library also has a [web page](#) with extensive resources about avoiding plagiarism and best practices about citations and referencing.

Late essays

All late work, unless excused **in advance** by the module lecturer, or justified by medical certificate or tutor's note, will be penalised at a rate of 5 marks per day. Under no circumstances will work be accepted after the set work has been marked and handed back to other students, or after the end of the second lecture term.

Make sure to save and back-up your work. Computer crashes or failure to back up your work will count as acceptable excuses for late work!

Disability policy

Students with a disability are encouraged to register with the [Disability Service](#) to seek supports where the disability could affect their ability to participate fully in all aspects of the course.

Lecture and reading schedule

Michaelmas term

Public Opinion: The Basics

Week 1: Introduction

Clawson and Oxley, chapters 1 and 12.

Asher, chapter 1.

Week 2: Measuring public opinion – questions and questionnaire design

Asher, chapter 3.

Drop, Kyle. 2016. "How We Conducted our 'Shy Trumper' Study." *Morning Consult*. November 3. Available at: <https://morningconsult.com/2016/11/03/shy-trump-social-desirability-undercover-voter-study/>

Enns, Peter K., and Jonathan P. Schuldt. 2016. "Are There Really Hidden Trump Voters?" *New York Times*. November 7. Available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/07/opinion/are-there-really-hidden-trump-voters.html>

Recommended:

Smith, Tom. 1993. "The Holocaust Denial Controversy." *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 57: 380-93.

Bishop, George F. Robert W. Oldendick and Alfred Tuchfarber. 1984. "What Must My Interest in Politics be If I Just Told You "I Don't Know"?" *Public Opinion Quarterly* 48(2): 510-19.

Week 3: Measuring public opinion: Sampling, confidence intervals, and the problem of non-response

Squire, Peverill. 1988. "Why the 1936 Literary Digest Poll Failed." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 52:125-133.

Asher, chapters 4 and 5.

The Guardian. 2016. "General Election Opinion Poll Failure Down to not Reaching Tory Voters." 19 January. Available at <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/jan/19/general-election-opinion-poll-failure-down-to-not-reaching-tory-voters>

Week 4: Citizen competence: Information and sophistication

Dalton, chapter 2.

Clawson and Oxley, chapter 8 and chapter 5 (From beginning until the section titled "Party Identification")

What moves public opinion?

Week 5: Self-interested publics?

Clawson and Oxley, chapter 6 (Only read section titled Self-Interest)

Recommended:

Erikson, Robert S., and Laura Stoker. 2011. "Caught in the Draft: The Effects of Vietnam Draft Lottery Status on Political Attitudes." *American Political Science Review* 105(2): 221-237.

McCall, Leslie, and Lane Kenworthy. 2009. "Americans' Social Policy Preferences in the Era of Rising Inequality." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 7(3): 459-484.

Week 6: Or not...? Symbolic politics and values

Frank, Thomas. 2004. *What's the Matter with Kansas? How Conservatives Won the Heart of America*. Henry Holt and Company. Introduction and chapter 1. **(BB)**

MacGillis, Alec. 2015. "Who Turned My Blue State Red?: Why Poor Areas Vote for Politicians Who Want to Slash the Safety Net." *The New York Times / Sunday Review*. November 20.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/22/opinion/sunday/who-turned-my-blue-state-red.html>

Feldman, Stanley. 1984. "Economic Self-Interest and Political Behavior." *American Journal of Political Science* 26(3): 446-466.

Recommended:

Sears, David O., Richard R. Lau, Tom Tyler, and A. M. Allen Jr. "Self-Interest versus Symbolic Politics in Policy Attitudes and Presidential Voting." *American Political Science Review* 74 (1980): 670-684.

Week 7: Reading week, no class

Week 8: Partisanship and group cues

Clawson and Oxley, chapter 7.

Samuels, David, and Cesar Zucco. 2014. "The Power of Partisanship in Brazil: Evidence from Survey Experiments." *American Journal of Political Science* 58(1): 212-225.

Gilens, Martin. 1999. *Why Americans Hate Welfare: Race, Media, and the Politics of Antipoverty Policy*. The University of Chicago Press. Chapter 3. **(BB)**

Week 9: Contextual effects on public opinion

Dalton, chapter 5.

Andersen, Robert, and Tina Fetner. 2008. "Economic Inequality and Intolerance: Attitudes toward Homosexuality in 35 Democracies." *American Journal of Political Science* 52(4): 942-958.

Attitude stability and change

Week 10: Communication and political elites

Levin, Sam. 2017. "'Legitimized in their Hatred': A Weekend of Violence in Trump's America." *The Guardian*. 31 May. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/may/31/portland-train-stabbing-racial-violence-trump-america>

Stone, John. 2016. "Brexit: Surge in Anti-Immigrant Hate Crime in Areas that Voted to Leave EU." *The Independent*. 31 July. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/brexit-hate-crime-racism-immigration-eu-referendum-result-what-it-means-eurospectic-areas-a7165056.html>

Zaller, John R. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 6 and 7. **(BB)** (skim)

Pollock III, Philip H. 1994. "Issues, Values, and Critical Moments: Did 'Magic' Johnson Transform Public Opinion on AIDS?" *American Journal of Political Science* 38 (2): 426-446.

