Course Overview

This course is designed to provide an introduction to the study of leaders, followers and political behavior. We will analyze political behavior from the perspectives of leaders and followers, as a function of individual psychology, as a function of biology and as a function of identity. Do we need more than valence affect to explain political behavior? Do emotions matter? How do episodes of intergroup violence affect political opinions toward outgroup members? These questions are investigated throughout the course via experimental and survey research methods and quantitative data analysis.

The latter part of the course will focus on leadership and policymaking: the inter-relationship between foreign aid, poverty and movements. How do we explain why people participate in movements? What sorts of factors determine the tactics people will use once they decide something must be done? What are the essential factors for movements to succeed? Does the emergence of new social media undermine stability and hence affect outcomes? What tools do leaders use to repress movements? Does repression instigate or impede movements? A set of analytic tools based on the strategic perspective of political science and political psychology will be introduced to examine how intergroup violence affects political attitudes.

Overall, this class aims to equip the student with the conceptual tools and prerequisite knowledge to understand, evaluate and think about leaders, followers and political behavior in general.

Course Requirements

Course grade will be based on class participation and presentations (40%), a 4 page writing assignment (20%), and a 10 page final project (40%). The class will run like a seminar. You are expected to have completed the readings before each class and come to class ready to participate in the discussion. For each class, a discussion leader is responsible for starting the discussion with a short presentation. The discussion leader will submit 3 questions based on the readings the day prior to the class, guide the class discussion and provide a brief overview of the readings.
Your writing assignment can be: (i) A case study of an election in a country. If you choose this option, you are expected to take a case which represents some of the themes discussed in class and provide a detailed analysis of the events and issues involved. (ii) An exploration of the conceptual issues raised by the themes in the class. The paper in this case may be a deeper analytic examination of such a question.

The final project will expand on the writing assignment and will aim to advise a candidate nominated for President of the country in the upcoming election on some important domestic or foreign policy issues as she lays out her campaign. You will receive a letter from the Chief Strategist to the candidate leader, asking for your expertise to advise the candidate. The exact question/issue will be detailed in the project packet. You will be asked to pick a policy issue, and to submit a memorandum along with a technical appendix to the candidate that helps him deal with the issue you picked. We will hold informal presentation of your project on the last day of classes.

**Texts**


Texts marked with an asterisk (*) are recommended readings. The books are on reserve at the circulation desk in Elmer Holmes Bobst Library. All other articles, lecture and practice session notes will be made available via Classes.

**Course Schedule, Topics and Reading Assignments**

**Part 1. Introduction**

**Week 1. Introduction to key concepts in Political Behavior**

Overview of the course, Theory Testing
Week 2: Causal Inference

Lecture: Causality, Research design: Randomized Experiments vs. Observational Studies, Examples and Applications of Field and Natural Experiments, Economics versus Psychology Experiments

Druckman, James et al. (2011), Chapter 1&9


McDermott et al (2009) “MAO predicts aggression following provocation” PNAS.

Morton and Williams (2010), Chapter 1

Part 2. Followers: Cognition, Emotion, Identity

Week 3: Political Cognition


Week 4: Emotion Research in Political Psychology


Week 5: Social Identity


Gaertner, Samuel L., John F. Dovidio, Jason A. Nier, Christine M. Ward, and Brenda S. Banker.

**Week 6: Intergroup Relations**


**Part 2. Leaders: Policy making**

**Week 7: A Theory of Leadership: Selectorate Politics**


**Week 8: The Logic of Political Survival**


**Week 9: Policy-making: Foreign Aid, Poverty and Movements**


**Week 10: Policy-making: Natural Disasters, Leadership and Movements**


Smith, Alastair and Alejandro Quiroz Flores. 2010. Disaster Politics. *Foreign Affairs.*


**Part 3. Leaders, Followers & Political Behavior**

**Week 11: Intergroup Violence and Political Attitudes**


**Week 12: Final Discussions on Elite Participation & Presentations**