

COMMUNICATION AND PSYCHOLOGY IN EUROPEAN ELECTION CAMPAIGNS*

Winter 2018/19

Wednesdays 14:00 – 15:30, IBW-Gebäude, 211 Seminarraum S103
6 ECTS

Instructor:

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1 Course Description

This course is designed for undergraduate students in social sciences. It introduces basic concepts and topics of the interplay between political communication and political psychology in electoral campaigns, with examples focused on (but not restricted to) European countries. At the end, students will know the fundamental models of communication, how framing effects affect individuals' attitudes and behavior – and when they fail to do so. We also cover recent topics on the influence of social media on political communication and voter persuasion. Students will learn the theoretical models, and be equipped with the methodological tools needed to study the effects of political communication in electoral campaigns.

*This is a preliminary syllabus subject to minor changes. Last updated September 12, 2018

2 Course Requirements

Grading will be composed of the following requirements:

- 1 **Final Paper (75%)**: Students must write a 3000-words (with a $\pm 5\%$ tolerance) research paper, to be handed in by **14 February , 2018, at 23:55 CET, through Ilias**. A list of references and appendices do not count towards the page limit. The topic must be related to contents covered in class. It should have an empirical component: for example, the analysis of how a specific theory we discussed can be applied to a country or government. Students are strongly encouraged to discuss the topic of their papers before the end of classes with the instructor.
- 2 **Final paper presentation (25%)**: In the last two weeks, students are required to present the design of their final paper. The presentation should include the topic, research question, theory, and (if applicable) data. This means: start thinking about your final paper early. The presentation should be 10-12 minutes long. It is modeled after a conference panel. Students should provide constructive criticism and feedback to their colleagues. By the end of the fourth week, students should register themselves for a presentation slot. The link for registration will be sent by the instructor. Delivering a presentation is **mandatory** for passing the course.

Points are converted to final grades as follows:

Points	Grade
100–96	1,0
95–91	1,3
90–86	1,7
85–81	2,0
80–76	2,3
75–71	2,7
70–66	3,0
65–61	3,3
60–56	3,7
55–51	4,0
50–0	5,0

Unexcused late submissions of final papers will be subject to grade deductions following the scale below:

Delay	Deduction
0–24 hours after deadline	20% penalty
24–48 hours after deadline	35% penalty
48–72 hours after deadline	50% penalty
> 72 hours after deadline	Not graded

Bonus points. It is possible to earn up to 15 bonus points in this course, meaning the maximum final grade can be 115. Bonus points can be earned in two ways: Between Weeks 2 and 13, students are asked to submit, by email, up to three questions about the weekly readings to the instructor, up to four hours before our meeting. I will select up to three questions in total (from those submitted by all students) to discuss in class. If your question is selected in a week, you earn one bonus point that week. The second way, which will give up to 7 points, will be a group work project to last the whole duration of the course, in which students will work together to create the communication strategy for a German party ahead of the 2019 European Elections. More details will be given in class. *Students can only earn bonus points if they fulfill the mandatory course requirements – meaning, deliver a final paper and do a presentation.* Bonus points can increase your grade, but never decrease it.

3 Schedule

Part I – Political Psychology

Week 1 (Oct 10): Introduction to the Course and to Political Psychology

Mandatory reading:

Feldman, S. (2003). “Values, Ideology, and the Structure of Political Attitudes”. In: *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*, edited by D. O. Sears, L. Huddy, and R. Jervis. Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 477–510.

Week 2 (Oct 17): Attitudinal Change and Stability

Mandatory Reading:

Druckman, J. N. (2004) “Political Preference Formation: Competition, Deliberation, and the (Ir)relevance of Framing Effects,” *American Political Science Review* 98(4), pp. 671–686.

Week 3 (Oct 24): Partisanship as Social Identity

Mandatory readings:

Huddy, L., L. Mason, and L. Aarøe. (2015). “Expressive Partisanship: Campaign Involvement, Political Emotion, and Partisan Identity” *American Political Science Review* 109(1): 1–17.

Bankert, A., Huddy, L., & Rosema, M. (2017). “Measuring Partisanship as a Social Identity in Multi-Party Systems” *Political Behavior* 39(1): 103–132.

