

**Political Behavior in Developing Countries  
Graduate Seminar  
New York University, Spring 2021**

Class Time: Tuesdays, 2pm-3:50pm  
Location: Zoom

Professor Gwyneth McClendon  
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Office Hours: email for appointment.  
Zoom room for office hours:  
<https://nyu.zoom.us/j/2268281870>  
Meeting ID: 226 828 1870, +16465588656

**Course Description:**

This seminar aims to introduce students to topics in the study of comparative political behavior, with a focus on cutting edge research that has been conducted in developing countries. We begin by examining core ideas in behavioral research (e.g., about cognitive biases, socialization, emotions personality, social identity). We then turn to examine how these ideas have been applied to the study of political behavior in various domains.

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 meetings, 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 study of comparative political behavior, and should feel they have a base of knowledge to “stand on” as they move forward as scholars and teachers in this field.

**Course Materials:**

Most materials for the course will be available electronically, through the course’s My Classes website (under “Resources”). All listed readings are required.

**Note on “Blended” Class Format:**

NYU has scheduled this course to have in-person and online components. Because students are located all over the world (and thus on different time zones), and because they may have different vulnerabilities to COVID-19, and because there are pedagogical downsides to having some students in the room while others are not, I propose to conduct all sessions over Zoom unless there is significant student demand to do otherwise. I will survey enrolled students at the start of the semester.

## Course Requirements

### *Regular Discussion Participation:*

The class is a reading seminar; **regular, engaged participation** from all students is crucial. Students must attend class meetings having read all required readings and prepared to discuss.

### *Presentations:*

Each student is required to give **two presentations** during the course of the term. **One presentation** will involve the student presenting on “the big idea,” theory or theoretical perspective in one of the assigned readings for that week. The student should present the big idea, argument or concept, argue for its importance, and discuss its relationship to other big ideas/concepts/arguments covered in the course. **The other presentation** will involve a student presenting on the research design and empirical analysis in one of the assigned readings (which may be the same or different reading than the subject of the first presentation). The student should present the nitty-gritty aspect of the design, argue for how the design helps answer the paper’s big question(s) and prepare to defend the design as if he/she were the author. Students will be asked only to **prepare slides** for these presentations, not to write separate memos. During the ensuing discussion with the class, presenting students will be asked to **take the perspective of the author** when considering questions and comments on either the “big idea” or design. Together, these two types of presentations are meant to compel students to get used to thinking *both* about how they can advance big debates and situate claims in the literature *and* about how to design and execute rigorous research. Each student will be expected to complete both types of presentations during the course of the term.

During the first class meeting, we will divide up the weeks and readings among students so that each student has two occasions during the semester to present. We will also discuss the format/content of the presentations in the first class meeting.

### *Prospectus/Research Design:*

The other main graded assignments for the class will be a **short paper prospectus** (2-3 pages, due halfway through the semester) and a **final research design** (~15 pages) that presents a design the student might be interested in executing, e.g., for his/her second year (MA) paper, MA thesis or 3<sup>rd</sup> year qualifying paper. Please email or meet with the professor at least one week before submitting the short paper prospectus in order to get some feedback on the idea.

Regular class participation – **20%**

Two in-class presentations

- One report: present the “big ideas” in the assigned reading, act as the author to answer critic’s questions – **15%** (email slides to the professor before start of class)
- The other report: present the empirical approach and evidence in the assigned reading, also take the position of the author – **15%** (email slides to the professor before start of class)

Prospectus (2-3 pages, double-spaced, due Thursday, March 18 by email by 5pm) – **15%**

Research Design (fifteen pages, double-spaced, due Tuesday, May 11 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 in consultation with the professor but are *strongly discouraged*.

### **Academic Integrity**

See the [NYU Citation Guide](#) for information on how to properly cite sources.

### **Course Outline**

#### **February 2. Intro. What is the Study of “Political Behavior”? Why Study It? Do We Learn Different Things by Studying It in Developing Countries?**

Simon, Herbert A. “Human Nature in Politics: The Dialogue of Psychology and Political Science.” *The American Political Science Review* 79.2 (1985): 293-304.

