**Course name**

27185 – Political Behaviour

**Aims**

This course is designed to provide students with an introduction to the (mostly) academic literature and major controversies regarding public opinion, voting behaviour, and political participation.

**Contents**

**BLOCK 1: INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL BEHAVIOR**

I. Political participation and democracy:

a) Democratic theories and democratic practices.
b) Conceptualizations of political participation: political attitudes, political opinion and political participation.
c) Theories of political participation.
d) Political learning.
e) Political and institutional participation.
f) Conventional and unconventional political participation. Participation and collective action.
g) New spaces for political participation.

**BLOCK 2: ELECTORAL BEHAVIOR**

II. Democracy and political representation:

a) Democracy and elections.
b) The functions of elections: production of representation, government and legitimacy.
c) Crisis representative democracy and party democracy model.
d) New spaces for political participation.

III. The analysis of electoral behavior:

a) The methodology of electoral behaviour.
b) Election results: fragmentation and concentration of the vote. Vote transference and electoral volatility.
c) Electoral context and vote: strategies, conjunctions, themes and campaigns.

IV. Participation and abstention:

a) Major trends in electoral participation
b) Sociodemographic mediations in explaining the abstention: age and social class.
c) Attitudinal mediations: satisfaction with the functioning of the system and corruption.
d) Contextual mediations: competitiveness and mobilisation campaign.

V. Explanatory models of vote:

a) Vote and rational economic choice.
b) Social mediations: social class, religion, age, gender, origin. Any new cleavages?


d) The influence of context: electoral and media campaigns; Elections with extraordinary events.
BLOCK 3: CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

VI. Democracy and citizen participation:

a) Citizen Participation vs. representation.
b) Different approaches to participation.
c) Defining elements: agents, content and scope, opportunities for participation.
d) Opportunities for participation. Difficulties and limits of participation.

**Evaluation system**

Part I. Attendance and participation (25 percent). Attendance matters, since you cannot participate if you’re not in class. However, the largest portion of this grade will reflect whether students make an informed (showing familiarity with assigned readings) contribution to class discussions.

Part II. Weekly essays (40 percent). Each student will complete three essays (each approximately 500 words in length) based on three of the blocks outlined below. These essays should do one of the following:

- Provide a theoretical overview linking several (though not necessarily all) of the week’s readings;
- Identify a question left unanswered by the week’s readings, and briefly suggest what kind of research might be done to fill in the blanks;
- Provide a methodological critique of one or more of the week’s readings; or
- Discuss findings from studies in a comparative context.

Note: It is expected that all essays will represent original work by students (or, when the work of others is referenced, be adequately cited).

Part III. Exam (35 percent). Each student also is required to Complete a written take-home exam, based on material covered in class and/or in your readings. Questions will be sent to students via email and answers will be due two days after.

**Literature**

A list of the literature will be delivered at the beginning of the course.