UAB
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Political Behaviour

Code: 101075
ECTS Credits: 6

2025/2026

Degree	Type	Year
Political Science and Public Management	OB	2

Contact

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Teachers

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Teaching groups languages

You can view this information at the end of this
document.

Prerequisites

Students should have acquired basic concepts of Political Science and Research Methods. They must be able
read English texts and work with spreadsheets.

Objectives and Contextualisation

The course has three objectives:

- To know the basic elements that characterize political and electoral behaviour in democratic contexts

- To be able to use theories and variables that explain how citizens think and act in politics

- To know and be able to use the main methods and data available for the analysis of political behaviour

Competences

- Act with ethical responsibility and respect for fundamental rights and duties, diversity and democratic
  values.
- Analysing the behaviour of the political actors, both individually and collectively (parties, interest groups,
  social movements, etc.).

- Analysing the electoral processes, including campaigns, parties' electoral strategies, political scenarios and analysis and interpretation of electoral results.
- Arguing from different theoretical perspectives.
- Assess the social, economic and environmental impact when acting in this field of knowledge.
- Demonstrating good writing skills in different contexts.
- Demonstrating the comprehension of citizen behaviour and democratic values, particularly in internal or international concrete cases.
- Designing data collection techniques, coordinating the information processing and meticulously applying hypothesis verification methods.
- Develop critical thought and reasoning and be able to communicate them effectively, both in your own language and second or third languages.
- Develop strategies for autonomous learning.
- Explaining political, individual and collective attitudes and behaviours, as well as the education process and expression of political preferences.
- Identifying and distinguishing the functioning of the electoral processes.
- Identifying main actors of the political system, inspecting their interactions and assessing their behaviour in their environment and in the political system from a theoretical and practical perspective.
- Identifying sources of data and conducting bibliographic and documentary searches.
- Interpreting and applying English texts in an academic way.
- Make changes to the methods and processes of the area of knowledge to provide innovative responses to the needs and wishes of society.
- Managing the available time in order to accomplish the established objectives and fulfil the intended task.
- Managing the different theoretical contributions about actors and actor's networks, as well as the characteristics of collective action.
- Realising effective oral presentations that are suited to the audience.
- Showing a good capacity for transmitting information, distinguishing key messages for their different recipients.
- Synthesizing and critically analysing information.
- Take sex- or gender-based inequalities into consideration when operating within one's own area of knowledge.
- Using the main information and documentation techniques (ICT) as an essential tool for the analysis.
- Working autonomously.
- Working by using quantitative and qualitative analysis techniques in order to apply them to research processes.
- Working in teams and networking, particularly in interdisciplinary conditions.

Learning Outcomes

1. Act with ethical responsibility and respect for fundamental rights and duties, diversity and democratic values.
2. Analysing the behaviour of the political actors, both individually and collectively (parties, interest groups, social movements, etc.).
3. Analysing the electoral processes, including campaigns, parties' electoral strategies, political scenarios and analysis and interpretation of electoral results.
4. Arguing from different theoretical perspectives.
5. Assess the social, economic and environmental impact when acting in this field of knowledge.
6. Demonstrating good writing skills in different contexts.
7. Designing data collection techniques, coordinating the information processing and meticulously applying hypothesis verification methods.
8. Develop critical thought and reasoning and be able to communicate them effectively, both in your own language and second or third languages.
9. Develop strategies for autonomous learning.
10. Explaining political, individual and collective attitudes and behaviours, as well as the education process and expression of political preferences.
11. Identifying and distinguishing the functioning of the electoral processes.
12. Identifying main actors of the political system, inspecting their interactions and assessing their behaviour in their environment and in the political system from a theoretical and practical perspective.

13. Identifying sources of data and conducting bibliographic and documentary searches.
14. Interpreting and applying English texts in an academic way.
15. Make changes to the methods and processes of the area of knowledge to provide innovative responses to the needs and wishes of society.
16. Managing the available time in order to accomplish the established objectives and fulfil the intended task.
17. Managing the different theoretical contributions about actors and actor's networks, as well as the characteristics of collective action.
18. Realising effective oral presentations that are suited to the audience.
19. Showing a good capacity for transmitting information, distinguishing key messages for their different recipients.
20. Synthesizing and critically analysing information.
21. Take sex- or gender-based inequalities into consideration when operating within one's own area of knowledge.
22. Using the main information and documentation techniques (ICT) as an essential tool for the analysis.
23. Working autonomously.
24. Working by using quantitative and qualitative analysis techniques in order to apply them to research processes.
25. Working in teams and networking, particularly in interdisciplinary conditions.

Content

Theoretical sessions

- T1_Introduction: how do we study political behaviour?
- T2_Columbia School
- T3_Michigan School
- T4_Spatial models
- T5_Economic voting
- T6_Electoral participation
- T7_Non-electoral participation
- T8_Political parties and party formation
- T9_Electoral system
- T10_Representation
- T11_Second-order elections
- T12_Public opinion and electoral behaviour
- T13_Campaigns and electoral strategy
- T14_Ideological and affective polarization

In parallel, there will be 5 reading sessions and 3 practical sessions designed to complement and apply the topics covered in the theoretical classes.

