

**Federal State Autonomous Educational Institution of Higher  
Education**

**National Research University "Higher School of Economics"**

**Department of Political Science**

Course syllabus (2018–19)

# Modern Political Science

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Approved at the meeting of the  
Department of Political Science

Head of the Department  
Prof. Andrei Y. Melville

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Adopted by the Academic Council  
of Faculty of Politics  
Academic secretary

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# Modern Political Science

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## Course Description

Many of the questions that political scientists study are timeless. Who votes for whom, how and why? How do politicians compete for political support and maintain themselves in power? How does the organization of the state shape incentives for investment, corruption, and for policies that promote (or retard) inequality? The answers to these questions are central both to our understanding of real world outcomes - economic growth, poverty, inequality - and to promoting policies to shape them. Despite their obvious importance, however, few of these questions have clear cut answers. As with any science, new findings are constantly released that challenge our understanding of older findings or expand it in new an important ways.

**Prerequisites:** None

**Course Type:** Compulsory

**Learning Objectives and Outcomes:** This course has two major goals. First, it seeks to provide a broad overview of the current state of the literature in several key areas of contemporary Political Science. By the end of the course, students should both understand the state of the art in the discipline, and how this recent work fits into the grand arc of research in Political Science. Second, the course also seeks to provide students with a better understanding of modern methodological tools and research design, as well as how to apply them to developing and critiquing a research agenda. The course places particular emphasis on the potential pitfalls of causal analysis, how to spot them in the works of others, and how to attempt to overcome them in one's own work. By the end of the course, students

should have the necessary tools to constructively critique the work of others, as well as an understanding of how to use these tools to design cutting edge research of their own.

## Grading System and Evaluation

Grades will consist of the following components:

Intermediate Assessments (1) .....	20%
Final Exam (1) .....	20%
Referee Reports (2) .....	30% (all together)
Research Proposal .....	20%
Participation .....	10%

Note: Students may be offered extra credit for participating in experimental research conducted by an NRU - HSE faculty member (in addition to any other benefits offered by the researchers themselves) or by attending scientific conferences and seminars held at HSE related to Political Science. Details will be provided in class once schedules are fixed for the 2018 – 2019 school year.

**Assessments and Exams:** During the third module, students will have an in-class intermediate assessment (see schedule below). There will also be a final exam to be taken in-class at the time designated by the university for the final exam. These assessments will *only* cover material for the module that proceeds it and *are not* cumulative. The main goal of these exams is to ensure that students have understood the readings and the lectures and that they are able to critically evaluate the material both within the context of each week’s topic and the discipline more widely. Details about the format of the exams and preparation advice will be given prior to each. I reserve the right to alter the format of these exams from module to module.

**Referee Reports:** In order to hone their analytical skills, students will be asked to write several short (2 – 3 pages) briefs critiquing any of the reading assignments for the course. Each brief should primarily tackle one of the course readings and should contain three elements:

1. A very brief (**one paragraph**) summary of the main research question, the main argument, and the types of evidence that the author presents to defend their position.
2. An evaluation of the argument and the evidence. This can be approached through a number of different questions. For each of these questions, it is important to explain why you answer the way you do and to carefully lay out the logic of your objections and suggestions.
  - Does the logic behind the argument make sense?
  - Does the evidence the author presents match the argument (i.e. do they prove what they say they will)? Are you aware of different sources of evidence that

could contradict or support the argument? How could the author have made the argument more convincing?

- How does the piece compare to others assigned for the topic? Are there major disagreements, or does there appear to be consensus?

3. An overall opinion on the piece. Do you find the argument convincing? Why or why not?

Note that the evaluation of the argument should be based on substance, *not* style, and be based on a careful reading of the article. Students are strongly encouraged to make sure that their critiques are not addressed in the article or its supplementary material *or* to explain why the author's attempt to address the critique was insufficient. We will spend a portion of the first week of the course discussing the briefs and talking through some basic strategies for dissecting and critiquing both the arguments and the evidence presented in academic and policy articles, book chapters, and policy briefs. Each module, students will be asked to submit one report. Reports for a given week's readings are due before the seminar for that week.

**Research Proposal:** One research paper proposal, due on the last day of class. In the first section of the course, we will discuss research strategies and design. The proposal should be between 5-10 pages and identify a theoretical or empirical puzzle worth exploring, present a central argument, lay out hypotheses to be tested, identify appropriate methods for testing the argument, and discuss the potential strengths and weaknesses of the research design. Ideally, this proposal will form the basis of students' masters theses.