Week 4 (Oct 31): Personality Traits and Political Attitudes – The Big-5 Model

Mandatory reading:

Gallego, A. and S. Pardos-Prado. (2014). “The Big Five Personality Traits and Attitudes towards Immigrants.” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 40(1): 79–99.

Part II – Political Communication

Week 5 (Nov 7): Models of Political Communication

Mandatory reading:

Hallin, D., & Mancini, P. (2004). *Comparing media systems. Three models of media and politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 21-45, 66-86.

Week 6 (Nov 14): Effects of Communication: Priming, Framing, and Agenda-setting

Mandatory readings:

Scheufele, D. A. (2007). “Agenda setting, priming and framing revisited: Another look at cognitive effects of political communication.” *Mass Communication and Society*, 3 (2&3), 297-316.

Dennis Chong and James N. Druckman. (2007). “Framing Theory”. *Annual Review of Political Science* 10(1): 103–126

Week 7 (Nov 21): The Demand Side: Selective Exposure and other Biases

Mandatory reading:

Slothuus, R. and C. H. de Vreese. (2010). “Political Parties, Motivated Reasoning, and Issue Framing Effects” *The Journal of Politics* 72:3, 630–645

Week 8 (Nov 28): Tools for Studying Communication Effects: Experiments

Mandatory reading:

Druckman, J. N., Green, D. P., Kuklinski, J. H. and Lupia, A. (2006) “The Growth and Development of Experimental Research in Political Science,” *American Political Science Review* 100(4): 627–635.

Part III – Party Strategies and Means

Week 9 (Dec 05): Why Do Parties Communicate with Voters? Vote-, Office-, and Policy-seeking Models

Mandatory reading:

Strøm, K., and Müller, W. C. (1999). “Political Parties and Hard Choices”. In: *Policy, office, or votes?: how political parties in Western Europe make hard decisions*, edited by Müller, W. C. and K. Strøm. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, pp. 1–35.

Week 10 (Dec 12): What do Parties Communicate? Position, Salience, and Issue Ownership

Mandatory readings:

Laver, M. (2001). “Position and salience in the policies of political actors”. In: *Estimating the Policy Positions of Political Actors*, edited by M. Laver. London: Routledge, pp. 66–75.

Stubager, R., and Seeberg, H. B. (2016). “What can a party say? How parties’ communication can influence voters’ issue ownership perceptions.” *Electoral Studies* 44(December): 162–171.

Week 11 (Dec 19): What do Parties Communicate? Leadership and the Attacking the Opposition

Mandatory readings:

Bittner, A. (2011). “Leader Evaluations and Partisan Stereotypes – A Comparative Analysis”. In: *Personality Politics: The Role of Leader Evaluations in Democratic Elections*, edited by M. C. Lobo and J. Curtice. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 17–37.

Week 12 (Jan 09): How Parties Communicate – Traditional Means

Mandatory readings:

Hill, S. J., J. Lo, L. Vavreck & J. Zaller (2013) How Quickly We Forget: The Duration of Persuasion Effects From Mass Communication, *Political Communication*, 30:4, 521–547.

Llaudet, E. (2018). The mobilizing and demobilizing effects of political TV ads: A midterm election study. *Electoral Studies* 54(August): 226–236.

Week 13 (Jan 16): Social Media: Changes in Style and Opportunities

Mandatory readings:

Nulty, P., Y. Theocharis, S. A. Popa, O. Parnet & K. Benoit. (2016). “Social media and political communication in the 2014 elections to the European Parliament.” *Electoral Studies* 44(December): 429–444.

Barberá, P., J. T. Jost, J. Nagler, J. A. Tucker, & R. Bonneau. (2015). “Tweeting From Left to Right: Is Online Political Communication More Than an Echo Chamber?” *Psychological Science* 26(10): 1531–1542.

Week 14 (Jan 23): Presentations and Final Overview: Microtargeting, and Do Campaigns Work?

Mandatory reading:

Endres, K. (2016). “The Accuracy of Microtargeted Policy Positions.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 49(4): 771–774.

Kalla, J., and Broockman, D. E. (2018). “The Minimal Persuasive Effects of Campaign Contact in General Elections: Evidence from 49 Field Experiments” *American Political Science Review* 112(1): 148–166.

Week 15 (Jan 30): Student Presentations