PUBLIC OPINION, PREFERENCES & VOTER BEHAVIOR

Grado en Comportamiento y Ciencias Sociales BBSS SEP-2023 POPVB-BS.4.M.A

Area Marketing and Communication

Number of sessions: 30

Academic year: 23-24

Degree course: FOURTH

Number of credits: 6.0

Semester: 2º

Category: COMPULSORY

Language: English

Professor: **PEDRO CIFUENTES HUERTAS**

E-mail: pcifuentes@faculty.ie.edu

Pedro Cifuentes is a Spanish journalist and editor, with a Bachelor degree in Political Science and another in Law Studies. After starting his career at the political section of the newspaper El País, he worked for five years as editorial assistant manager of the Encarta digital encyclopedia (Microsoft) in its Spanish and Latin American version. Since 2008 he has combined the practice of journalism with the coordination of online content for several Spanish-speaking countries and university and postgraduate teaching. Contributor for different media outlets on both sides of the Atlantic, he has translated into Spanish, in addition, various books by authors such as Isaiah Berlin, Anthony Giddens or Malcolm Gladwell. He teaches journalism and 'storytelling' at the IE School of Communication in Spanish and English language. He lived in Argentina (where he worked as a correspondent for the newspaper La Nación in Mendoza) and Brazil, where he served as correspondent for El País in Rio de Janeiro in 2014 and 2015. From the end of that year until 2018 he wrote chronicles and investigative reports about the world of sport in El Español and El Confidencial (Madrid). After two years devoted exclusively to writing and teaching, he is now a member of ABC's newsroom.

https://www.linkedin.com/in/pedrocifuenteshuertas

Office Hours

Office hours will be on request. Please contact at:

pcifuentes@faculty.ie.edu

SUBJECT DESCRIPTION

What are opinions and how they are formed? What factors do and do not influence opinion development and change? How do opinions drive citizens' political thinking and behavior? What implications do psychological processes have for the formation of identity issues and political majorities in democratic regimes? These are the questions that we will answer in this course.

Public Opinion, Preferences & Voter Behavior is a course that introduces students to the interdisciplinary field of political psychology. The course seeks to explain the role of human thought, emotion and behavior in politics and voting. In the course, students will develop critical thinking skills and tools to be able to explain phenomena such as the role of media in politics, polarisation, the decline of polling as a predictive tool and long lasting identification with political parties. Additionally, we will analyze course concepts on the basis of recent events, including U.S. elections, the political evolution in Spain, 'Brexit' or democracy's crisis. Finally, we will pay special attention to understanding the psychology of mass political behavior, radically altered by the appearance of social media and digital mass media in the turn of century. By the end of the semester students should be significantly more savvy and alert to the power of manipulation in democratic regimes.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Through active and consistent participation in this course, it is expected that students will be able to:

- Understand what opinions are and how they are formed.
- Understand the basic mechanisms of media manipulation.
- Examine the impact of personality on political behavior.
- Become familiar with the various psychological and political factors impacting voting behavior.
  Examine the impact of political psychology in broader international concerns such as nationalism, political extremism or war.

TEACHING METHODOLOGY

IE University teaching method is defined by its collaborative, active, and applied nature. Students actively participate in the whole process to build their knowledge and sharpen their skills. Professor's main role is to lead and guide students to achieve the learning objectives of the course. This is done by engaging in a diverse range of teaching techniques and different types of learning activities such as the following:

Learning Activity	Weighting	Estimated time a student should dedicate to prepare for and participate in
Lectures	30.0 %	45.0 hours
Discussions	13.33 %	20.0 hours
Exercises in class, Asynchronous sessions, Field Work	20.0 %	30.0 hours
Group work	16.67 %	25.0 hours
Individual studying	20.0 %	30.0 hours
TOTAL	100.0 %	150.0 hours

PROGRAM

SESSION 1 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Course overview and presentations. What is Political Psychology?

Objectives: Understanding the scope of Political Psychology as a social science.

Activities: Introductions + review of course content, participation styles and evaluation, Q+A on course review + lecture.

SESSION 2 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Communication, Public Opinion, and Democracy

Objectives: Understanding the concept of Public Opinion, the role of mass-media communication and its central relation to democracy.

Readings: Introduction (chapter1) of *Political Psychology. Situations, Individuals, and Cases.*

Activities: Lecture.

Book Chapters: Introduction (chapter 1) of Political Psychology. Situations, Individuals, and Cases (See Bibliography)

SESSION 3 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Personality dispositions, attitudes and political preferences

Objectives: Understanding the basic elements of personality and its intersection with context in affecting political attitudes.

