

**COMPARATIVE POLITICAL BEHAVIOR**  
**Political Science 2313**  
**University of Pittsburgh • Fall 2025**  
**Thurs. 9:30am-12:30pm**

**Professor:** Jae-Jae Spoon

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**Office Hours:** Thurs. 12:30-2pm by appointment in 4441 Posvar Hall

**Course Description**

In this course, we will explore the literature on comparative political behavior from both the voters' and political parties' perspective. We will spend the first half of the semester examining questions of voting behavior and vote choice. In the second half of the semester, we will then turn to parties and their relationship with voters as well as the choices they make in campaigns and elections and finish up with a discussion of voter and party behavior during turbulent times. We will take an explicitly thematic approach and will not focus on behavior in any one country or region. We will read about voter and party behavior in countries and regions around the world. Although an explicit focus on the US is covered in a different course, to understand the foundations and progression of the literature, we will read some American-focused readings at various points throughout the semester. While the course will not be exhaustive as this is a wide, deep, and dynamic area in comparative politics, by the end of the semester, you will have a firm grounding in many of the important questions in the study of comparative political behavior from both the voters' and the parties' perspectives.

<b>Course Information and Policies</b>
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**Course Materials**

All of the course readings are available on-line. Articles can be located through your favorite search engine. I have put book chapters on Canvas, denoted as [C].

**Assessments**

**Reading and Participation.** Do the readings and come to class prepared to discuss, debate, ask questions. Participation is 20% of your grade, which includes leading discussion once (5% of your participation grade). The role of discussion leader is organize/synthesize/jump start the week's discussion of the readings, key themes, etc. Your grade will be based on the quality of questions and how well you are able to facilitate discussion. For the week that you are the

discussion leader, please post your questions on Canvas (Discussions) by 6pm on Weds. Make sure you review the discussion leader's questions each week before class. We will determine the discussion schedule on the first day of class.

**Response Papers.** 2 (4-5 pages double-spaced) reading response papers—20% of your grade (each paper is worth 10%). You may choose the weeks you wish to work on. We will select weeks the first day of class. One paper will be on a voter week and one on a party week. Papers will be due before class that week on Canvas (Assignments). No exceptions. These papers are meant to be analytical response papers and not simply restatements of the readings. You should work to synthesize the readings by focusing on one issue, debate, concept, etc. in the readings. You do not need to include all of the readings for a given week, but cannot just focus on 1 or 2. You should coordinate the day you sign-up to lead discussion with one of the weeks you plan to write a response paper.

**Research Design and Presentation.** Each student will write a research design between 12-15 double-spaced pages not including abstract, references, tables, and figures. The goal of the research design is to give you an opportunity to focus in depth on a question related to the course and how you would design a project to study this. The paper will take the form of an empirical journal article or conference paper and have a research question, brief literature review, hypotheses, discussion of the research method, variables, cases, and potential sources of data you would use to answer your question. Papers can also include some preliminary analysis. If your research method, data availability, and your skills allow for it, you may conduct the analysis. However, this is not required. **Please note:** This paper should be \*distinct\* from those you've written (or are writing for) other classes. It can, however, build on (or relate to) something you've written/are writing, especially for 2<sup>nd</sup> year Political Science students. The proposal (about a paragraph with a preliminary hypothesis and some data ideas) for the project is due Sept. 25<sup>th</sup>. Paper drafts are to be circulated to me and your assigned reader on Dec. 1<sup>st</sup> at 5pm. The final paper will be due **Dec. 8<sup>th</sup> at 5pm.**

You will also present your research design either on the last day of class (12/4) or on a second (third) day that we agree on to meet during/before exam week using slides (Powerpoint, Beamer, etc.) The presentations will be conference-style, which means 10-12 minutes in length. You will also serve as discussant of another student's paper. Your comments should be about 5 minutes. You will give a written copy of your comments to the both me and the other student. The research design (including the presentation and discussant comments) is 40% of your grade (10% of which will be the presentation and discussant comments).

**Final Exam.** 20% of your grade. The exam is meant to simulate a comprehensive exam. The exam will be 'take-home' and you will have 8 hours to answer 2 questions. The exam will be open book/article and open note. It is scheduled for **Dec. 11<sup>th</sup> from 9am-5pm.** Please plan accordingly and let me know as soon as possible if you have a conflict with a class for which you are the TA or other exams. Non-Political Science students may opt to not take the exam and can work

individually with Prof. Spoon to determine what the substitute work will be. Please make these arrangements within the first couple of weeks of the semester.

