



European  
University  
Institute

DEPARTMENT  
OF POLITICAL  
AND SOCIAL  
SCIENCES

## **‘Foundation Seminar’: Public opinion and political behavior**

*Hanspeter Kriesi*  
*Seminar Fall 2017*

**Tuesdays 9:00 AM-11:00 AM, Badia Seminar Room 4**

[Registration](#)

Organising Administrative Assistant: Maureen Lechleitner (Maureen.Lechleitner@EUI.eu)

### **Description**

This seminar belongs in the series of ‘Foundation seminars’. Its goal is to read and discuss the classics in the field of ‘public opinion and political behavior’. The seminar consists of ten sessions, an introductory session to discuss the notion of public opinion and nine sessions dedicated to nine different authors who represent the four approaches we can identify in the field of public opinion and political behavior. The first session includes the point of view of five authors (two classics from the 1920s, who directly speak to each other, a second package of two authors speaking to each other across almost forty years, and a fifth text that deals with the most recent developments in US electoral campaigns). The following sessions are each devoted to a classic study. American authors prevail, because they have just been more influential than European ones. My choice is, of course, debatable and one might have made a different selection. I believe, however, that this choice provides a good idea of the field’s development and of its key theoretical, methodological and empirical issues.

By choosing to take this class you are taking on the obligation to reading all the materials. Over the course of the seminar students must submit three 500-word response papers to the readings for a given session and post that paper on the course website at noon on the day before class. These response papers are fundamental for the holding of a good discussion of the materials, as is a thorough reading of the assigned texts.

Writing a term paper is encouraged. Your term paper should draw on the literature covered in the course but go well beyond it. Those who wish to write a term paper should submit it to us by email and in paper copy, with a cc to Maureen Lechleitner.

## Sessions, topics and readings

### 1. **What is public opinion and what are its problems? The starting point – a debate over 100 years (October 3)**

Lippman, Walter, 1997 (1922). *Public Opinion*. New York: Free Press. (Chapters 1, 5-7, 9, 15, 24-28) EUI Library: LIB 301.592 LIP

Dewey, John 2012 (1927). *The Public and Its Problems. An Essay in Political Inquiry*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press. (Chapter 4, and pp. 152-160) LIB 321.8 DEW

Blumer, Herbert 1948. Public opinion and public opinion polling, *American Sociological Review* Vol 13, 5: 542-49.

Converse, Philip E. 1987. Changing conceptions of public opinion in the political process, *Public Opinion Quarterly* Vol 51: 512-24.

Kneiss, Daniel 2016. *Prototype politics: technology-intensive campaigning and the data of democracy*, Oxford U Press, LIB 324.70973 KNE

### 2. **The Columbia school's sociological approach: Lazarsfeld et al. (October 10)**

Lazarsfeld, Paul F., Berelson, Bernard and Hazel Gaudet, 1968 (1944). *The People's Choice. How the Voter Makes Up his Mind in a Presidential Campaign*. New York: Columbia University Press. EUI Library: LIB 329.023730917 LAZ

### 3. **The rational choice approach: Downs (October 17)**

Downs, Anthony, 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper Collins. EUI Library: LIB 321.8 DOW

### 4. **The Michigan school's social-psychological approach: The American voter (October 24)**

Campbell, Angus, Converse, Philip E., Miller, Warren E. and Donald E. Stokes, 1964. *The American Voter: an Abridgement*. New York: Wiley. EUI Library: LIB 324.73 CAM (pp 1-159; 269-290)

Campbell, Angus, Converse, Philip E., Miller, Warren E. and Donald E. Stokes, 1960. *The American Voter*, New York: Wiley, EUI Library: LIB 324.73 CAM (pp 18-37)

### 5. **The rational choice approach revisited: V.O. Key (October 31)**

Key, V.O., 1966. *Responsible Electorate: Rationality in Presidential Voting 1936-1960*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. EUI Library: LIB 329.023730017 KEY

**6. The sociological approach revisited: Lipset and Rokkan and the transformation of cleavage structures (November 7)**

Lipset, Seymour Martin and Stein Rokkan (1967) 1990. Cleavage structures, party systems, and voter alignments, pp. 91-138 in *The West European Party System*, edited by Peter Mair, Oxford U Press.

Hooghe, Liesbet, Gary Marks and Carole Wilson 2002. Does left/right structure party positions on European integration?, *Comparative Political Studies* Vol 35, 8: 965-989.

Kriesi, Hanspeter, Edgar Grande, Martin Dolezal, Marc Helbling, Dominic Höglinger, Swen Hutter and Bruno Wüest 2012. *Political Conflict in Western Europe*. Cambridge U Press (Chapters 1, 4, 10)(pp. 1-35, 96-126, 254-273)

**7. A new milestone: Zaller's cognitive approach (November 14)**

Zaller, John R. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge University Press. LIB 301.154 ZAL (chapters 1-8; 11-12)

**8. The cognitive approach revisited: The rationalizing voter (November 21)**

Lodge, Milton and Charles S. Taber 2013. *The rationalizing voter*. Cambridge U Press. LIB 320.019 LOD (except chapter 8)

**9. The cognitive approach once more: Druckman's framing experiments (November 28)**

Chong, Dennis and James N. Druckman 2007. Framing Theory. *Annual Review of Political Science* 10: 103-26.

Druckman, James N. 2004. Political Preference Formation: Competition, Deliberation and the (Ir)relevance of Framing Effects, *American Political Science Review* 98, 4:671-685.

Druckman, James N., Jordan Fein and Thomas J. Leeper 2012. A Source of Bias in Public Opinion Stability, *American Political Science Review* 106, 2: 430-454

Druckman, James N., Erik Peterson and Rune Slothuus 2013. How Elite Partisan Polarization Affects Public Opinion Formation, *American Political Science Review* 107, 1: 57-79.

**10. The latest milestone – the social-psychological approach revisited: Achen and Bartels (December 5)**

Achen, Christopher H. and Larry M. Bartels 2016. *Democracy for realists. Why elections do not produce responsive government*, Princeton University Press. Chapters 1, 2, 4, 7-9, 11) (200 pages)