

Political Behavior

Fall 2025 - POS 3204

Professor: Hannah M. Alarian

Email: halarian@ufl.edu

Office Hours: T 1 – 3pm (ET)

Office Location: 004 Anderson

Office hours link: [Calendly](#)

Grader: Sunkyoo Kim

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Class Time: Tu 10:40 AM - 11:30 AM

Th 10:40 AM - 12:35 PM

Class Location: CSE E220

PSY 0130

Syllabus Links

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Weekly Reading Links

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[Week 5:](#) September 16 & 18

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[Week 15:](#) December 2

1 General Information

Course Description

This course introduces the institutional, social, and psychological influences on political behavior. This course crosses disciplinary lines to offer an introduction to the study of political behavior with a global, comparative focus. Although this class will touch on some aspects of American, Latin American, and African political behavior, the key focus is on comparative political behavior within the democracies of Europe.

Course Pre-Requisites/ Co-Requisites

POS 2041 is required. Completion of CPO2001 is strongly recommended.

General Education Designation

None.

Course Materials

There are no required books for purchase, as all books and articles can be found online or at the University Library Course Reserve. Please plan accordingly for weeks where chapters of **Citizen Politics** or **The American Voter** are assigned, as these books are only available in the library (on reserve for our course). All other book chapters and articles are available online via the UF library.

Availability

Materials are available through the following means:

1. UF Library ([link](#))
 - Off-campus access ([link](#))
2. Course Reserves ([link](#))
3. Google Scholar ([link](#))

Materials Fee

None. Students must, however, download the iClicker app. I strongly recommend downloading the phone app to account for days when laptops are not permitted for use. Learn more about setting up iClicker at this [link](#). You can download the iClicker app from the [Google](#) or [Apple](#) app stores.

2 Course Goals

Course Objectives

In this course, we will learn about the causes and consequences of political behavior globally. The course is divided into four modules through which we will explore key themes necessary to the study of political behavior, including: 1) [competence and knowledge](#); 2) [methods of participation](#); 3) [identity and issues](#); and [applications](#).

Student Learning Outcomes

A student who successfully completes this course will be able to:

1. Demonstrate awareness of prominent theories of political behavior globally
2. Understand new research in political behavior
3. Refine skills required to engage in civil, professional discourse in political behavior that is essential to any career

3 Graded Work

Course Evaluation Criteria

Click on any assignment name to learn more about the details of the expectations for each evaluation criteria.

Table 1: *Evaluation*

Assignment	Percent of Final Grade	Due Date
Attendance & Participation	20%	Weekly
Activity Notes	10%	See Details
Reading Quizzes	10%	See Details
Exam 1	10%	October 16
Pitch Deck	25%	—
<i>Research Pitch</i>	3%	September 12
<i>Poster Draft & Reflection</i>	7%	October 24
<i>Final Presentation</i>	15%	November 13-18
Exam 2	15%	December 2
Final Research OpEd	10%	December 11
Total	100%	

Course Evaluation Details

Attendance & Participation - 20%

Course attendance accounts for 5% of your total grade. Attendance includes showing up to class on time and staying in class throughout the entire scheduled course period (i.e., no late arrivals or early exits). Attendance will be assessed using the [iClicker app](#). Scores will be adjusted daily for partial credit for late arrivals and early class exits. All students are permitted to miss two classes without penalty (see [Absence Policy](#)).

Participation accounts for 15% of the evaluation. You should attend class prepared to discuss the assigned reading for that meeting. Participation may include providing personal insight to the material, outside articles, current events, or responding to classmates. iClicker will also be used to track participation.

In addition to class participation, several in-class activities will occur throughout the semester. **No laptops are to be used during in-class activity days.**

- **Debates** will require students to argue for or against a question provided in the syllabus. Roles will be assigned in class, and students should come prepared to take either side of the debate.
- **Think Tank Pitches** will require students to discuss and present a proposal for a given actor based on research from our class (e.g., a specific political party, interest group, policymaker) in response to the question posed in the syllabus. Students should be prepared to present to any audience.

Activity Notes - 10%

In-class activities require students to prepare in advance. Students must submit their prepared notes electronically on Canvas before the start of class (10:39am). Notes should include citations, arguments, and evidence used to argue either side of a class debate or to develop an answer to a research proposal. Notes can be electronically scanned copies of handwritten notes or typed notes. **Note that during the in-class activity, no laptops are permitted, even for the use of reviewing notes.** See also information about the course [Technology Policy](#) regarding the use of generative AI. The lowest activity note grade will be dropped.

