Course Description:
This seminar aims to introduce students to various topics in the study of political behavior, with a focus on cutting edge research that has been conducted in developing countries. We begin by examining various influences on public opinion (cognitive biases, historical conditions, trust, the media, ethnic identities, religion, partisanship and ideology). We then turn to the consequences of these and other influences for various domains of citizen behavior (compliance, turnout and protest participation, vote choice and participation in violence). Finally, we discuss explanations for variation in elite behavior (campaigning, responsiveness and public goods provision).

The course is not designed to teach particular methods; however, the readings cover a range of different research designs and data gathering strategies, and in some weeks we will discuss the advantages and disadvantages of different approaches to research. A principal goal of the course is to help students engage with current debates in the study of political behavior. A second goal is to help students explore and develop possible topics, theories and approaches for their own research. By the end of the semester, students should have an appreciation for the diversity of issues and approaches that can be found in the field of comparative politics, and should feel they have a base of knowledge to “stand on” as they move forward as scholars and teachers in comparative politics.

Course Materials:
Most materials for the course will be available electronically, through the course’s My Classes website (under “Resources”). Readings listed under “Additional Readings” on the syllabus are given for your reference. All other readings are required.

Course Requirements
The class is a reading seminar; regular, engaged participation from all students is crucial. Students must attend all sessions and come to class having read all required readings and prepared to discuss. Beginning in the third week of the course, we will start each session with a student presentation, designed to raise core issues, debates and research challenges facing scholars of that particular week’s topic; these presentations (two per student) will involve a short write-up as well (designed to be in a format similar to what one would write as a journal.
reviewer) and will be graded. The other main graded assignments for the class will be a short paper prospectus (due halfway through the semester) and a final research design. If you would like to substitute these research assignments with two analytic essays (on questions of my choosing), please speak to me about this possibility.

Class participation – 20%
Two in-class presentations/reviewer reports on the readings – 30%
Prospectus (2-3 pages, double-spaced, due March 8th by email by 5pm) – 15%
Research Design (20 pages, double-spaced, due May 7th by email by 5pm) – 35%

Late Policy
Work will be penalized 1/3 of a grade for each 24 hours period in which it is late. Exceptions will be made in only the rarest of circumstances (e.g., medical emergencies) and must be requested as soon as the conflict becomes apparent. Incompletes can be taken at the end of the semester but are strongly discouraged.

Academic Integrity
See the NYU Citation Guide for information on how to properly cite sources.

Course Outline
Readings listed under “Additional Readings” are given for your reference. All other readings are required.

January 23. What Do We Mean By Political Behavior? Why Study It? And Why Study It in Developing Countries?


Additional readings:


**PART I: THE NATURE OF PUBLIC OPINION**

**January 30. Political Knowledge and Information Processing**


Adida, Claire, Jessica Gottlieb, Eric Kramon and Gwyneth McClendon. "Reducing or Reinforcing In-Group Preferences? An Experiment on Information and Ethnic Voting." N.d.

**February 6. Trust and Social Cohesion**


*Additional readings:*


**February 13. Media Influence**


Conroy-Krutz, Jeffrey, and Devra C. Moehler. "Moderation from bias: A field experiment on


**February 20. Ethnicity and Religion**


*Additional reading:*


**February 27. Partisanship and Ideology**


*Additional readings:*


**March 6. Attitudes toward the State (and Compliance)**


*Additional readings:*


**March 13 – SPRING BREAK (NO CLASS)**

**PART II: EXPLAINING CITIZEN BEHAVIOR**

**March 20. Political Participation**


**Additional readings:**


**March 27. Vote Choice**


**Additional readings:**


**April 3. Violence and Non-Violence**


**PART III: EXPLAINING ELITE BEHAVIOR**

**April 10. Electoral Strategy and Campaigns**


*Additional reading:*


**April 17. Responsiveness**


*Additional reading:*


**April 24. Public Goods Provision**


**May 1. Wrap-Up (No reading)**