To assist in the writing process, students will submit a preliminary assignment: a one-page research proposal describing two or three potential research questions, dependent variable, possible sources of data, etc. for the paper, due at the beginning of the third module of the course.

**Participation:** Classes will be conducted in a hybrid lecture/discussion format. It is important to complete all readings for each week before class begins. Lectures will primarily focus on situating the assigned reading in pre-existing work and the discussion will mostly be about the theoretical arguments being tested. Seminar sections will go into greater detail on the readings and will be designed to dissect the empirical components of the readings in order to critically evaluate the research design, its strengths, and its weaknesses. Students should come to class with questions on unclear terms, concepts, or events. This is important, since as a rule, if something is confusing for one member of the class, many other students will also find it confusing. Asking questions is therefore critical for a successful class.

The participation component of the final grade is based on our in-class discussions in seminar. Each students' grade will reflect the quality of their answers and contribution to discussions. Students are granted one unexcused absence in each module. Students who expect to be absent during class for a legitimate reason should contact me prior to class to make arrangements and will be accommodated according to university policies. Only absences due to

medical or family issues (with appropriate documentation) will be accommodated after the fact. Please feel free to ask about your participation grade at any point in the semester or approach me or my co-instructor with any questions related to it.

## Special Needs

Students with special needs of any type should speak with the instructor as soon as possible to arrange for necessary accommodations. These will be handled on a case-by-case basis according to university policy.

## Academic Integrity

All work for this course is expected to be students own and cheating on exams or the use of other's work (words or ideas) without acknowledgment (plagiarism) will not be tolerated. Cases of either will be handled according to university policy and, where appropriate, referred to the relevant university authorities. When in doubt about whether conduct will violate university policy, please do not hesitate to ask me first.

Please be aware that it is often hard to tell the difference between sloppy punctuation or citation practices and intentional plagiarism. It is the responsibility of every student to be aware of proper citation procedures. For students with little experience writing course papers, or those that want to brush up on academic integrity, I would recommend the following resources:

- Roig, M. Avoiding plagiarism, self- plagiarism, and other questionable writing practices: A guide to ethical writing. Available at: [http://ori.hhs.gov/education/products/roig\\_st\\_johns/index.html](http://ori.hhs.gov/education/products/roig_st_johns/index.html).
- Stolley, K., A. Brizee, and J. Paiz. Avoiding Plagiarism. Available at: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/>

Again, I am more than happy to answer any and all questions on topics related to academic integrity. Instructions on preferred citation format, etc. will be provided during our discussion of research paper design.

## Course Lecture Plan and Reading List

All course materials will be available at <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/5m26s93tcfhs2ot/AAB-J2HCTIGnMe9xIKIep05ba?dl=0>, including the most up-to-date version of the course syllabus. Please note that exact lecture topics and readings are subject to change. I will provide at least two weeks notice of any such changes. The final lecture of the course will be assigned prior to Module 4 based on the research interests of the class. Please feel free to make specific suggestions if your topic of interest is not covered elsewhere on the syllabus.

## Course Introduction and Research Design (07/11)

### 1. Lecture: A Brief History of Political Science and the Modern Problems of Causal Inference

- (optional) Almond, G. (1998). Political Science: The History of the Discipline. in R. Goodin and H. Klingemann, eds., *A New Handbook of Political Science*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

### 2. Lecture: Traditional Quantitative and Experimental Research (14/11)

- Seminar: Causal Inference, Identification, and Paper writing
  - Kitschelt, H. (2002). Accounting for Postcommunist Regime Diversity: What Counts as a Good Cause?. In Ekiert, G. and Hanson, S., eds. *Capitalism and Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
  - Huber, J. (2013). Is Theory Getting Lost in the Identification Revolution? Available at: <http://themonkeycage.org/2013/06/is-theory-getting-lost-in-the-i>
  - Gerber, A., D. Green, and E. Kaplan (2004). The Illusion of Learning from Observational Research, in I. Shapiro, R. Smith, and T. Massoud, eds., *Problems and Methods in the Study of Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
  - Recommended Readings
    - \* Frye, T. (2012). In From the Cold: Institutions and Causal Inference in Postcommunist Studies. *Annual Review of Political Science* 15: 245 – 263.
    - \* Banerjee, A. V. and E. Duflo. (2008). The Experimental Approach to Development Economics. *Annual Review of Economics* 1: 151 - 178.