Activities and Methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Lectures and presentations	29.5	1.18	4, 6, 18, 12, 14, 19, 20, 22
Practical sessions and seminars	20	0.8	4, 16, 13, 19, 20, 24, 23, 25, 22
Type: Supervised			

Evaluation	2	0.08	2, 3, 4, 10, 16, 12, 11, 19, 20, 23
Type: Autonomous			
Compulsory readings and readings related to the practical sessions	20	0.8	12, 13, 11, 14, 20, 23
Study of the theory presented in class	50	2	2, 4, 16, 12, 11, 14, 20, 23, 22
Writing of practical exercices	20	0.8	16, 20, 24, 23, 25, 22

There are three types of in-person sessions:

1. Theoretical lectures where the teacher presents the theoretical content in interaction with the students
2. Seminar sessions where an exercise applying the knowledge acquired through the analysis of the readings is worked on
3. Practical sessions where an exercise applying the knowledge acquired through data analysis is worked on

The in-person sessions may require prior reading of the materials that will be indicated at the beginning of the course.

During autonomous activities, students will have to prepare the materials corresponding to each session, complete the assignments to be evaluated, and prepare the content for the exam.

Annotation: Within the schedule set by the centre or degree programme, 15 minutes of one class will be reserved for students to evaluate their lecturers and their courses or modules through questionnaires.

Assessment

Continous Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Attendance and participation	5%	0.5	0.02	4, 8, 19, 20
Final exam	50%	2	0.08	21, 5, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 17, 10, 16, 12, 11, 19, 20
Lab exercises	20%	3	0.12	2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 17, 10, 18, 16, 12, 13, 11, 14, 19, 20, 24, 23, 25, 22
Seminars	25%	3	0.12	1, 3, 4, 6, 9, 8, 7, 17, 10, 16, 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, 24, 23, 25, 22

The final grade for the course will be a weighted average of the following components:

- Final exam (50%)
  - Multiple-choice test (30%)
  - Essay question in the exam (20%)
- Practical sessions (20%)
- Seminars (25%)

- Attendance and participation (5%)

According to Article 117.2 of the UAB Academic Regulations, repeat students may be assessed through a single synthesis exam. Repeat students wishing to opt for this format must contact the teaching staff at the beginning of the course.

To pass the course, students must meet the following requirements:

- Obtain a minimum overall grade of 5 for the course
- Score at least a 4 on the final exam

Single assessment

Only students who have obtained official permission from Gestió Acadèmica at the beginning of the course may follow the single assessment procedure.

The single assessment exam will consist of the following sections, each with the corresponding weight in the final grade:

- Multiple-choice test: 40%
- Essay question: 30%
- Practical exam: 30%

Resit exam

- Students will be entitled to take the resit exam only if they have attended the regular final exam of the course.
- The resit exam will serve solely to recover the grade for the final exam. It cannot be used to recover grades for practical sessions or seminars.
- Grades from practicals and seminars do not prevent students from taking the resit exam, but each student is responsible for assessing their chances of passing the course based on those grades.
- In the case of students under the Single Assessment scheme, the resit exam may be used to recover the theory and/or practical exam grade, depending on the results obtained in the original exam.

Evaluation through credit compensation

This consists of grade compensation between subjects within the same bachelor's degree programme. Students must request it from Academic Management, provided they meet the requirements established by the UAB.

"Not assessed" grade
Submitting any activity or attending any exam excludes the possibility of being graded as "Not Assessed" ("No Presentado").

Restricted use of artificial intelligence

In this course, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies is allowed only for support tasks, such as literature or information searches, text correction or translation, and assistance with R code in the practical sessions. Students must clearly identify which parts of their work were generated using AI tools, specify the tools used, and include a critical reflection on how these tools influenced the process and final outcome of the activity. Failure to disclose the use of AI in assessable activitieswill be considered a breach of academic integrity and may result in partial or full loss of marks for the activity, or more serious sanctions in severe cases.