Reading Quizzes - 10%

There will be five in-person reading quizzes throughout the semester. All quizzes will take place in class using pen and paper. Quizzes may not be announced in advance. The lowest reading quiz will be dropped.

Exams - 25%

There will be a total of two open-book exams throughout the course, taken on Canvas in class. Students may use printed notes, but cannot consult any online or outside class material during the exam. These exams will cover material from required readings and lectures. These tests offer an opportunity to display your application and analysis of important concepts and themes discussed in class. Tests are staggered in point value to reflect growing confidence with the material and course structure. The first test constitutes 10% and the second 15% of your total grade.

Final Pitch Deck & Presentation - 25%

The final group pitch deck is the main research activity for the course. This ‘pitch deck’ represents the equivalent of a full research paper, similar to an academic conference or think tank presentation. Students will work in randomly assigned groups of 4-5 to develop this pitch deck and presentation throughout the semester.

Students will have the choice of one of two topics: **electoral turnout** or **vote choice**. Once a topic is chosen by week 2, each student will be randomly assigned and will select one country for analysis. You must include both academic articles from your own outside research as well as readings from the course in your analysis.

Group and individual contributions will be assessed separately across three components:

1. Research Pitch (3%)

- The group will submit a two-page pitch that outlines 1) the proposed project and 2) individual group plans for each individual’s contribution. Concretely, this pitch must include: the proposed research question, one hypothesis, 2-3 scholarly sources used to derive the hypotheses (one must be from the syllabus), a proposed data source or method to test the hypothesis or hypotheses, and a plan for individual contribution to the project (individually assessed).

2. Poster Draft & Reflection (7%)

- One draft poster is submitted per group. Drafts will be evaluated as a group and should reflect an initial data analysis. (4%)
- Each student must also submit a brief (300-word) reflection outlining their individual contributions to the draft and plans for revision (3%).

3. Pitch Deck & Presentation (15%)

- The pitch deck must be a maximum of five slides (not including the title slide). Decks will be assessed as a group. Pitch decks must be uploaded to Canvas by one group member at least 24 hours before your scheduled panel day. These decks will be evaluated on (5%):
 - Professionalism and clarity
 - Research question and motivation
 - Hypotheses and theoretical framework
 - Summary of relevant literature
 - Methods and data
 - Key findings and implications
- Each group will present their deck in a six-minute presentation during class. All students must present part of the poster and respond to at least one audience question. Individual grades will be based on (10%):
 - Clarity and engagement during the presentation
 - Ability to respond thoughtfully to questions
 - Quality of questions posed to other presenters

Final Research OpEd - 10%

Each student must individually submit a short Op-Ed (600–800 words) that presents their 1) group’s research and 2) findings from their classmates in an accessible and persuasive format intended for a public audience. Each submission must be written independently and should reflect the individual student’s perspective. Students may not duplicate the work of other group members from their pitch deck. Strong submissions will demonstrate the ability to translate complex research into clear and persuasive public writing.

This Op-Ed should, at minimum:

- Clearly state the research and why it matters to policymakers, voters, or civic organizations
- Summarize the key findings and implications of the research conducted
- Incorporate findings from at least two other class projects
- Make a clear, compelling argument for the implications of these findings in combination with those from your classmates

Students are encouraged to model their Op-Ed after outlets such as The Monkey Cage (Washington Post), The Conversation, FiveThirtyEight, etc.

Absences

All students are awarded **two unexcused absences** without penalty to attendance and participation. You do not need to contact the professor or the grader to use these unexcused absences. **Excused absences** are those that meet university policy. No additional options for excused absences are available beyond those mandated by ([university policy](#)). Planned excused absences must be communicated before the start of class.

Late or Make-up Assignments

No late or make-up assignments will be accepted without prior approval. If an assignment is submitted late without prior approval, it will receive a 0. At least one week in advance notice is required for an assignment or exam extension request. Acceptable reasons for exam or assignment extension are in accordance with the university attendance policy. Assignment deadlines for other courses are not valid excuses for any assignment or exam extension request.