Readings: Part 1 (chapters 3 & 4) of *Political Psychology Situations, Individuals, and Cases.*

Activities: Lecture.

Book Chapters: Part 1 (chapters 3 & 4) of Political Psychology Situations, Individuals, and Cases (See Bibliography)

SESSION 4 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Ideology and Identity

Objectives: Understanding the cleavages which shape ideologies and social identities.

Activities: Lecture and debate.

Post-work: Assignment completion and delivery.

SESSION 5 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Emotions in Politics: Fear, Anxiety, Anger and Mass Opinion

Objectives: Understanding the importance of emotions and political manipulation for the formation of mass opinion.

Readings: Chapters 7, 8, 9, 10 & 11 of Political Psychology. Situations, Individuals, and Cases.

Activities: Lecture + critical discussion.

Book Chapters: Chapters 7, 8, 9, 10 & 11 of Political Psychology. Situations, Individuals, and Cases (See Bibliography)

SESSION 6 (ASYNCHRONOUS)

The Psychology of Racism and Political Intolerance

Objectives: Analyzing the individual and group factors behind this social malaise.

Readings: Chapter 15 of Political Psychology. Situations, Individuals, and Cases.

Activities: Oriented group discussion in Blackboard. (You must reply to at least two of your classmates' posts).

Book Chapters: Chapters 12 & 13 of Political Psychology. Situations, Individuals, and Cases (See Bibliography)

SESSION 7 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Political parties

Objectives: Understanding the role of parties in political regimes and acquiring perspective about their role in the formation of public opinion.

Readings: TBD.

Activities: Lecture.

SESSION 8 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Political parties and media

Objectives: Discussing the relationships between the political establishment and the media industry.

Readings: Media articles and broadcasts. Excerpts from different British / USA political parties' programs.

Activities: Debate in class.

SESSION 9 (ASYNCHRONOUS)

Political Communication and Voter Persuasion (I)

Objectives: Understanding the value of political communication in the quest for power.

Pre-work: Viewing of fragments from episodes belonging to TV series 'The West Wing', 'House of Cards' and/or 'The Loudest Voice'.

Activities: Oriented group discussion in Blackboard. (You must reply to at least two of your classmates' posts).

SESSION 10 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Political Communication and Voter Persuasion (II)

Objectives: Comparing political communication strategies.

Readings: TBD.

Activities: Lecture and debate.

SESSION 11 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Polling

Objectives: Understanding the value of polling and its new challenges.

Activities: Lecture + Analysis of recent failed polling examples.

SESSION 12 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Political Leadership

Objectives: Analysis of different political leaders' styles and strategies.

Pre-work: Viewing of political speeches and debates.

Activities: Group discussion.

SESSION 13 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Voting Behavior and Voter Turnout

Objectives: Understanding the evolution of balloting in Western democracies in the last 75 years and the factors which determine its fluctuations.

Activities: Lecture.

Readings: Chapter 12 of *Political Psychology. Situations, Individuals, and Cases.*

SESSION 14 (ASYNCHRONOUS)

Voting Campaigns

Objectives: Analyzing the nature of (and differences between) recent crucial voting campaigns.

Readings: Press articles.

Activities: Oriented group discussion in Blackboard. (You must reply to at least two of your classmates' posts).

SESSION 15 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

The Culture Wars

Objectives: Holding an electoral debate in class.

Pre-work: Preparation of case.

Activities: Debate in class, prepared by different groups (with different individual roles).

SESSION 16 (ASYNCHRONOUS)

Public Opinion and Public Intellectuals

Objectives: Discussing the role of public intellectuals in the world of noise

Readings: TBD. (Plus listening to an episode of Malcolm's Gladwell podcast, 'Revisionist History').

Activities: Oriented group discussion in Blackboard. (You must reply to at least two of your classmates' posts).

SESSION 17 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Cognitive dissonance and Cancel Culture

Objectives: Understanding the concept of cognitive dissonance in relation to ideology and the rise of cancel culture.

Readings: Readings (TBD)

Activities: Lecture + Debate.

SESSION 18 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

The New Media Environment

Objectives: Understanding the political consequences of recent changes in journalism and the lack of business models in digital media.

Readings: Chapters 7, 8, 9, 10 & 11 of Political Psychology. Situations, Individuals, and Cases.

Activities: Lecture.

Post-work: Newspaper-related individual assignment.

SESSION 19 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Social Media and Polarization

Objectives: Analyzing the effects of the so-called 'democratization of content' in present societies.

Pre-work: Research in different social networks.

Activities: Lecture and debate.