### 3. Lecture: Traditional Qualitative and Mixed Methods Research (21/11)

- Seminar: Traditional Quantitative and Experimental Research
  - Coppock, A. and D. Green (2015). Assessing the Correspondence between Experimental Results Obtained in the Lab and Field: A Review of Recent Social Science Research. *Political Science Research and Methods* 3 (1): 113 – 131.
  - Aschwaden, C. (2015). Science Isn't Broken: It's Just a hell of a lot harder than we give it credit for. Available at: <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/science-isnt-broken/#part4>
  - Recommended readings
    - \* Schrodtt, P. (2014). Seven Deadly Sins of Contemporary Quantitative Political Analysis. *Journal of Peace Research* 51 (2): 287 – 300.
    - \* Gerber, A.S. and D. P. Green (2011). Field Experiments and Natural Experiments. in Goodin, R.E. (ed.). *The Oxford Handbook of Political Science*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- \* Duflo, E., R. Glennerster, and M. Kremer (2006). Using Randomization in Development Economics Research: A Toolkit. *NBER Technical Working Paper* 333. Available at: <https://www.nber.org/papers/t0333>.

## Political Behavior

### 4. Lecture: Determinants of Vote Choice (28/11)

- Traditional Qualitative and Mixed Methods Research
  - Geddes, B. (1990). How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics, in James A. Stimson, ed. *Political Analysis* Vol. 2. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
  - Seawright, J. and J. Gerring (2008). Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options. *Political Research Quarterly* 61 (2): 294 – 308.
  - Niedzwiecki, S. and D. Nunnally (2017). Mixed-Methods Research in the Study of Welfare States. *PS: Political Science and Politics* 50 (4): 1028 – 1031.
  - Recommended Readings
    - \* Weller, N. and J. Barnes (2014). Pathway Analysis and the Search for Causal Mechanisms. *Sociological Methods & Research* 45 (3): 424 – 457.
    - \* Lieberman, E. S. (2010). Bridging the qualitative-quantitative divide: Best practices in the development of historically oriented replication databases. *Annual Review of Political Science* 13: 37 – 59.
    - \* Kreuzer, M. (2010). Historical Knowledge and Quantitative Analysis: The Case of the Origins of Proportional Representation. *American Political Science Review* 104 (2): 369 – 392.

### 5. Lecture: Identity Politics (12/12)

- Seminar: Determinants of Vote Choice
  - Treisman, D. (2011). Presidential Popularity in a Hybrid Regime: Russia under Yeltsin and Putin. *American Journal of Political Science* 55 (3): 590 – 609.
  - Baker, A., B. Ames, and L. Renno. (2006). Social Context and Campaign Volatility in New Democracies: Networks and Neighborhoods in Brazil's 2002 Elections. *American Journal of Political Science* 50 (2): 382 – 399.
  - Recommended Readings
    - \* Nadeau, R., Lewis-Beck, M. S., and Blanger, . (2013). Economics and elections revisited. *Comparative Political Studies* 46 (5): 551 – 573.
    - \* Cox, G. W. (2010). Swing Voters, Core Voters, and Distributive Politics. in Shapiro, I., S.C. Stokes, and A. S. Kirshner (eds.). *Political Representation* Cambridge: Cambridge UP.

- \* Weitz-Shapiro, R. (2012). What wins votes: Why some politicians opt out of clientelism. *American Journal of Political Science* 56 (3): 568 – 583.

## Political Institutions and Representation

### 6. Lecture: Democratic Parties, their Influence, and Representation (19/12)

- Seminar: Identity Politics
  - Darden, K. and A. Grzymala-Busse (2006). The Great Divide: Literacy, nationalism and the communist collapse. *World Politics* 59 (1): 83 – 115.
  - Posner, D. N. 2004. The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi. *American Political Science Review* 98 (4): 529 – 545.
  - Recommended Readings
    - \* Madrid, R. (2008). The Rise of Ethno-Populism in Latin America. *World Politics* 60 (3): 475 – 508.
    - \* Chandra, K. and S. Wilkinson (2008). Measuring the effect of ethnicity. *Comparative Political Studies* 41 (4-5): 515 – 563.

