COMPARATIVE POLITICAL BEHAVIOR (2nd Semester, 2011)

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Course description

The aims of the course are: a) to introduce students to the main research paradigms in comparative political behaviour and b) to foster capacity to do original empirical research on the various themes of the discipline (political participation, voting, public opinion analysis, etc.) in a comparative perspective.

Course requirements:

Active participation by students is expected and reading requirements are to be fulfilled before hand (the reading list is kept short but all requirements have to be met). A 7000 word research empirical paper, on a topic selected in accordance with the instructor, is due by the end of semester. Evaluation is based on class participation – including oral presentation of relevant literature (10%) – empirical assignments (30%) and paper (60%).

Two data set – ICPSR # 2790. World Value Surveys and European Values Surveys, 1981-1984; 1990-1993, and 1995-1997; ICPSR # 3384, Eurobarometer Trend File - will be distributed to be used for assignments. Assignments are to be delivered through e-mail (student’s name-assX.doc). No late turnout allowed.

Students should be familiar with basic statistical techniques (i.e., regression analysis). A reading pack is available for photo-copying. It can also be downloaded from Google Documents.

Class meets on Wednesday (h. 11-13.00), Seminar Room, 2nd Floor

Basic readings

Very useful reviews and thoughtful assessments of the literature are presented below. These have to be read before coming to the first seminar:


Course Outline

Seminar 1 (02/03/2011)
What is political behaviour and comparative analysis I?


**Seminar 2 (23/03/2010)**
What is political behaviour and comparative analysis, II? From the civic culture to social capital.


**Seminar 3 (30/03/2011)**
What is the electorate like? Beliefs, interest, information, electoral participation and turnout.


Assignment 1 due at Seminar 4: Comparative analysis of mass political behaviour (interest in politics, information, turnout) based on data-set (1000 word paper).

Seminar 4 (6/04/2011)
Models of voting 1: Sociological approaches (the European tradition and the US-Columbia School approach)


Seminar 5 (13/04/2011)
Models of voting 2: The Michigan revolution: the social-psychological model (party identification)


Ian Budge, Ivor Crewe, Dennis Farlie, Introduction. Party Identification and Beyond, in Ian Budge, Ivor Crewe, Dennis Farlie (Eds.), Party Identification and Beyond, John Wiley and Sons, 1976, pp.3-20


Assignment 2 due at seminar 7: Comparative analysis of party identification and left-right self-placement based on data set (1000 word paper).

**Seminar 6  (4/5/2011)**

**Decline of cleavage voting and of party identification.**


**Seminar 7  (11/5/2011)**

**Models of voting 3: The Individual Rationality Framework. Towards the rational-reasoning voter (issues, leader, campaign)**


Seminar 8  (18/05/2011)  
**Issue voting, economic voting, party competence, the impact of leaders**


Assignment 3 due at seminar 10: Comparative analysis of issues, political culture and support for democracy, based on data set (1000 word paper).

Seminar 9  (25/05/2011)
Forecasting elections


Seminar 10  (1/06/2010)
Political support and citizens’ disaffection


Further readings


Hans-Dieter Klingemann and Dieter Fuchs (Eds.), *Citizens and the State* (Beliefs in Government Volume One), Oxford University Press, 1995


**June 20th:** Term paper to be delivered.