Readings: Barberá, Pablo 2020 "Social Media, Echo Chambers, and Political Polarisation", in Social Media and Democracy, eds. Nathaniel Persily and Joshua Tucker. Cambridge University Press, 34-55. (Chapter 3)

SESSION 20 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Social Media and Polarization (II)

Objectives: Debating solutions for the current state of information, fake news and filter bubbles.

Activities: Lecture and debate.

Readings: Young, Donnagal Goldthwaite. 2019. Irony and Outrage: The Polarised Landscape of Rage, Fear, and Laughter in the United States. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press. (Chapters 1-5)

Multimedia Material: Feedback Fruits interactive activity (Feedback Fruits)

SESSION 21 (ASYNCHRONOUS)

Mid-Term Exam

Objectives: Comprehension of course material presented so far.

Pre-work: Study and interviews.

Activity: Group podcast about the possible role of filter bubbles in the formation of echo chambers in contemporary societies. (The topic, which is subject to change, will be discussed two or three weeks before with the professor).

SESSION 22 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

The Political Psychology of Nationalism

Readings: Chapter 14 of Political Psychology. Situations, Individuals, and Cases.

Objectives: Understanding the concept and roots of nationalism.

Activities: Lecture.

SESSION 23 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

The Political Psychology of Nationalism (II)

Objectives: Understanding the theories behind genocide and terrorism.

Readings: Chapters 14 & 16 of *Political Psychology. Situations, Individuals, and Cases.*

Activities: Lecture + Debate.

SESSION 24 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Moderation and Political Extremism

Objectives: Achieving an understanding of the differences between political views according to the moderate/extremist cleavage.

Readings: Chapters 15&16 of Political Psychology. Situations, Individuals, and Cases.

Activities: Lecture + Debate.

SESSION 25 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

International Security

Objectives: Understanding our unstable geopolitical world order and the possibilities and limitations of politics.

Readings: Chapter 17 of Political Psychology. Situations, Individuals, and Cases.

Activities: Lecture. Potential Guest Speaker.

Book Chapters: Chapter 17 of Political Psychology. Situations, Individuals, and Cases (See Bibliography)

SESSION 26 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Conflict Resolution

Objectives: Discussing best and worse examples of conflict resolution in recent history.

Readings: TBD

Activities: Lecture.

SESSION 27 (ASYNCHRONOUS)

Conflict Resolution (II)

Objectives: Discussing best and worse examples of conflict resolution in recent history.

Readings: Viewing of films: 'Do the right thing' (Spike Lee), 'Hotel Rwanda' (Terry George) and 'The Killing Fields' (Roland Joffé)

Activities: Critical text delivered to professor.

SESSION 28 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Course review and synthesis - General discussion

Objectives: Recapitulation of basic concepts and learnings developed in the course so far.

Activities: Q&A session, informal verbal quiz with students.

SESSIONS 29 - 30 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Final Exam (individual)

Objectives: Showing comprehension of the fundamental concepts taught during the course.

Activities: Paperless exam in class.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The evaluation for the course is based on four components: (1) group work, (2) individual continuous evaluation, (3) a final exam and (4) class participation and engagement.

Group Work (25%) - Students will have several in-class and asynchronous assignments in which they will work in groups to apply the tools and methodologies that they are learning. These assignments will complement the theoretical components of the course and help students gain a broader understanding of the skills and techniques that are critical for effective communication. They will contribute to your theoretical knowledge and serve as an opportunity to bring to life what you are learning in the class. You will always receive additional information about the assignments and expectations during the sessions in which I introduce the assignments. If you do not attend this session, it is your responsibility to gather this information from your peers.

Individual Continuous Evaluation (25%) - Students will have several assignments and forum discussions in which they will work individually. These assignments will complement the theoretical components of the course and help students gain a broader understanding of the skills and techniques that are critical for effective communication. They will contribute to your theoretical knowledge and serve as an opportunity to bring to life what you are learning in the class. You will always receive additional information about the assignments and expectations during the sessions in which I introduce the assignments. If you do not attend this session, it is your responsibility to gather this information from your peers.

Final Exam (30%) – Critical review and assessment of press articles published during the months before Brexit's referendum in Great Britain.

Class Participation and Engagement (20%) - Class participation and engagement will be evaluated based on the quality (not quantity) of your participation in class discussion, online forums and other activities that take place during synchronous and asynchronous sessions. The most important component of your participation is the content of what you are saying. A high quality comment reveals depth of insight, rigorous use of case evidence, consistency of argument, and realism. People who speak often but whose comments lack substance will not be rewarded in the same way that people who speak less frequently but with rich content that furthers the class discussion. That said, your attempts at participation should not be such that the instructor has to "go looking for you". You should be attempting to get into the debate on a regular basis. Listening is an equally important component of class participation. Please be mindful of how much you are speaking versus listening and ensure that this class is an environment in which all of us are encouraged to do both. Students who are disruptive or disrespectful will be asked to leave the classroom and will be counted as absent for that day. No exceptions.

