

The Political Economy of Democracy

Master in Social Sciences (2nd year)
Juan March - Carlos III Institute

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Aim of the course

The course approaches the study of democratic theory combining the political economy and psychological approaches. The main aim of the lectures is try to understand how democratic representation actually works. It evaluates how institutional and individual factors affect the key elements of representation: how we select and control governments. The course dedicates an important portion of the lectures in how democracy actually works and its weaknesses. The course is structured in three parts. The first is centered on selection, i.e. the capacity of voters to choose representatives that reflect their preferences. The second part of the course considers responsiveness, i.e. the degree to which government decisions reflect the preferences and interests of their constituents. The last part revolves around accountability. It addresses questions about the impact of globalization on retrospective accountability, the electoral consequences of economic austerity and the individual cognitive limitations to accountability.

Course requirements

This course has three major requirements:

Participation: (20%): This is a graduate level seminar and participation is an essential component of satisfactory completion of the course.

Response papers: (30%): Each student will be required to write three response papers once we complete each part of the course. To do so, select one of the topics discussed in that part of the course, describe the core aspect of the theoretical debate, and identify shortcomings in both the theoretical discussion and the empirical evidence. (2-3 pages maximum).

Research paper (50%): Each student is expected to write a research paper related to the topics covered in the course. The paper must identify a research question, present motivating empirical evidence, describe a research design, and report empirical analyses.

Week 1 –September 18th - Course introduction

I. SELECTING GOVERNMENTS

Week 2 –September 25th- The informational challenge (I): selecting without information

Converse, Philip E. (1964) “The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics,” in David Apter (ed.), *Ideology and Discontent*, ch. 6

Lupia, Arthur. (1994) “Shortcuts versus Encyclopedias: Information and Voting Behavior in California Insurance Reform Elections.” *American Political Science Review*, 88 (1): 63-76.

Miller, Patrick R. (2011). The emotional citizen: Emotion as a function of political sophistication. *Political Psychology*, 32 (4): 575-600.

In-class exercise: Are really men more politically sophisticated than women?

Week 3 –October 2nd- The informational challenge (III): Campaigns, manifestos and policies as a source of information for selecting representatives.

Fernández-Vázquez, Pablo. (2018). The Credibility of Party Policy Rhetoric: Survey- Experimental Evidence. *Journal of Politics*, 81 (1): 309-314.

Tomz, Michael and Robert Van Houweling. (2009). “The Electoral Implications of Candidate Ambiguity”. *American Political Science Review* 103(1): 83-98.

Research paper: discussion of the topic and tentative hypotheses

Week 4 –October 9th- Thinking about politics: self-interest or emotions?

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

Green, Donald, and Ann Elizabeth Gerken. (1989). “Self-Interest and Public Opinion toward Smoking Restrictions and Cigarette Taxes.” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 53(1): 1-16.

Egan, Patrick and Mullin, Megan (2012) "Turning personal experience into political attitudes: The effect of local weather on Americans' perceptions about global warming" *Journal of Politics*, 74 (3): 796-809.

In-class exercise: Brexit: emotions or self-interest?

II: RESPONSIVENESS

Week 5 –October 16th – Responsiveness (I): Public opinion and policy outcomes

Stimson, James A., Michael B. MacKuen, and Robert S. Erikson. (1995) "Dynamic Representation." *American Political Science Review*, 89: 543-565.

Page, Benjamin I., and Robert Y. Shapiro. "Effects of Public Opinion on Policy." *American Political Science Review* 77 (1983): 175-190

Week 6 –October 23th – Responsiveness (II): leadership and manipulation

Ted Brader, Nicholas A. Valentino, and Elizabeth Suhay.(2008) "What triggers public opposition to immigration? anxiety, group cues, and immigration threat". *American Journal of Political Science*, 52(4): 959–978

Susan Stokes, "What Do Policy Switches Tell Us about Democracy?" in Przeworski, Manin and Stokes (eds), *Democracy, Accountability and Representation*, Cambridge UP 1999, p.98-132.

Jacobs, Lawrence R., and Robert Y. Shapiro. 2000. *Politicians Don't Pander: Political Manipulation and the Loss of Democratic Responsiveness*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. (chapters 1-2)

Research paper: Research in progress session

Week 7 –October 30th - Unequal democracy

Bartels, Larry (2008) "Economic Inequality and Political Representation". In: *Unequal democracy. The Political Economy of the new Gilded Age*. Princeton University Press.

Martin Gilens and Benjamin I. Page. 2014. "Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens". *Perspectives on Politics* 12(3):564-581.

In-class exercise: Why the poor do not expropriate the rich?

Week 8 –November 6th- Descriptive representation: does it matter?

Carnes, Nicholas and Noam Lupu (2014) “Rethinking the Comparative Perspective on Class and Representation: Evidence from Latin America”. *American Journal of Political Science*, 59(1): 1-18

Chauchard, Simon. (2014). “Can Descriptive Representation Change Beliefs about a Stigmatized Group? Evidence from Rural India”. *American Political Science Review*, 108(2): 403-422

In-class exercise: Should women represent women?

III. ACCOUNTABILITY

Week 9 –November 13th - Accountability in complex settings

Powell, G. Bingham and Guy D. Whitten. (1993). “A cross-national analysis of economic voting: taking account of the political context.” *American Journal of Political Science* 37(2): 391-414

Kosmidis, Spyros. (2018). “International Constraints and Electoral Decisions: Does the Room to Maneuver Attenuate Economic Voting?”. *American Journal of Political Science*, 62 (3) 519-534.

In-class exercise: Who benefits from being part of a coalition government?

Week 10 –November 20th -. Cognitive limitations to accountability

Bartels, Larry and Christopher H. Achen (2016). *Democracy for realists. Why elections do not produce responsive government*. Princeton University Press (Chapter 10).

León, Sandra and Lluís Orriols (2019) “Attributing Responsibility in devolved contexts. Experimental evidence from the UK”. *Electoral Studies*, 59: 39-48

Druckman, James (2004) “Political Preference Formation: Competition, Deliberation, and the (Ir)relevance of Framing Effects” *APSR* (Nov 2004): 671-686.

Research paper: Research in progress session

Week 11 –November 27th -. Accountability after the Great Recession

Ramiro, Luis and Raul Gómez (2019) “Beyond the 2008 Great Recession: Economic factors and electoral support for the radical left in Europe”. *Party Politics*, 25 (3): 358-368

Rico, Guillem and Eva Anduiza (2019) “Economic correlates of populist attitudes: An analysis of nine European countries in the aftermath of the Great Recession. *Acta Politica*, 54 (3): 371-397.

In-class exercise:

Week 12 –December 4th – Research paper presentations