

Social Norms Laboratory
POLISCI-9597-001
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Course Schedule: Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
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Course Description



Social norms are among the most influential forces on attitudes and behaviors. Yet, the study of how social norms influence people's perceptions about politics and their political behavior is just beginning. The main objective of this course is to provide concrete experience with quantitative research while developing new avenues of research on the topic of social norms and politics. Using data from the 2019 and 2021 Canadian Election Study or the COVID-19 Survey, students will have the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the complete scientific process. First, based on the provided readings, students will be required to develop original hypotheses that are grounded in the literature on social norms. Second, students will be asked to develop the appropriate methodology to test these hypotheses and to carry it out. Finally, the students will be called to write a research report, in the form of a scientific article, summarizing the theoretical context, hypotheses, methodology and the results. At the end of the course, everyone will take part in an in-class symposium where they will present their research project orally.

Course objectives

1. To acquire concrete research experience;
2. To become familiar with the various theories on social influence;
3. To develop theoretically sound research hypotheses that can be empirically tested;
4. To conduct statistical analyses that test the developed hypotheses.

Teaching methods

My teaching approach consists of giving students as much autonomy as possible, through a student-centered approach to teaching. In this approach, students are at the center of their learning, i.e. the teacher uses interactive methods, where the learner is active and reflective. This approach is a challenge for both you and me as it requires a combination of flexibility and intellectual rigor. In my personal experience, students are intimidated at first, but this reaction quickly turns into enthusiasm and motivation to learn the course material and to put the knowledge they have acquired to good use. Your ideas will be taken into consideration, both by the other students and by me. We (the other students and me) will constantly encourage you to think as precisely as possible. This approach will especially help you to develop better critical thinking skills in your research.

The proposed pedagogical activities are: a) lectures followed by group discussions; b) class presentations; c) individual and team work.

Assignments

Feedback on most assignments will be given in class. The purpose of these assignments is to encourage you to reflect on your final paper throughout the semester. All assignments will have to be submitted on OWL.

A) Abstract (5%). Summarize, in 250 words maximum, your research project. For this assignment, you will need to provide a provisional title, describe the issue you wish to address, the theoretical framework you will be using, its limits and your hypothesis. Please also briefly describe (in one or two sentences) the dataset that you will use to test your hypothesis. Due at the start of class on May 8th.

B) Description of your research question and hypotheses (15%). You will be required to turn in a paper (2 pages maximum) which describes in greater detail than the abstract, the issue you wish to address, the literature you will be using to understand the issue, the theoretical limits in the literature, what you wish to bring to the literature and your hypotheses. Due before midnight on May 12th.

C) Submission of the first draft of your final essay (loss of 15% of the final grade if not submitted). On May 19th, each student will be required to bring a copy of a draft of their final paper as well as an additional copy for the teacher. Your copy will be given to a student in the class. This student will be asked to write a critique of your draft, which will help you with your final paper (and vice versa). Part of the class on May 24th will be devoted to exchanging "constructive criticism" with your colleagues. This exchange should help you to look critically at your own work as well as to identify the places in your draft that will need clarifications. Due at the start of class on May 19th.

D) Critique of another student's first draft of final essay (15%). Students will be required to individually write a "constructive critique" of another student's work (maximum 2 pages). The purpose of this exercise is to stimulate thinking. Critiques will be evaluated for clarity, depth and relevance. Please note that you may not participate in this assignment if you did not turn in your draft. Due before midnight on May 24th.

E) Oral Presentations (15%). Each student will be required to present their work orally during the last class. You will also be required to hand in your power point presentation on the same day. This activity will take place on **May 31st** and the power point files are due on the same day.

F) Final paper (40% --- 20% individual grade and 20% group grade). The final paper consists of maximum 30 pages of text (double-spaced, including references, title page and abstract, and excluding tables and figures). For this assignment, you are required to write a research paper in the form of a scientific article. The purpose of this assignment is to develop a study evaluating the relationship between social norms and politics. The criteria for evaluating the final assignment, as well as further explanation of the assignment will be discussed in class. Before midnight on June 14th.

H) Participation (10%). Students will be expected to participate actively in class discussions, both in general discussions and with other students. Attendance to each class will also be evaluated.

Course Schedule

Dates	Class Topics
Class 1 May 1 st	Introduction and presentation of the research theme
Class 2 May 3 rd	Discussion on social norms
Class 3 May 5 th	Discussion on social norms continued Discussion on psychological reactance
Class 4 May 8 th	Discussion on longitudinal data and trajectory analyses Abstract due
Class 5 May 10 th	Discussion on current debates in the social sciences
Class 6 May 12 th	Introduction to R <i>Please have R installed on your computer before class</i> Research question and hypotheses due
Class 7 May 15 th	Cleaning your data in R
Class 8 May 17 th	Visualising your data in R
Class 9 May 19 th	Information on data analyses and interpretation First draft due
Class 10 May 22 nd	Information on data analyses and interpretation
Class 11 May 24 th	Information on data analyses and interpretation Critique due
Class 12 May 31 st	Oral presentations (research symposium)
June 14 th	Final paper due