Finally, you might want to avoid being classified as one of the following types of students:

- Repeaters: students who, consciously or unconsciously, make comments that are really just repeats/rephrasing of what has already been said (by other students, or yourself). This is a waste of time and does nothing to move the conversation along.

- Ramblers: students who take a lot of time to say simple things or may tell long personal/professional stories, or roam into irrelevant topics, or simply make low quality comments just to participate. They waste valuable time and prevent other students from being able to participate.

- Space Cadets: Students who have been distracted (by Facebook, etc.) or who have stopped paying attention and then, later on, when they realized they have missed a term or concept, ask you about it even though it has already been discussed.

criteria	percentage	Learning Objectives	Comments
Final Exam	30 %		
Individual Work	25 %		
Workgroups	25 %		

Class Participation	20 %		

RE-SIT / RE-TAKE POLICY
As per University Policy:

Each student has 4 chances to pass any given course distributed in two consecutive academic years (regular period and July period).

It is mandatory to attend 100% of the classes. Students who do not comply with at least 80% attendance will lose their 1st and 2nd chance and go directly to the 3rd one (they will need to enroll again in this course the next academic year).

RE-SIT / RE-TAKE POLICY

Each student has four (4) chances to pass any given course distributed over two (2) consecutive academic years. Each academic year consists of two calls: one (1) ordinary call (during the semester when the course is taking place); and one (1) extraordinary call (or "re-sit") in June/July. Students who do not comply with the 80% attendance requirement in each subject during the semester will automatically fail both calls (ordinary and extraordinary) for that Academic Year and have to re-take the course (i.e., re-enroll) during the next Academic Year.

The Extraordinary Call Evaluation criteria will be subject to the following rules:

- Students failing the course in the ordinary call (during the semester) will have to re-sit evaluation for the course in June / July (except those students who do not comply with the attendance rule, and therefore will not have that opportunity, since they will fail both calls and must directly re-enroll in the course during the next Academic Year).

- It is not permitted to change the format nor the date of the extraordinary call exams or deadlines under any circumstance. All extraordinary call evaluation dates will be announced in advance and must be taken into consideration before planning the summer (e.g. internships, trips, holidays, etc.)

- The June/July re-sit will consist of a comprehensive evaluation of the course. Your final grade for the course will depend on the performance in this exam or evaluation only. I.e., continuous evaluation over the semester (e.g. participation, quizzes, projects and/or other grade components over the semester) will not be taken into consideration on the extraordinary call. Students will have to achieve the minimum passing grade of 5 and the maximum grade will be capped at 8.0 (out of 10.0) - i.e., "notable" in the extraordinary call.

- Re-takers: Students who failed the subject on a previous Academic Year and are now re-enrolled as re-takers in a course will need to check the syllabus of the assigned professor, as well as contact the professor individually, regarding the specific evaluation criteria for them as re-takers in the course during that semester (ordinary call of that Academic Year). The maximum grade that may be obtained as a retaker during the ordinary call (i.e., the 3rd call) is 10.0 (out of 10.0).

After exams and other assessments are graded by the professor (on either the ordinary or extraordinary call), students will have a possibility to attend a review session (whether it be a final exam, a final project, or the final overall grade in a given course). Please be available to attend the session in order to clarify any concerns you might have regarding your grade. Your professor will inform you about the time and place of the review session.

- Students failing more than 18 ECTS credits after the June/July re-sits will be asked to leave the Program. Please, make sure to prepare yourself well for the exams in order to pass your failed subjects.

- In case you decide to skip the opportunity to re-sit for an exam or evaluation during the

June/July extraordinary call, you will need to enroll in that course again for the next Academic Year as a re-taker, and pay the corresponding tuition fees. As you know, students have a total of four (4) allowed calls to pass a given subject or course, in order to remain in the program.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Compulsory

- David Patrick Houghton. (2014). *Political Psychology Situations, Individuals, and Cases.* 2nd edition. Routledge. ISBN 9780415833820 (Digital)

BEHAVIOR RULES

Please, check the University's Code of Conduct here. The Program Director may provide further indications.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Please, check the University's Attendance Policy here. The Program Director may provide further indications.

ETHICAL POLICY

Please, check the University's Ethics Code here. The Program Director may provide further indications.