Grading Policy

I do not under any circumstances round or adjust grades. This policy is not an attempt to be harsh but to hold all students in equal standing.

Table 2: *Grading Policy*

Percent	Grade	Grade Points	Percent	Grade	Grade Points
94.0 - 100.0	A	4.00	74.0 - 76.9	C	2.00
90.0 - 93.9	A-	3.67	70.0 - 73.9	C-	1.67
87.0 - 89.9	B+	3.33	67.0 - 69.9	D+	1.33
84.0 - 86.9	B	3.00	64.0 - 66.9	D	1.00
80.0 - 83.9	B-	2.67	60.0 - 63.9	D-	0.67
77.0 - 79.9	C+	2.33	0-59.9	E	0.00

4 Class Policies

Syllabus

All students are expected to review the syllabus carefully. This syllabus is a living document. This means it is subject to change. All potential changes will be communicated to you in our class meetings and on Canvas.

Expected Workload

You should be aware that our course requires a significant amount of outside work, including reading, writing, analysis, and preparing comments. As a Carnegie I, research-intensive university, UF is required by federal law to assign at least 2 hours of work outside of class for every contact hour. Work done in these hours may include reading/viewing assigned material and doing explicitly assigned individual or group work, as well as reviewing notes from class, synthesizing information in advance of exams or papers, and other self-determined study tasks. For our 3-credit class, this means you should expect to spend 6-9 hours per week outside of class. This can, of course, vary by week, but plan accordingly. I strongly encourage you to speak to me during office hours if you encounter any struggles or difficulties.

Lecture Slides

I will post redacted lecture slides on a password-protected link on my website after each class meeting. The password will be provided after add/drop. The slides are meant as a guide and are in no way a substitute for a lecture. I hope that by providing redacted slides, you will not have to spend the entire class furiously note-taking and can pay close attention to the lecture, ask questions, and participate deeply in class discussion. If, however, class participation or attendance wanes, **I retain the right to end sharing lecture slides.**

Technology Policy

Research shows students learn and retain information best by taking notes by hand (see [Scientific American: A Learning Secret - Don't take Notes with a Laptop](#)). To provide the best learning environment, I prefer that you keep your laptops in your bag or at home during our class. At times, we will use cell phones to conduct attendance or real-time polling in class. I expect your phone to be put away outside of these times. Laptops will not be allowed during in-class debates or proposal exercises.

The use of ChatGPT or other generative AI assistance for any assignment is strictly prohibited. Use of these AI tools for the completion of any assignment will be treated as a violation of academic integrity. These tools often provide overly confident, biased information, and generate fictional references. **The Professor reserves the right to modify the assignment modality for the entire course if the use of ChatGPT, etc., is suspected (e.g., oral exams).**

Referencing the Professor

Often, students have questions about proper naming or titling etiquette for communicating with their professors. To remove this confusion and reduce email anxiety, you may use any of the following acceptable references in all communication with me throughout our course. Any other title or name is unacceptable.

- Professor Alarian
- Dr. Alarian
- Prof. A.
- Dr. A.

Contacting the Professor

Students should use Canvas to contact me. Although you may email me at my UF email account, the university strongly encourages that we communicate via Canvas to avoid the potential of violations of student confidentiality protected by [FERPA](#). I strongly encourage students to visit my office hours virtually or in person, scheduled [here](#), to discuss any course questions, comments, or concerns. Please keep in mind that I am a Title IX mandatory reporter.

Email/Messaging Hours

You may email or message me via Canvas at any time that is convenient to you. I will respond within one business day between the hours of 8am and 5pm. If you do not receive a reply from me after 48 hours, please resend your message. Although I may sometimes reply outside of these designated hours, responses cannot be guaranteed after 5pm on weekdays, on weekends, or on holidays.

Letters of Recommendation

If you anticipate requesting that I write a letter on your behalf, please note that I expect that you have attended multiple office hours and actively participated in class discussions throughout this course. Attending class itself, in other words, is not sufficient for a letter of recommendation. You can read more about my letter of recommendation policy on my [website](#).

5 University Policies and Resources

This course complies with all UF academic policies. For information on those policies and for resources for students, please see this [link](#).

6 Course Schedule

Module 1: Competence and Knowledge

What is political behavior? What makes a behavior political? How do we understand what goes into these behaviors? How relevant is knowledge and competency to these behaviors?