### **Evaluation**

All work will be weighted according to the break-down described above. Your final grade will thus be out of 100 possible points:

2 Response Papers (10% each)	20%
Research Design (Paper + Presentation)	40%
Final Exam	20%
Participation	20%

Grades will be calculated on a scale of A-B, etc. broken down as follows: 93-100=A; 90-92=A-; 87-89=B+; 83-86=B; 80-82=B-...

### **Class Policies**

**Expectations.** I expect you to come to class prepared to participate. Please have all readings with you (either on an electronic device or printed out) and make sure you have looked at (and thought about) the discussion questions before class. When you're in class, I expect you to be fully engaged. .

**Attendance.** As this is a graduate seminar, I expect you to attend *all* sessions. Should something come up that will prevent you from attending class, please let me know in advance or as soon as you can. We will make arrangements to meet outside of class to discuss the material.

**Communication.** Please make sure you check your Pitt email regularly (or make sure your Pitt email is forwarded to whatever email program you use). This is how I will communicate with you. Should you need to reach me, please email me directly. I will typically respond within a few hours (as long as it's not the middle of the night).

**Extensions and Alternate Dates.** In general, I will not allow extensions on assignments. However, should you find yourself in a situation where you will not be able to turn an assignment in on-time, please advise me of this as soon as you can, and not the day the assignment is due. We will work together to come up with a solution.

**Late Policy.** A late assignment will be penalized 1/3 of a grade for each day it is late. After 1 week, I will no longer accept it.

**Grade Appeals.** Should you want to appeal a grade you've received, it must be in writing. You will need to explain why you believe you deserve a grade that is different than the one you received.

**Academic Integrity.** Students in this course are expected to comply with the University of Pittsburgh's [Policy on Academic Integrity](#). Cheating, plagiarism, or other acts of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. All work completed and/or submitted in this course must be your own. Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated by the instructor, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity.

**Classroom Recording.** To ensure free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance permission of the instructor. Any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.

**Disability Services.** If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both me and the [Office of Disability Resources and Services \(DRS\)](#), 140 William Pitt Union, (412-648-7890, 412-228-5347 for P3 ASL users, or drsrecp@pitt.edu), as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

**Civil Rights and Title IX.** The University of Pittsburgh does not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation based on disability, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, genetic information, marital status, familial status, sex, age, sexual orientation, veteran status or gender identity or other factors as stated in the University's Title IX policy. The University is committed to taking prompt action to end a hostile environment that interferes with the University's mission. For more information about policies, procedures, and practices, please visit <https://www.wellbeing.pitt.edu/civil-rights-title-ix>.

I ask that everyone in the class strive to help ensure that other members of this class can learn in a supportive and respectful environment. If there are instances of the aforementioned issues, please contact the Title IX Coordinator, by calling 412-648-7860, or e-mailing [titleixcoordinator@pitt.edu](mailto:titleixcoordinator@pitt.edu). Reports can also be [filed online](#). You may also choose to report this to a faculty/staff member; they are required to communicate this to the University's Office of Institutional Engagement and Wellbeing. If you wish to maintain complete confidentiality, you may also contact the University Counseling Center (412-648-7930).

## SYLLABUS

### *Part 1: Voter Behavior*

#### **Aug. 28. Introduction and Preliminaries: What are the big questions in studying (mass and party) behavior?**

Silver, Laura. "Most Across 19 Countries See Strong Partisan Conflicts in Their Society, Especially in South Korea and the US." Pew Research Center. 16 November 2022.

<https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2022/11/16/most-across-19-countries-see-strong-partisan-conflicts-in-their-society-especially-in-south-korea-and-the-u-s/>

#### **Sept. 4. Voter Turnout: Individual and Macro/Institutional Explanations**

Norris, Pippa. 2002. *Democratic Phoenix: Reinventing Political Activism*. New York: CUP. Ch. 3-5. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/democraticphoenix/486CDCC4E2A198E78E1DB45C26705957#>

Aldrich, John H. 1993. "Rational Choice and Turnout." *American Journal of Political Science*. 37.1: 246-278.

