New Perspectives on Political Behavior

This course is designed to introduce and investigate scholarship on the forefront of political behavior research. The goal of the course is for researchers to gain insight into new methods and areas of inquiry in political behavior research and to be able to use these insights for research design.

The course is structured around two themes, both broadly defined:

1. Political behavior as a function of individual psychology.
2. Political behavior as a function of the environment.

The course is divided into seven modules (see below) exploring aspects of these themes. Each module will be explored using a combination of lecture, discussion, and the building of research designs.

Readings by Topic

Readings have been selected with a heavy emphasis on very recent research – much of which has not yet been published. This comes with advantages, for example it allows us to engage with work that is truly on the cutting edge and also to learn by evaluating work that may not be a finished product. However, it also obviously comes with the disadvantage of the impetus falling on us to evaluate the quality of the research.

Below is a list of readings to be covered in the course. Readings should be completed before the module is covered. Working papers will be provided.

1. Political Cognition

2. Understanding biased political decision-making
3. Behavior as a function of biology


4. Behavior as a function of identity


5. What is context and can the effects of context be identified?


(b) Ryan D. Enos. What tearing down public housing projects teaches us

6. Behavior as a function of context


7. The effects of Scientifically Elusive Phenomenon (studying phenomenon we can neither ask about, nor manipulate)