1 Course Description

This course is designed for undergraduate students in social sciences. It introduces basic concepts and topics of the interplay between political communication and political psychology in electoral campaigns, with examples focused on (but not restricted to) European countries. At the end, students will know the fundamental models of communication, how framing effects affect individuals’ attitudes and behavior – and when they fail to do so. We also cover recent topics on the influence of social media on political communication and voter persuasion. Students will learn the theoretical models, and be equipped with the methodological tools needed to study the effects of political communication in electoral campaigns.

*This is a preliminary syllabus subject to minor changes. Last updated September 12, 2018
2 Course Requirements

Grading will be composed of the following requirements:

1 **Final Paper (75%)**: Students must write a 3000-words (with a ±5% tolerance) research paper, to be handed in by **14 February, 2018, at 23:55 CET**, through Ilias. A list of references and appendices do not count towards the page limit. The topic must be related to contents covered in class. It should have an empirical component: for example, the analysis of how a specific theory we discussed can be applied to a country or government. Students are strongly encouraged to discuss the topic of their papers before the end of classes with the instructor.

2 **Final paper presentation (25%)**: In the last two weeks, students are required to present the design of their final paper. The presentation should include the topic, research question, theory, and (if applicable) data. This means: start thinking about your final paper early. The presentation should be 10-12 minutes long. It is modeled after a conference panel. Students should provide constructive criticism and feedback to their colleagues. By the end of the fourth week, students should register themselves for a presentation slot. The link for registration will be sent by the instructor. Delivering a presentation is **mandatory** for passing the course.

Points are converted to final grades as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100–96</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95–91</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90–86</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85–81</td>
<td>2.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>80–76</td>
<td>2.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>75–71</td>
<td>2.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>70–66</td>
<td>3.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>65–61</td>
<td>3.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>60–56</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55–51</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50–0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Unexcused late submissions of final papers will be subject to grade deductions following the scale below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Delay</th>
<th>Deduction</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0–24 hours after deadline</td>
<td>20% penalty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24–48 hours after deadline</td>
<td>35% penalty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48–72 hours after deadline</td>
<td>50% penalty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 72 hours after deadline</td>
<td>Not graded</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Bonus points.** It is possible to earn up to 15 bonus points in this course, meaning the maximum final grade can be 115. Bonus points can be earned in two ways: Between Weeks 2 and 13, students are asked to submit, by email, up to three questions about the weekly readings to the instructor, up to four hours before our meeting. I will select up to three questions in total (from those submitted by all students) to discuss in class. If your question is selected in a week, you earn one bonus point that week. The second way, which will give up to 7 points, will be a group work project to last the whole duration of the course, in which students will work together to create the communication strategy for a German party ahead of the 2019 European Elections. More details will be given in class. *Students can only earn bonus points if they fulfill the mandatory course requirements – meaning, deliver a final paper and do a presentation.* Bonus points can increase your grade, but never decrease it.

# 3 Schedule

## Part I – Political Psychology

### Week 1 (Oct 10): Introduction to the Course and to Political Psychology

Mandatory reading:


### Week 2 (Oct 17): Attitudinal Change and Stability

Mandatory Reading:

**Week 3 (Oct 24): Partisanship as Social Identity**

Mandatory readings:

**Week 4 (Oct 31): Personality Traits and Political Attitudes – The Big-5 Model**

Mandatory reading:

**Part II – Political Communication**

**Week 5 (Nov 7): Models of Political Communication**

Mandatory reading:

**Week 6 (Nov 14): Effects of Communication: Priming, Framing, and Agenda-setting**

Mandatory readings:
Week 7 (Nov 21): The Demand Side: Selective Exposure and other Biases

Mandatory reading:


Mandatory reading:

Part III – Party Strategies and Means


Mandatory reading:

Week 10 (Dec 12): What do Parties Communicate? Position, Salience, and Issue Ownership

Mandatory readings:

Week 11 (Dec 19): What do Parties Communicate? Leadership and the Attacking the Opposition

Mandatory readings:


Week 12 (Jan 09): How Parties Communicate – Traditional Means

Mandatory readings:


Week 13 (Jan 16): Social Media: Changes in Style and Opportunities

Mandatory readings:


Week 14 (Jan 23): Presentations and Final Overview: Microtargeting, and Do Campaigns Work?

Mandatory reading:


Week 15 (Jan 30): Student Presentations