Kasara, Kimuli and Pavithra Suryanarayan. 2015. "When Do the Rich Vote Less Than the Poor and Why? Explaining Turnout Inequality across the World." *American Journal of Political Science*. 59.3: 613-627.

Singh, Shane. 2011. "How Compelling is Compulsory Voting? A Multilevel Analysis of Turnout." *Political Behavior* 33.1: 95-111.

Petitpas, Adrien, Julien M. Jaquet, and Pascal Sciarini. 2021. "Does E-Voting Matter for Turnout, and to Whom?" *Electoral Studies* 71: 102245.

#### **Sept. 11. Sociological Models of Vote Choice: Class, Religion, Gender, Ethnicity**

Lipset, Seymour Martin and Stein Rokkan. 1967 [1990]. "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments." In *The West European Party System*, Peter Mair, ed. Pgs. 91-138. [C]

Lijphart, Arend. 1979. "Religious vs. Linguistic vs. Class Voting: The "Crucial Experiment" of Comparing Belgium, Canada, South Africa, and Switzerland." *American Political Science Review*. 73.2: 442-458.

Evans, Geoffrey and James Tilley. 2012. "How Parties Shape Class Politics: Explaining the Decline of the Class Basis of Party Support." *British Journal of Political Science*. 42.1: 137-161.

Inglehart, Ronald and Pippa Norris. 2000. "The Developmental Theory of the Gender Gap: Women's and Men's Voting Behavior in Global Perspective." *International Political Science Review*. 21.4: 441-463.

Birnir, Jóhanna Kristín. 2007. "Divergence in Diversity? The Dissimilar Effects of Cleavages on Electoral Politics in New Democracies." *American Journal of Political Science*. 51.3: 602-619.

Robinson, Amanda Lea. 2024. "Ethnic Visibility." *American Journal of Political Science*. 68.4: 1234-1251.

### **Sept. 18. Partisanship Models of Vote Choice and Dealignment**

Clarke, Harold D., David Sanders, Marianne C. Stewart, and Paul Whiteley. 2009. "The American Voter's British Cousin." *Electoral Studies*. 28: 632-641.

Huber, John D., Georgia Kernell, and Eduardo L. Leoni. 2005. "Institutional Context, Cognitive Resources, and Party Attachments across Democracies." *Political Analysis*. 13: 365-386.

Dalton, Russell and Martin Wattenberg. 2000. *Parties without Partisans*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapters 2 & 3. [C]

Samuels, David and Cesar Zucco, Jr. 2014. "The Power of Partisanship in Brazil: Evidence from Survey Experiments." *American Journal of Political Science*: 58.1: 212-225.

Reiljan, Andreas. 2019. "Fear and Loathing Across Party Lines' (also) in Europe: Affective Polarisation in European Party Systems." *European Journal of Political Research*: 59.2: 376-396.

### **Sept. 25. Proximity and Directional Voting**

Downs, Anthony. 1957. *Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper Collins. Ch. 7-8 . [C]

Rabinowitz, George and Stuart MacDonald. 1989. "A Directional Theory of Issue Voting." *American Political Science Review*. 83.1: 93-121.

Fazekas, Zoltan and Zsombor Zoltan Meder. 2013. "Proximity and Directional Theory Compared: Taking Discriminant Positions Seriously in Multi-Party Systems." *Electoral Studies*. 32.4: 693-707.

Lachat, Romain. 2008. "The Impact of Party Polarization on Ideological Voting." *Electoral Studies*. 27.4: 687-698.

Gallati, Laura and Natalie Giger. 2020. "Proximity and Directional Voting: Testing for the Region of Acceptability." *Electoral Studies*. 64: 102024.

Kedar, Orit. 2005. "When Moderate Voters Prefer Extreme Parties: Policy Balancing in Parliamentary Elections." *American Political Science Review*. 99.2: 185-99.

### **Week of Oct. 2 (Class will not meet on 10/2, date TBD). Economic Voting**

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.

Anderson, Christopher J. 2000. "Economic Voting and Political Context: A Comparative Perspective." *Electoral Studies*. 19.2/3:151-70.

Timothy Hellwig and David Samuels. 2008. "Electoral Accountability and the Variety of Democratic Regimes." *British Journal of Political Science*. 38: 65-90.

Duch, Raymond M. and Randy Stevenson. 2010. "The Global Economy, Competency, and the Economic Vote." *Journal of Politics*. 72: 105-123.