Week 1

August 21

- Syllabus
- Green, Amelia. (2013). How to Read Political Science: A Guide in Four Steps. [Link](#).
- Taagepera, Rein. (1993). Running for president of Estonia: A political scientist in politics. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 26(2), 302–304

Week 2: Defining Political Behavior

August 26

- Hirschman, Albert O. (1970). *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States*. Harvard University Press, Chapters 1, 7, and 8.

August 28

- Dalton, Russell J. (2018). *Citizen Politics: Public Opinion and Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies*. SAGE Publications, Chapter 3.

Quiz 1. Note: Future quizzes will not be announced in advance.

Final Pitch Deck Topic Selected: August 28, 11:59pm.

Week 3: Political Knowledge and Information

September 2

- Dalton, Russell J. (2018). *Citizen Politics: Public Opinion and Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies*. SAGE Publications, Chapter 2.
- Converse, Philip E. (2006). The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics (1964). *Critical Review*, 18(1-3), 1–74

September 4

- Dalton, Russell J. (2018). *Citizen Politics: Public Opinion and Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies*. SAGE Publications, Chapter 5.
- Taber, Charles S. and Lodge, Milton. (2006). Motivated Skepticism in the Evaluation of Political Beliefs. *American Journal of Political Science*, 50(3), 755–769
- Nyhan, Brendan and Reifler, Jason. (2010). When Corrections Fail: The Persistence of Political Misperceptions. *Political Behavior*, 32(2), 303–330

Week 4: Education

September 9

- Croke, Kevin and Grossman, Guy and Larreguy, Horacio A and Marshall, John. (2016). Deliberate Disengagement: How Education Can Decrease Political Participation in Electoral Authoritarian Regimes. *American Political Science Review*, 110(3), 579–600
- Arceneaux, Kevin and Kolodny, Robin. (2009). Educating the Least Informed: Group Endorsements in a Grassroots Campaign. *American Journal of Political Science*, 53(4), 755–770
- Geddes, Barbara and Zaller, John. (1989). Sources of Popular Support for Authoritarian Regimes. *American Journal of Political Science*, 33(2), 319–347

September 11 - NO CLASS *American Political Science Association Annual Meeting*

Research Pitch Due: September 12, 11:59pm.

Week 5: Sophistication

September 16

- Highton, Benjamin. (2009). Revisiting the Relationship between Educational Attainment and Political Sophistication. *The Journal of Politics*, 71(4), 1564–1576
- Geddes, Barbara and Zaller, John. (1989). Sources of Popular Support for Authoritarian Regimes. *American Journal of Political Science*, 33(2), 319–347
- Gordon, Stacy B., Segura, Gary M. (1997). Cross-National Variation in the Political Sophistication of Individuals: Capability or Choice? *The Journal of Politics*, 59(1), 126–147

September 18

Debate: *Citizens should have to pass a test about civics to vote.*

Module 2: Methods of Political Participation

How do people participate? Is it rational to participate in politics? How do we encourage people to participate?

Week 6: Political Systems

September 23

- Dalton, Russell J. (2018). *Citizen Politics: Public Opinion and Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies*. SAGE Publications, Chapter 7
- Huber, John D. (2012). Measuring Ethnic Voting: Do Proportional Electoral Laws Politicize Ethnicity? *American Journal of Political Science*, 56(4), 986–1001

September 25- NO CLASS *German Studies Association Annual Meeting*

Week 7: Rational Choice

September 30

- Downs, Anthony. (1957). An Economic Theory of Political Action in a Democracy. *Journal of Political Economy*, 65(2), 135–150
- Aldrich, John H. (1993). Rational Choice and Turnout. *American Journal of Political Science*, 246–278
- Blais, André. (2000). *To Vote or Not to Vote: The Merits and Limits of Rational Choice Theory*. University of Pittsburgh Press, Introduction.

