

POLI 490
Analyzing European public opinion

Spring 2020

Instructor

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Meeting times

Lecture: Tuesday/Thursday 5:00-6:15
Lecture hall: Hamilton 452
Office hours: Tuesday/Thursday 3:00-4:00

Course website: https://sakai.unc.edu/portal/site/poli490_sp20

Course description

The course introduces students to the theory and practice of studying European public opinion. The course is split into three parts. In the first part, we will discuss core concepts and important problems in the study of public opinion. We will encounter different research designs for analyzing public opinion but focus on survey research for the rest of the semester. In the second part of the course, we will familiarize ourselves with tools and common datasets for the empirical study of European public opinion. In the third part of the course, we will examine several recent contributions on different aspects of European public opinion. Over the course of the semester, students will develop a small research project on a European public opinion question of their choice. The course concludes with students giving a short presentation on their findings.

After attending the course, students...

- ... are familiar with the basic concepts and research designs in the study of public opinion.
- ... are aware of important debates in the field of European public opinion.
- ... are able to interpret and critically evaluate survey research.
- ... are able to design and conduct a survey research project.
- ... are able to present their research findings in a written report.

Course requirements

- Midterm exam (February 27): 20%
- Research proposal (Due February 25): 20%
- Research paper (Due May 5): 20%
- Presentation: 15%
- Questions on the basic readings: 15%
- Active participation: 10%

Midterm exam (20%)

The midterm exam (February 27) will review the material from the sections “Basic concepts and research designs” and “Data analysis”. Please prepare the course readings and the content of the course slides for the exam. Further information about the exam is provided in class.

You are expected to be present for the exam. The only exception is a documented emergency. If you miss a scheduled exam without cause, you may be allowed to take a make-up test at my discretion, with a penalty. If you think you will have to miss an exam, please contact me as soon as possible.

Questions on the basic readings (15%)

For the section “Research findings” (nine sessions, May 3 – April 7), you are expected to draft three short questions (not two, not four!) on the basic readings each week to show that you have read and understood the texts. Please upload your questions to the “Assignments” tab in Sakai. Questions might explore theoretical, conceptual, or methodological aspects of the texts. Please do not draft “final exam”-type questions such as “What is the definition of XYZ?” or “What are the three components of XYZ?”. You do not have to provide an answer to your questions.

Research proposal (20%)

The first task for your small research project is to identify a research question on European public opinion and to find suitable data to answer that question. To help you clarify your thoughts on your research project, you are expected to draft a short research proposal (no more than three pages) that presents your research question and how you intend to study the question. I will not grade the quality or viability of the research proposal (although the project needs to be viable eventually), but the clarity and the structure of your proposal.

You are expected to format the research proposals as follows: Font Arial, 12 pt., double-spaced, 1-inch margins, no color. Please be sure that your name is on the cover page and that the pages are numbered. The essays are turned in via email to nyhuis@unc.edu. The documents should be in PDF format and the document names should conform to the following format: lastname firstname opinion sp20 proposal.pdf (all lower case).

Research paper (20%)

After conducting your research project, you are expected to draft a short project report about your results (approximately seven pages). We will discuss the structure and content of the report in class. In general, the report should contain the following elements:

- Introduction, including...
 - o ... your research question
 - o ... relevance of your research question
 - o ... short overview of prior research
 - o ... overview of the structure of the project report
- Data and methodology, including...

- ... your research design
- ... case selection
- ... strategy for your data analysis
- Data analysis
- Conclusion, including...
 - ... short summary of your research interest and findings
 - ... implications of your findings
 - ... potential shortcomings of your study

The grade will not be based on the quality of the project results, but on whether your report contains all relevant features, how well you elaborate the components of your research design, findings, and potential shortcomings.

Please use the same formatting guidelines as before. The document should have the following document name: lastname_firstname_opinion_sp20_report.pdf (all lower case).

Presentation (15%)

In the last sessions, you are expected to give a presentation about your research findings to the class. Be sure to include all the relevant features from the project report. Please be sure to send me the slides for your presentation via email no later than 48 hours before class.

Active participation (10%)

You are expected to actively participate in class discussion. Mere physical presence will not result in a perfect participation grade.

Grading scale

		A	94-100	A-	90-93
B+	87-89	B	84-86	B-	80-83
C+	77-79	C	74-76	C-	70-73
D+	67-69	D	60-66		
F	<60				

Course materials

All readings are published on Sakai. I will upload any additional course materials and slides that we will be using throughout the course.

Important dates

- Midterm exam: February 27
- Due date research proposal: February 25
- Due date research paper: May 5

Expectations

Weekly readings and electronic devices

Please turn your phones to silent mode and do not use them during class. I allow the use of laptops for class purposes, but I expect to you to bring a printed copy of the readings. Engaging with a text is much simpler when you have access to a printed copy.