Colantone, Italo and Piero Stanig. 2018. "The Trade Origins of Economic Nationalism: Import Competition and Voting Behavior in Western Europe." *American Journal of Political Science*. 62.4: 936-953.

Tilley, James, Anja Neundorff, and Sara B. Hobolt. 2018. "When the Pound in the People's Pockets Matters: How Changes to Personal Financial Circumstances Affect Party Choice." *Journal of Politics*. 80.2: 555-569.

### **Oct 9. Institutions, Party Behavior, and Vote Choice**

Blais, André, and Arianna Degan. 2019. "The Study of Strategic Voting." *The Oxford Handbook of Public Choice, Volume 1*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Pgs. 292-309. [C]

Meirowitz, Adam and Joshua A. Tucker. 2007. "Run Boris Run: Strategic Voting in Sequential Elections." *Journal of Politics*. 69.1: 88-99.

Spoon, Jae-Jae and Heike Klüver. 2019. "Party Convergence and Vote Switching: Explaining Mainstream Party Decline across Europe." *European Journal of Political Research*. 58.4: 1021-1042.

Nonnemacher, Jeffrey. 2025. "Do Voters Pay Attention Transnational Politics? Party Positions, Transnational Families, and Voters Perceptions." *British Journal of Political Science*. 55: e22.

Arceneaux, Kevin. 2005. "Do Campaigns Help Voters Learn? A Cross-National Analysis." *British Journal of Political Science*. 36.1: 159-173.

Cornejo, Rodrigo Castro. 2021. "How Do Campaigns Matter? Independents, Political Information, and the Enlightening Role of Campaigns in Mexico." *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*. 33.4: 779-798.

## *Part 2: Party Behavior*

### **Oct. 16. Why Parties?**

Aldrich, John. *Why Parties? A Second Look*. 2011. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Ch. 1-2. [C]

Madison, James. *Federalist Paper 10*.

Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. Chap. 2. [C]

Schlesinger, Joseph. 1984. "On the Theory of Party Organization." *Journal of Politics*. 46: 369-400.

Stokes, Susan. 1999. "Political Parties and Democracy." *Annual Review of Political Science* 2: 243-267.

Dalton, Russell J., David M. Farrell, and Ian McAllister. 2012. *Political Parties and Democratic Linkage: How Parties Organize Democracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Ch. 1 (pgs. 3-16). [C]

### **Oct 23. Party-Voter Linkage**

Norris, Pippa. *Democratic Phoenix*. Ch. 6-7. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/democratic-phoenix/486CDCC4E2A198E78E1DB45C26705957#>

Poguntke, Thomas, Susan E. Scarrow, Paul D. Webb. 2016. "Party Rules, Party Resources and the Politics of Parliamentary Democracies: How Parties Organize in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century." *Party Politics*. 22.6: 661-678.

Kitschelt, Herbert. 2000. "Linkages between Citizens and Politicians in Democratic Polities." *Comparative Political Studies*. 33:6-7: 845-879.

Thachil, Tariq. 2014. "Elite Parties, Poor Voters: Theory and Evidence from India." *American Political Science Review*. 108.2: 454-477.

Luna, Juan Pablo. 2010. "Segmented Party-Voter Linkages in Latin America: The Case of the UDI." *Journal of Latin American Studies*. 42.2: 325-356.

Lupu, Noam. 2014. "Brand Dilution and the Breakdown of Political Parties in Latin America." *World Politics*. 66.4: 561-602.

### **Oct. 30. Party Responsiveness and Policy Shifts**

Adams, James, Lawrence Ezrow and Zeynep Somer-Topcu. 2011. "Is Anybody Listening? Evidence that Voters Do Not Respond to European Parties' Policy Programmes." *American Journal of Political Science*. 5: 370-382.

Fernandez-Vazquez, Pablo. 2014. "And Yet It Moves: The Effect of Election Platforms on Party Policy Images." *Comparative Political Studies*. 47.14: 1919-1944.

Ezrow, Lawrence and Timothy Hellwig. 2014. "Responding to Voters or Responding to Markets? Political Parties and Public Opinion in an Era of Globalization." *International Studies Quarterly*. 58.4: 816-827.

Klüver, Heike and Jae-Jae Spoon. 2016. "Who Responds? Voters, Parties and Issue Attention." *British Journal of Political Science*. 46.3: 633-654.