World Bank. *World Development Report 2015: Mind, Society and Behavior*. World Bank. Pp.1-61.

Smets, Koen. “There is More to Behavioral Economics Than Biases and Fallacies.” *The Behavioral Scientist*. July 24, 2018.

### **PART I. BEHAVIORAL INSIGHTS**

#### **February 9. Cognitive Biases**

Kunda, Ziva. 1990. “The Case for Motivated Reasoning.” *Psychological Bulletin* 108.3: 480.

Shah, Anuj, Sendhil Mullainathan, and Eldar Shafir. 2012. “Some Consequences of Having Too Little.” *Science* Vol 338: 682-685.

Adida, Claire, Jessica Gottlieb, Eric Kramon and Gwyneth McClendon. "Reducing or Reinforcing In-Group Preferences? An Experiment on Information and Ethnic Voting." 2017. *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*.

Doces, John A., and Amy Wolaver. "Are We All Predictably Irrational? An Experimental Analysis." *Political Behavior* 2019: 1-22.

#### **February 16. Socialization**

Sapiro, Virginia. “Not Your Parents’ Political Socialization: Introduction for a New Generation.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 7 (2004): 1-23.

Bicchieri, Cristina. *The Grammar of Society: The Nature and Dynamics of Social Norms*. Cambridge University Press, 2005. Chapter 1.

Pop-Eleches, Grigore, and Joshua A. Tucker. "Communist Socialization and Post-communist Economic and Political Attitudes." *Electoral Studies* 33 (2014): 77-89.

Parreira, Christiana, Daniel L. Tavana, and Charles Harb. "University Socialization in the Developing World: Experimental Evidence from Lebanon." Working paper, 2018.

### **February 23. Emotions**

Marcus, George E. "Emotions in Politics." *Annual Review of Political Science* 3 (2000): 221-250.

Zeitoff, Thomas. "Anger, Exposure to Violence, and Intragroup Conflict: A 'Lab in the Field' Experiment in Southern Israel." *Political Psychology* 35.3 (2014): 309-35.

McClendon, Gwyneth H. *Envy in Politics*. Princeton University Press, 2018. Introduction.

Aldama, Abraham, Mateo Vasquez, and Lauren Young. "Fear and Citizen Coordination Against Dictatorship." *Journal of Theoretical Politics*.

### **March 2. Personality**

Greene, Samuel, and Graeme Robertson. "Agreeable Authoritarians: Personality and Politics in Contemporary Russia." *Comparative Political Studies* 50.13 (2017): 1802-1834.

Oskarsson, Sven, and Sten Widmalm. "Personality and political tolerance: Evidence from India and Pakistan." *Political Studies* 64.1 (2016): 235-254.

Blass, Thomas. "The Milgram Paradigm After 35 Years: Some Things We Now Know About Obedience to Authority." *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 29.5 (1999): 955-978.

### **March 9. Social Identity**

Tajfel, Henri, et al. "Social Categorization and Intergroup Behavior." *European Journal of Social Psychology* 1.2 (1971): 149-178.

Habyarimana, James, Macartan Humphreys, Daniel Posner, and Jeremy Weinstein. 2007. "Why Does Ethnic Diversity Undermine Public Goods Provision? An Experimental Approach," *American Political Science Review* 101 (4): 709- 25.

Charnysh, Volha, Christopher Lucas, and Perna Singh. "The ties that bind: National identity salience and pro-social behavior toward the ethnic other." *Comparative Political Studies* 48.3 (2015): 267-300.

## **March 16. Incentives and Preference Formation**

Kamenica, Emir. "Behavioral Economics and Psychology of Incentives." *Annual Review of Economics*. 4.1 (2012): 427-452.

Druckman, James N., and Arthur Lupia. "Preference formation." *Annual Review of Political Science* 3.1 (2000): 1-24.