Readings :

Social norms:

- Bicchieri, C., Muldoon, R., & Sontuoso, A. (2014). Social norms. *The Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy*. Available at: <https://seop.illc.uva.nl/entries/social-norms/>
- Blais, A., Galais, C., & Coulombe, M. (2019). The effect of social pressure from family and friends on turnout. *Journal of social and personal relationships*, 36(9), 2824-2841.
- French Bourgeois, L. & de la Sablonnière, R. (2022). When societal values and individual behavior do not align: The role of planning in injunctive norm interventions to increase voting behavior. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*.
- French Bourgeois, L., Harell, A., & Stephenson, L. (2020). To follow or not to follow: Social norms and civic duty during a pandemic. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 1-11. doi:10.1017/S0008423920000554
- Groenendyk, Eric, Erik Kimbrough and Mark Pickup. 2022. "How Norms Shape the Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics." *American Journal of Political Science* (Published Online):1-16. DOI: 10.1111/ajps.12717
- Panagopoulos, C. (2010). Affect, social pressure and prosocial motivation: Field experimental evidence of the mobilizing effects of pride, shame and publicizing voting behavior. *Political Behavior*, 32, 369-386.
- Pickup, Mark, Erik Kimbrough and Eline de Rooij. 2021. "Expressive Politics as (Costly) Norm Following." *Political Behavior* (Published online). DOI:10.1007/s11109-020-09667-6
- Pickup, Mark, Erik O. Kimbrough and Eline A. de Rooij. 2019. "Identity and the Self-Reinforcing Effects of Norm Compliance." *Southern Economic Journal*. 86(3):1222-1240. DOI:10.1002/soej.12410
- Prentice, D. A. (2012). The psychology of social norms and the promotion of human rights. In R. Goodman, D. Jinks, & A. K. Woods (Eds.), *Understanding social action, promoting human rights*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Suhay, E. (2015). Explaining group influence: The role of identity and emotion in political conformity and polarization. *Political Behavior*, 37, 221–251.
- White, I., Laird, C., & Allen, T. (2014). Selling out? The politics of navigating conflicts between racial group interest and self-interest. *American Political Science Review* 108(4), 783–800.

Social identity theory and politics:

- Huddy, L. (2001). From social to political identity: A critical examination of social identity theory. *Political psychology*, 22(1), 127-156.
- Brown, R. (2000). Social identity theory: Past achievements, current problems and future challenges. *European journal of social psychology*, 30(6), 745-778.

Psychological reactance:

- Rosenberg, B. D., & Siegel, J. T. (2018). A 50-year review of psychological reactance theory: Do not read this article. *Motivation Science*, 4(4), 281.
- Mann, C. B. (2010). Is there backlash to social pressure? A large-scale field experiment on voter mobilization. *Political Behavior*, 32, 387-407.
- Reynolds-Tylus, T. (2019). Psychological reactance and persuasive health communication: A review of the literature. *Frontiers in Communication*, 4, 56.
- Miron, A. M., & Brehm, J. W. (2006). Reactance theory-40 years later. *Zeitschrift für Sozialpsychologie*, 37, 9-18.

Trajectory analyses:

- Ferrante VM, Lacourse &, Dorfman A, Pelletier-Dumas M, Lina J-M, Stolle D and de la Sablonnière R (2022) COVID-19, economic threat and identity status: Stability and change in prejudice against Chinese people within the Canadian population. *Front. Psychol.* 13:901352. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2022.901352
- Kil, H., Lacourse, E., Mageau, G. A., Pelletier-Dumas, M., Dorfman, A., Stolle, D., ... & de la Sablonnière, R. (2022). Initial risk factors, self-compassion trajectories, and well-being outcomes during the COVID-19 pandemic: A person-centered approach. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13.

Current debates in the social sciences:

- Lawrence, P. A. (2003). The politics of publication. *Nature*, 422(6929), 259-261.
- Liumbruno, G. M., Velati, C., Pasqualetti, P., & Franchini, M. (2013). How to write a scientific manuscript for publication. *Blood Transfusion*, 11(2), 217.
- McDermott, R. (2022). Breaking free: How preregistration hurts scholars and science. *Politics and the Life Sciences*, 41(1), 55-59.
- Rubenson, D. (2021). Tie my hands loosely: Pre-analysis plans in political science. *Politics and the Life Sciences*, 40(2), 142-151.
- Rubin, M. (2020). Does preregistration improve the credibility of research findings? *The Quantitative Methods for Psychology*, 16(4), 376–390. doi:10.20982/tqmp.16.4.p376

Statistics in R:

- Field, A., Miles, J., & Field, Z. (2012). *Discovering statistics using R*. Sage publications.
- Imai, K. (2018). *Quantitative social science: an introduction*. Princeton University Press.
- Li. (2018). *Using R for data analysis in social sciences : a research project-oriented approach*. Oxford University Press.
- Zetlin, & Auerbach, C. (2019). *Basic statistics for the behavioral and social sciences using R*. Oxford University Press.