## Winter Break

### 7. Lecture: Electoral Rules and their Origins (09/01?)

- First Referee report is due by today
- Seminar: Democratic Parties, their Influence, and Representation
  - Brader, T., J. Tucker, and D. Duell (2013). Which Parties Can Lead Opinion: Experimental Evidence on Partisan Cue Taking in Multiparty Democracies. *Comparative Political Studies* 46 (11): 1485 – 1517.
  - Noam L. (2013) Party Brands and Partisanship: Theory with Evidence from a Survey Experiment in Argentina. *American Journal of Political Science* 57 (1): 49 – 64.
    - \* Calvo, E. and M. V. Murillo (2013). When Parties Meet Voters: Assessing Political Linkages Through Partisan Networks and Distributive Expectations in Argentina and Chile. *Comparative Political Studies* 46 (7): 851 – 882.
    - \* Harbers, I. (2010). Decentralization and the development of nationalized party systems in new democracies: Evidence from Latin America. *Comparative Political Studies* 43 (5), 606-627.
    - \* Margalit, Y. (2013). Explaining Social Policy Preferences: Evidence from the Great Recession. *American Political Science Review* 107 (1): 80 – 103.



8. First Module Assessment (16/01 – No Seminar)
9. Lecture: Lecture: Autocratic Survival (23/01)
- Seminar: Electoral Rules and their Origins
    - Kreuzer, M. (2010). Historical Knowledge and Quantitative Analysis: The Case of the Origins of Proportional Representation. *American Political Science Review* 104 (2): 369 – 392.
    - Leemann, L. and I. Mares (2014). The Adoption of Proportional Representation. *Journal of Politics* 76 (2): 461 – 478.
      - \* Cusack, Thomas, Torben Iversen, and David Soskice (2007). Economic Interests and the Origins of Electoral Systems. *The American Political Science Review* 101 (3): 373 – 391.
      - \* Cusack, T., T. Iversen, and D. Soskice (2010). Coevolution of Capitalism and Political Representation: The Choice of Electoral Systems. *American Political Science Review* 104 (2): 393 – 403.
10. Lecture: Autocratic Parties, Dominant Parties, and their Purposes (30/01)
- Seminar: Autocratic Survival
    - Reuter, O. and G. Robertson (2015). Legislatures, Cooptation, and Social Protest in Contemporary Authoritarian Regimes. *Journal of Politics* 77 (1): 235 – 248.
    - Reuter, O. and J. Gandhi (2010). Economic Performance and Elite Defection from Hegemonic Parties. *British Journal of Political Science* 41: 83 – 110.
    - Recommended Reading
      - \* Frye, T., D. Szakonyi, and O.J. Reuter (2014). Political Machines at Work: Voter Mobilization and Electoral Subversion in the Workplace. *World Politics* 66 (2): 195 – 228.
      - \* Malesky, E. and P. Schuler (2010). Nodding or Needling: Analyzing Delegate Responsiveness in an Authoritarian Parliament. *American Political Science Review* 104 (3): 482 – 502.
      - \* Mares, I and B. Zhu (2015). The Production of Electoral Intimidation: Economic and Political Incentives. *Comparative Politics* 48 (1): 23 – 41.
11. Lecture: Political Protests (06/02)
- Seminar: Autocratic Parties, Dominant Parties, and their Purposes
    - Reuter, O. (2017). *The Origins of Dominant Parties: Building Authoritarian Institutions in Post-Soviet Russia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Ch.s 2 and 4.
    - Recommended Reading
      - \* Gehlbach, S. and P. Keefer (2011). Investment Without Democracy: Ruling-Party Institutionalization and Credible Commitment in Autocracies. *Journal of Comparative Economics* 39 (2): 123 – 139.

- \* Svobik, M. (2012). *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP. Ch. 6.

## Comparative Political Economy

### 12. Lecture: Institutions, Investment, and Property Rights (13/02)

- Seminar Political Protests
  - Robertson, G. (2011). The politics of protest in hybrid regimes: Managing dissent in post-communist Russia. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Ch.s 1 and 3.
  - Recommended Reading
    - \* Meirowitz, A. and J. Tucker (2013). People Power or a One-Shot Deal? A Dynamic Model of Protest. *American Journal of Political Science* 57(2): 478-490.
    - \* Tucker, J. A. (2007) Enough! Electoral Fraud, Collective Action Problems, and Colored Revolutions. *Perspectives on Politics* 5 (3): 535 – 551.