October 2

Debate: *It is irrational to vote.*

Week 8: Vote Choice

October 7

- Slothuus, Rune and Bisgaard, Martin. (2021). How Political Parties shape Public Opinion in the Real World. *American Journal of Political Science*, 65(4), 896–911
- Alarian, Hannah M. (2020). Cause or Consequence?: The Alternative for Germany and Attitudes toward Migration Policy. *German Politics and Society*, 38(2), 59–89
- Allen, Trevor J. (2017). Exit to the Right? Comparing Far Right Voters and Abstainers in Western Europe. *Electoral Studies*, 50, 103–115

October 9

Think Tank Pitch: *How can political parties mobilize citizens to turnout to vote?*

Week 9: Contentious Politics

October 14

- Rudolph, Lukas and Däubler, Thomas. (2016). Holding Individual Representatives Accountable: The Role of Electoral Systems. *The Journal of Politics*, 78(3), 746–762
- McClendon, Gwyneth H. (2014). Social Esteem and Participation in Contentious Politics: A Field Experiment at an LGBT Pride Rally. *American Journal of Political Science*, 58(2), 279–290
- Hutter, Swen and Vliegenthart, Rens. (2018). Who responds to protest? protest politics and party responsiveness in western europe. *Party Politics*, 24(4), 358–369

October 16

Exam 1

Module 3: Identity and Issues

Is behavior shaped by who we are? How, if at all, do issues matter?

Week 10: Partisanship

October 21

- Dalton, Russell J. (2018). *Citizen Politics: Public Opinion and Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies*. SAGE Publications, Chapter 9
- Campbell, Angus and Converse, Philip E. and Miller, Warren E. and Stokes, Donald E. (1960). *The American Voter*. University of Chicago Press, Chapter 2

October 23

- Hobolt, Sara B and Leeper, Thomas J and Tilley, James. (2021). Divided by the Vote: Affective Polarization in the Wake of the Brexit Referendum. *British Journal of Political Science*, 51(4), 1476–1493
- Goodwin, Matthew J and Heath, Oliver. (2016). The 2016 Referendum, Brexit and the Left Behind: An Aggregate-level Analysis of the Result. *The Political Quarterly*, 87(3), 323–332
- Huber, John D and Kernell, Georgia and Leoni, Eduardo L. (2005). Institutional Context, Cognitive Resources, and Party Attachments Across Democracies. *Political Analysis*, 13(4), 365–386

Poster Draft & Reflection Due October 24, 11:59pm

Week 11: Political Identity

October 28

- Michelitch, Kristin and Utych, Stephen. (2018). Electoral Cycle Fluctuations in Partisanship: Global Evidence From Eighty-Six Countries. *The Journal of Politics*, 80(2), 412–427
- Bankert, Alexa and Huddy, Leonie and Rosema, Martin. (2017). Measuring Partisanship as a Social Identity in Multi-Party Systems. *Political Behavior*, 39, 103–132
- West, Emily A and Iyengar, Shanto. (2022). Partisanship as a Social Identity: Implications for Polarization. *Political Behavior*, 44(2), 807–838

October 30

Debate: *Strong partisanship weakens democracies.*

Week 12: Issues

November 4: Retrospective Voting

- Anderson, Christopher J. (2000). Economic Voting and Political Context: A Comparative Perspective. *Electoral Studies*, 19(2–3), 151–170
- Lewis-Beck, Michael S and Nadeau, Richard. (2000). French Electoral Institutions and the Economic Vote. *Electoral Studies*, 19(2-3), 171–182
- Nezi, Roula. (2012). Economic Voting under the Economic Crisis: Evidence from Greece. *Electoral studies*, 31(3), 498–505

November 6: Issues

- Dalton, Russell J. (2018). *Citizen Politics: Public Opinion and Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies*. SAGE Publications, Chapter 6
- Ansolabehere, Stephen and Rodden, Jonathan and Snyder, James M. (2008). The Strength of Issues: Using Multiple Measures to Gauge Preference Stability, Ideological Constraint, and Issue Voting. *American Political Science Review*, 102(2), 215–232
- Alarian, Hannah M. (2022). The Enduring Effect of Immigration Attitudes on Vote Choice: Evidence from the 2021 German Federal Election. *German Politics and Society*, 40(4), 37–68

Week 13: Pitching Political Behavior

November 11

NO CLASS: University Holiday

November 13

Think Tank Pitch: *How can a new political party identify and target likely supporters?*

Module 4: Applications

How do we address the big questions of political behavior?

Week 14

November 18

Presentations: *Think Tank Groups 1-3*

November 20

Presentations: *Think Tank Groups 4-9*

November 17 - 21 Thanksgiving Holiday

Week 15

December 2

Exam 2

Final Research Op-Ed Due: December 11, 12:00PM