Office hours

Everyone is welcome to come see me during office hours or write me an email.

Honor code

The Honor Code is in effect in this class. I am committed to treating Honor Code violations seriously and urge all students to become familiar with its terms set out at

<http://instrument.unc.edu>.

If you have questions, it is your responsibility to ask about the Code's application. All exams, written work, and other projects must be submitted with a statement that you have complied with the requirements of the Honor Code in all aspects of the submitted work.

Course schedule

Date	Topic	Readings
Jan. 9	Introduction	–
<u>Basic concepts and research designs</u>		
Jan. 14	What is public opinion?	(Glynn et al., 2016, chap. 1)
Jan. 16	How do we measure public opinion?	(Glynn et al., 2016, chap. 3)
Jan. 21	Survey research	(Weisberg, 2008)
Jan. 23	Sampling and non-response	(O’Muircheartaigh, 2008) (Berinsky, 2008)
Jan. 28	Designing questionnaires	(Rasinski, 2008)
<u>Data analysis</u>		
Jan. 30	Analyzing survey data I	–
Feb. 4	Analyzing survey data II	–
Feb. 6	Analyzing survey data III	–
Feb. 11	Analyzing survey data IV	–
Feb. 13	Analyzing survey data V	–
Feb. 18	Data sets I	–
Feb. 20	Data sets II	–
Feb. 25	Review	–
Feb. 27	Midterm exam	–
<u>Research findings</u>		
Mar. 3	National identity I	(Schild, 2001)
Mar. 5	National identity II	(Carey, 2002)
Mar. 17	European identity	(Scheuer and Schmitt, 2009)
Mar. 19	Attitudes towards European integration	(Gabel, 1998) (McLaren, 2002)
Mar. 24	Right-wing populism	(Oesch, 2008)

Mar. 26	Policy attitudes: Welfare state I	(van Oorschot, 2006)
Mar. 31	Policy attitudes: Welfare state II	(Blekesaune, 2013)
Apr. 2	Policy attitudes: Foreign and defense policy	(Peters, 2014)
Apr. 7	Policy attitudes: Immigration	(Sides and Citrin, 2007)

Research presentations

Apr. 9	Presentations I	–
Apr. 14	Presentations II	–
Apr. 16	Presentations III	–
Apr. 21	Presentations IV	–
Apr. 23	Review and conclusions	–

Literature

- Berinsky, A.J., 2008. Survey non-response, in: Donsbach, W., Traugott, M.W. (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Public Opinion Research*. Sage, London, pp. 309–21.
- Blekesaune, M., 2013. Economic strain and public support for redistribution: A comparative analysis of 28 European countries. *J. Soc. Policy* 42, 57–72.
- Carey, S., 2002. Undivided loyalties: Is national identity an obstacle to European integration? *Eur. Union Polit.* 3, 387–413.
- Gabel, M., 1998. Public support for European integration: An empirical test of five theories. *J. Polit.* 60, 333–54.
- Glynn, C.J., Herbst, S., Lindeman, M., O’Keefe, G.J., Shapiro, R.Y., 2016. *Public opinion*. Routledge, New York.
- McLaren, L.M., 2002. Public support for the European Union: Cost/benefit analysis or perceived cultural threat? *J. Polit.* 64, 551–66.
- Oesch, D., 2008. Explaining worker’s support for right-wing populist parties in Western Europe: Evidence from Austria, Belgium, France, Norway, and Switzerland. *Int. Polit. Sci. Rev.* 29, 349–73.
- O’Muircheartaigh, C., 2008. Sampling, in: Donsbach, W., Traugott, M.W. (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Public Opinion Research*. Sage, London, pp. 294–308.
- Peters, D., 2014. European security policy for the people? Public opinion and the EU’s common foreign, security and defence policy. *Eur. Secur.* 23, 388–408.
- Rasinski, K.A., 2008. Designing reliable and valid questionnaires, in: Donsbach, W., Traugott, M.W. (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Public Opinion Research*. Sage, London, pp. 361–73.
- Scheuer, A., Schmitt, H., 2009. Dynamics in European political identity. *J. Eur. Integr.* 31, 551–68.
- Schild, J., 2001. National v. European identities? French and Germans in the European multi-level system. *J. Common Mark. Stud.* 39, 331–51.
- Sides, J., Citrin, J., 2007. European opinion about immigration: The role of identities, interests and information. *Br. J. Polit. Sci.* 37, 477–504.
- van Oorschot, W., 2006. Making the difference in social Europe: Deservingness perceptions among citizens of European welfare states. *J. Eur. Soc. Policy* 16, 23–42.
- Weisberg, H.F., 2008. The methodological strengths and weaknesses of survey research, in: Donsbach, W., Traugott, M.W. (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Public Opinion Research*. Sage, London, pp. 223–31.