Bibliography

The following bibliography is recommended for consultation in the course. Specific mandatory and voluntary readings will be specified at the beginning of the course:

- Anduiza Perea, E., & Bosch, A. (2004). Comportamiento político y electoral. Barcelona: Ariel.
- Arzheimer, K., Evans, J., & Lewis-Beck, M. (2017). The Sage Handbook of Electoral Behaviour. London: Sage.
- Astudillo, J., & Rodon, T. (2013). "El comportamiento electoral del votante en la mediana y las «paradojas» de la competición política española / The Electoral Behaviour of the Median Voter and the 'Paradoxes' of Spanish Political Competition". Revista Española de Investigaciones Sociológicas, 144: 3-21. https://doi.org/10.5477/cis/reis.144.3
- Blais, A., & Anduiza, E. (2013). "Voter Turnout". In R. Valelly (Ed.), Oxford Bibliographies in Political Science. Oxford: Oxford University Press DOI: 10.1093/obo/9780199756223-006
- Bosh, Agustí. (2020). The Spanish Electoral System, in "The Oxford Handbook of Spanish Politics" (eds. Diego Muro & Ignacio Lago), London: Oxford University Press, pàgines 389-409.
- Carmines, E. G., & Stimson, J. A. (1980). "The Two Faces of Issue Voting". The American Political Science Review, 74 (1): 78-91.
- Converse, P. E. (1964). "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics". Critical Review, 18(1): 1-74.
- Dalton, R. J. (2014 o posterior). Citizen Politics: Public Opinion and Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies. Los Angeles: Sage CQ Press.
- Dalton, R. J., & Klingemann, H.-D. (2007). Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Downs, A. (1992). "Una teoría económica de la democracia". En Diez textos básicos de ciencia política. Ariel.
- Equipo Piedras de Papel. (2015). Aragón es nuestro Ohio: así votan los españoles. Barcelona: Malpaso. Capítols 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9 i 10.
- Fernbach, P. M., Rogers, T., Fox, C. R., & Sloman, S. A. (2013). "Political Extremism Is Supported by an Illusion of Understanding". Psychological Science, 24(6): 939-946. https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797612464058
- Inglehart, R., & Welzel, C. (2005). Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Capítol 1 (en castellano, publicado por el CIS).
- Iyengar, S., Sood, G., & Lelkes, Y. (2012). "Affect, Not Ideology". Public Opinion Quarterly, 76(3): 405-431.
- Klandermans, B., & van Stekelenburg, J. (2013). "The Social Psychology of Protest". Current Sociology, 61(5-6): 886-905.
- Mintz, A., Valentino, N. A., & Wayne, C. (2021). Beyond Rationality: Behavioral Political Science in the 21st Century. Cambridge University Press.
- Prior, M. (2018). Hooked. How Politics Captures People's Interest. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Capítol 1.
- Reif, K., Schmitt, H., & Norris, P. (1997). Second-order elections. European Journal of Political Research, 31: 109-124. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6765.1997.tb00768.x
- Rodon, T., & Guinjoan, M. (2018). "Mind the Protest Gap: The Role of Resources in the Face of Economic Hardship". PS - Political Science and Politics, 51(1): 84-92.
- Rodon, Toni. (2022). Quan el teu veí és diferent. La relació entre la segregació i el capital social. Fundació Catalunya Europa. Pàgines 14-41.
- Rodon, Toni, & Guinjoan, Marc. (2023). Les actituds en relació amb el canvi climàtic a Espanya varien amb l'edat? Observatori social de la Fundació "la Caixa".
- Sanders, D. (1995). Behavioral Analysis. In Theory and Methods inPolitical Science (pp. 23-41).
- Shively, W. P. (1979). "The Development of Party Identification among Adults: Exploration of a Functional Model". The American Political Science Review, 73(4): 1039-1054.
- Theocharis, Y., & Van Deth, J. W. (2018). "The Continuous Expansion of Citizen Participation: A New Taxonomy". European Political Science Review, 10(1): 139-163.
- Torcal, M., Rodon, T., & Hierro, M. J. (2016). "Word on the Street: The Persistence of Leftist-dominated Protest in Europe". West European Politics, 39: 326-350.
- Trujillo, M., & Gómez, B. (2016). Urnas vacías en los suburbios de las ciudades. Barcelona: Observatorio Social La Caixa.
- Urban, Tim. (2023). What's Our Problem?: A Self-Help Book for Societies. Wait But Why. Chapter 1: The Laddery.
- Viilup, Elina. (2017). L'amenaça populista: una ombra inquietant a la paret o un monstre real? Revista Eines, 29: 28-37.
- Vries, C. E. D., Hobolt, S. B., Proksch, S.-O., & Slapin, J. B. (2021). Foundations of European Politics: A Comparative Approach. Oxford University Press.

- Westwood, S. J., Iyengar, S., Malhotra, N., Lelkes, Y., & Levendusky, M. (2018). The Origins and Consequences of Affective Polarization in the United States. Annual Review of Political Science, 22(1), 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-051117-073034

Software

Throughout the course, the following software will be used:

- R
- Microsoft Excel

Groups and Languages

Please note that this information is provisional until 30 November 2025. You can check it through this link. To consult the language you will need to enter the CODE of the subject.

Name	Group	Language	Semester	Turn
(SEM) Seminars	1	Catalan	second semester	morning-mixed
(SEM) Seminars	51	Catalan	second semester	afternoon
(TE) Theory	1	Catalan	second semester	morning-mixed
(TE) Theory	51	Catalan	second semester	afternoon