Week 11: Media effects, priming and framing

Clawson and Oxley, chapter 3.

Brewer, Paul. 2002. "Framing, Value Words, and Citizens' Explanations of Their Issue Opinions." *Political Communication* 19:303-316.

Berinsky, Adam J., and Donald R. Kinder. 2006. "Making Sense of Issues Through Media Frames: Understanding the Kosovo Crisis." *The Journal of Politics* 68(3): 640-656.

Week 12: Review of topics

I will be out of country to attend a workshop this week. We will either have a make-up class or have an online session. Details will be announced in Blackboard.

Hillary term

Week 1: Forms of political participation

Dalton, chapter 3.

Dalton, Russell. 2009. *The Good Citizen: How a Younger Generation is Shaping American Politics*. Revised edition. Chapters 1 and 3. **(Library)**

Week 2: Who participates? The resources model

Dalton, chapter 4.

Brady, Henry E., Sidney Verba, and Lehman Schlozman. 1995. "Beyond SES: A Resource Model of Political Participation." *American Political Science Review* 89 (2): 271-294.

Week 3: Who participates? Social capital and mobilization

Norris, chapters 8 and 9.

Recommended:

Brehm, John and Rahn, Wendy. 1997. "Individual-Level Evidence for the Causes and Consequences of Social Capital." *American Journal of Political Science* 41(3): 999-1023.

Calhoun-Brown, Allison. 1996. African American Churches and Political Mobilization: The Psychological Impact of Organizational Resources. *The Journal of Politics* 58 (4): 935-953.

Week 4: Who participates? Distrust and grievances

Dalton, chapter 12 (SKIM).

Gurr, Ted Robert. 1993. "Why Minorities Rebel: A Global Analysis of Communal Mobilization and Conflict Since 1945." *International Political Science Review* 14(2): 161-201.

Hooghe, Marc, and Sofie Marien. 2013. "A Comparative Analysis of the Relation between Political Trust and Forms of Political Participation in Europe." *European Societies* 15(1): 131-152.

Recommended:

Anderson, Christopher, and Silvia M. Mendes. 2006. "Learning to Lose: Election Outcomes, Democratic Experience, and Political Protest Potential." *British Journal of Political Science* 36(1): 91-111.

Week 5: Social influences on participation

Bond, Robert M., Christopher J. Fariss, Jason J. Jones, Adam D. I. Kramer, Cameron Marlow, Jaime E. Settle, and James H. Fowler. 2012. "A 61-million-person experiment in social influence and political mobilization." *Nature* 489(7415). Available at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3834737/pdf/nihms524815.pdf>

Valenzuela, Sebastian, Arturo Arriagada, and Andres Scherman. 2012. "The Social Media Basis of Youth Protest Behavior: The Case of Chile." *Journal of Communication* 62: 299-314.

Science Daily. 2008. "How Social Pressure Increases Voter Turnout: Evidence From A Large-scale Field Experiment." March 14. Available at <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/03/080313124403.htm>

Week 6: Political context and political participation

Norris, chapter 4.

Dalton, Russell, Alix van Sicle, and Steven Weldon. 2010. "The Individual-Institutional Nexus of Protest Behavior." *British Journal of Political Science* 40(1): 51-73.

Week 7: Reading week, no class

Week 8: Explaining vote choice: Social cleavages and partisanship

Dalton, chapters 8 and 9.

Week 9: Explaining vote choice: Economic voting and issue voting

Erikson, Robert S. 1989. "Economic Conditions and the Presidential Vote." *American Political Science Review* 83 (2): 567-73.

Lewis-Beck, Michael. 1986. "Comparative Economic Voting: Britain, France, Germany, Italy." *American Journal of Political Science* 30(2): 315-346.

Dalton chapter 10

Week 10: Explaining vote choice: Campaigns and candidates; new media and changing face of election campaigns

Sides, John, and Jake Haselswerdt. 2015. "Campaigns and Elections." In Adam J. Berinsky (ed.), *New Directions in Public Opinion*. Second Edition. New York: Routledge, pp. 261-277. **(BB)**

Stefano DellaVigna and Ethan Kaplan. 2007. "The Fox News Effect: Media Bias and Voting." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 122(3):1187-1234.

DiGrazia, Joseph, Karissa McKelvey, Johan Bollen, and Fabio Rojas. 2013. "More Tweets More Votes: Social Media as a Quantitative Indicator of Political Behavior." *PLOS One*.
<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0079449>

Kilkenny, Katy. 2015. "Is Nothing Sacred? Why Political Candidates are Commandeering the Hip New Media." *Psmag*. 29 September. <https://psmag.com/social-justice/why-political-candidates-are-comandeering-new-media>

Guilbeaut, Douglas, and Samuel Woolley. 2016. "How Twitter Bots are Shaping the Election." *The Atlantic*. November 1. <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2016/11/election-bots/506072/>

Weeks 11 and 12: Review and conclusions