Giger, Nathalie, Simon Lanz, and Catherine de Vries. "The motivational basis of constituency work: how intrinsic and extrinsic motivations interact." *Political Science Research and Methods* 8.3 (2020): 493-508.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN PROSPECTUS DUE BY 5PM THURSDAY, MARCH 18**

### **March 23. Do Political Elites Behavior Differently Than Ordinary Citizens?**

LeVeck, Brad L., et al. "The role of self-interest in elite bargaining." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 111.52 (2014): 18536-18541.

Mintz, Alex. "How do leaders make decisions? A poliheuristic perspective." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48.1 (2004): 3-13.

Hogg, Michael A. "A Social Identity Theory of Leadership." *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 5.3 (2001): 184-200.

## **PART II. APPLICATIONS**

### **March 30. Effects of Media Exposure**

Paluck, Betsy & Green, Donald. 2009. Deference, dissent, and dispute resolution: An experimental intervention using mass media to change norms and behavior in Rwanda. *American Political Science Review*, 103, pp. 622- 644.

Conroy-Krutz, Jeffrey, and Devra C. Moehler. "Moderation from bias: A field experiment on partisan media in a new democracy." *The Journal of Politics* 77.2 (2015): 575-587.

Bleck, Jaimie, and Kristin Michelitch. "Capturing the Airwaves, Capturing the Nation? A Field Experiment on State-Run Media Effects in the Wake of a Coup." *The Journal of Politics* 79.3 (2017).

### **April 6. The Contact Hypothesis**

Paluck, Betsy, Seth Green and Donald Green. 2018. "The Contact hypothesis re-evaluated" *Behavioral Public Policy* 1-30.

Scacco, Alexandra, and Shana S. Warren. "Can social contact reduce prejudice and discrimination? Evidence from a field experiment in Nigeria." *American Political Science Review*(2018): 1-24.

Mousa, Salma. "Creating Coexistence: Intergroup Contact and Soccer in Post-ISIS Iraq." Forthcoming. *Science*.

Samii, Cyrus. 2013. "Perils or Promise of Ethnic Integration: Evidence from a Hard Case in Burundi." *American Political Science Review* 107(3): 558-573.

#### **April 13. Political Participation**

Paler, Laura, Leslie Marshall, and Sami Atallah. "The Social Costs of Public Political Participation: Evidence from a Petition Experiment in Lebanon." *The Journal of Politics* 80.4 (2018).

Young, Lauren E. "The psychology of state repression: Fear and dissent decisions in Zimbabwe." *American Political Science Review* 113.1 (2019): 140-155.

Rosenfeld, Bryn. "Reevaluating the Middle-Class Protest Paradigm: A Case-Control Study of Democratic Protest Coalitions in Russia." *American Political Science Review* 111.4 (2017): 637-652.

#### **April 20. Electoral Behavior and Accountability**

*Information, Accountability and Cumulative Learning: Lessons from Metaketa I.* Dunning, Grossman, Humphreys, Hyde and McIntosh. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1 and 11.

Arias, Eric, Horacio Larreguy, John Marshall and Pablo Querubín. "Priors rule: When do malfeasance revelations help and hurt incumbent parties." *Working Paper*.

Nathan, Noah L. 2016. "Local Ethnic Geography, Expectations of Favoritism, and Voting in Urban Ghana." *Comparative Political Studies* 49 (14): 1896-1929

#### **April 27. Legacies of Violence**

Noam Lupu and Leonid Peisakhin. 2017. "The Legacy of Political Violence Across Generations." *American Journal of Political Science*. 61(4): 836-851.

Littman, Rebecca and Elizabeth Levy Paluck. "The Cycle of Violence: Understanding Individual Participation in Collective Violence." *Advances in Political Psychology*, 36, (2015) 79-99.

Nugent, Elizabeth. *After Repression*. Chapters 5 and 7.

#### **May 4. Sharing Research Designs/Discussing Future Research Directions**

**RESEARCH DESIGNS DUE: May 11th**