### 13. Lecture: Corruption and Governance (20/02)

- Seminar Readings: Institutions, Investment, and Development
  - Sokoloff, K. L., and S. Engerman. (2005). Colonialism, Inequality, and Long-Run Paths of Development. NBER Working Paper 11057.
  - Gehlbach, S. and P. Keefer. 2012. Private Investment and the Institutionalization of Collective Action in Autocracies: Ruling Parties and Legislatures. *Journal of Politics* 74 (2): 621 – 635.
    - \* Besley, Tim and Persson, Torsten. The Origins of State Capacity: Property Rights, Taxation and Politics, *American Economic Review*, 99(4), 1218-44, 2009.
    - \* Bates, R. H., Coatsworth, J. H., and J. Williamson. (2007). Lost Decades: Postindependence Performance in Latin America and Africa. *The Journal of Economic History* 67 (04): 917 – 943.

### 14. Lecture: Business-state relations (27/02)

- Seminar Readings: Corruption and Governance
  - McMillan, J. (2004). How To Subvert Democracy: Montesinos in Peru. *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 18 (4): 69 – 92.
  - Ferraz, C. and F. Finan. (2008). Exposing Corrupt Politicians: The Effects of Brazil's Publicly Released Audits on Electoral Outcomes. *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 123 (2): 703 – 745.

- \* Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo, Clement Imbert, Santhosh Mathew and Rohini Pande (2016). E-governance, Accountability, and Leakage in Public Programs: Experimental Evidence from a Financial Management Reform in India. *Working Paper*.
- \* Treisman, D. (2007). What Have We Learned About the Causes of Corruption From Ten Years of Cross-National Empirical Research? *Annual Review of Political Science* 10: 211 – 244.

15. Lecture: Varieties of Capitalism and the Welfare State (06/03)

- Seminar Readings: Business-state relations
  - Gans-Morse, J. (2016). Demand for Law and the Security of Property Rights: The Case of Post-Soviet Russia. *American Political Science Review* Forthcoming.
  - Boas, T., F. Hidalgo, and N. Richardson (2014). The Spoils of Victory: Campaign Donations and Government Contracts in Brazil. *Journal of Politics* 76 (2).
    - \* Szakonyi, D. (2018). Businesspeople in Elected Office: Identifying Private Benefits from Firm-Level Returns. *American Political Science Review* 112 (2): 322 – 338.
    - \* Frye, T. M. and I. Iwasaki (2011). Government Directors and Business-State Relations in Russia. *European Journal of Political Economy* 27: 642 – 658.

16. Lecture: Civil War and Violence (13/03)

- Seminar Readings: Varieties of Capitalism and the Welfare State
  - Busemeyer, M. (2015). Skills and Inequality. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Ch. 1 and 3.
  - Recommended Readings
    - \* Estevez-Abe, M., D. Soskice, and T. Iversen. (2001). Social Protection and the formation of skills: a reinterpretation of the welfare state. in Hall, P. and D. Soskice (eds.), *Varieties of Capitalism: The Institutional Foundations of Comparative Advantage*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.
    - \* Pierson, P. (2001). Coping with Permanent Austerity: Welfare State Restructuring in Advanced Democracies, in Pierson, P. (ed.), *The New Politics of the Welfare State*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

17. Lecture: Elective Topic (20/03)

- Second Review and extra-credit is due by today
- Seminar Readings: Civil War and Violence

- Kalyvas, S. and Kocher, M. A. (2007). How ‘Free’ is Free Riding in Civil Wars? Violence, Insurgency, and the Collective Action Problem. *World Politics* 59: 177 – 216.
- McDoom, O. S. (2012). The Psychology of Threat in Intergroup Conflict: Emotions, Rationality, and Opportunity in the Rwandan Genocide. *International Security* 37 (2): 119 – 155.
- Recommended Reading
  - \* Cederman, L. and L. Girardin (2007). Beyond Fractionalization: Mapping Ethnicity onto Nationalist Insurgencies. *American Political Science Review* 101 (1): 173 – 185.
  - \* Humphreys, M. and J.M. Weinstein (2008). Who Fights? The Determinants of Participation in Civil War. *American Journal of Political Science* 52 (2): 436 – 455.