Abou-Chadi, Tarik and Werner Krause. 2020. "The Causal Effect of Radical Right Success on Mainstream Parties' Policy Positions: A Regression Discontinuity Approach." *British Journal of Political Science*. 50.3: 829-847.

Homola, Jonathan. 2019. "Are Parties Equally Responsive to Women and Men?" *British Journal of Political Science*. 49.3: 957-975.

## **Nov. 6: Issue Ownership, Campaigns, and Appeals**

Budge, Ian. 2015. "Issue Emphases, Saliency Theory and Issue Ownership: A Historical and Conceptual Analysis." *West European Politics*. 38.4: 761-777.

Bélanger, Eric and Bonnie M. Meguid. 2008. "Issue Salience, Issue Ownership, and Issue-Based Vote Choice." *Electoral Studies*. 27.3: 477-91.

Hobolt, Sara B. and Catherine E. de Vries. 2015. "Issue Entrepreneurship and Multiparty Competition." *Comparative Political Studies*. 48.9: 1159-1185.

Somer-Topcu, Zeynep. 2015. "Everything to Everyone: The Electoral Consequence of the Broad Appeal Strategy in Europe." *American Journal of Political Science*. 59.4: 841-854.

Rovny, Jan. 2012. "Who Emphasizes and Who Blurs? Party Strategies in Multidimensional Competition." *European Union Politics*. 13.2: 269-292.

Spoon, Jae-Jae, Sara B. Hobolt, Catherine E. de Vries. 2014. "Going Green: Explaining Issue Competition on the Environment." *European Journal of Political Research*. 53.2: 363-380.

## **Nov. 13. Winning Votes and Buying Audiences**

Gans-Morse, Jordan, Sebastian Mazzuca, and Simeon Nichter. 2013. "Varieties of Clientelism: Machine Politics during Elections." *American Journal of Political Science*. 58.2: 415-432.

Hidalgo, F. Daniel and Simeon Nichter. 2016. "Voter Buying: Shaping the Electorate through Clientelism." *American Journal of Political Science*. 60.2: 436-455.

Cantù, Francisco. 2019. "Groceries for Votes: The Electoral Returns of Vote Buying." *Journal of Politics*. 81.3: 790-804.

Wanchekon, Leonard. 2003. "Clientelism and Voting Behavior: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Benin." *World Politics*. 55.3: 399-422.

Gonzalez-Ocantos, Ezequiel, Chad Kiewiet De Jonge, Carlos Meléndez, Javier Osorio, and David W. Nickerson. 2012. "Vote Buying and Social Desirability Bias: Experimental Evidence from Nicaragua." *American Journal of Political Science*. 56.1: 202-217.

Cruz, Cesi. 2019. "Social Networks and the Targeting of Vote Buying." *Comparative Political Studies*. 52.3: 382-411.

## **Nov. 20. Voter and Party Behavior in Turbulent Times**

Bakker, Ryan, Seth Jolly, and Jonathan Polk. 2020. "Multidimensional Incongruence, Political Disaffection, and Support for Anti-Establishment Parties." *Journal of European Public Policy*. 27.2: 292–309.

Reiljan, Andres, Diego Garzia, Frederico Ferreira Da Silva, and Alexander H. Trechsel. 2024. "Patterns of Affective Polarization toward Parties and Leaders across the Democratic World." *American Political Science Review*. 118.2: 654-670.

Santoso, Lie Philip. 2025. "Who Cooperates with Whom? The Role of Day-to-Day Partisan Cooperation in Affective Polarization." *Party Politics*. 31.4: 623-633.

Riera, Pedro and Marco Pastor. 2022. "Cordons Sanitaires or Tainted Coalitions? The Electoral Consequences of Populist Participation in Government." *Party Politics*. 28.5: 889-902.

Balcells, Laia and Sergi Martínez. 2025. "Discounting Extreme Positions: Party Normalization and Support for the Far Right." *Political Science Research and Methods*. 1-9.

Baccini, Leonardo and Lucas Leemann. 2021. "Do Natural Disasters Help the Environment? How Voters Respond and What That Means." *Political Science Research and Methods* 9.3: 468-484.

## **Nov. 27. Thanksgiving—No Class**

## **Dec. 4 (and 2<sup>nd</sup> Day if needed). Presentations**

**Papers Due—Dec. 8<sup>th</sup>**

**Final Exam—Dec. 11<sup>th</sup>**