The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

Social Networks and Politics - 56327

Last update 11-11-2019

HU Credits: 4

Degree/Cycle: 1st degree (Bachelor)

Responsible Department: Political Science

Academic year: 0

Semester: Yearly

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Prof. Lilach Nir

Coordinator Email: LNir@mail.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: Monday, 14:45-15:45

Teaching Staff:

Prof Lilach Nir

Course/Module description:
  Why do people differ in their political activities, such as voting, participating in demonstrations, or seeking information about the public issues of the day? Major research traditions in political science tend to explain behavior by either micro or micro factors. On the one hand, researchers explain behavior as the product of individual characteristics, such as socioeconomic status or partisanship strength. On the other hand, researchers explain behavior as the product of the electoral institutions of a country, such as the size or the competitiveness of its electoral districts. With the rise of NGO's, associations, and social networking sites such as Facebook, social network research offers a complementary theoretical approach to understanding political behavior. We begin with an overview of a network approach in political science, defining the concepts and tools that characterize network research in the social and natural sciences, and the historical roots of network research in politics, from the1940s election studies onwards. Following the review, we will examine the effects of social network characteristics on a variety of behaviors and perceptions. The course will be based on examples from studies conducted in different countries at different time periods, and focused on behaviors that are intended to influence politics directly or indirectly. At the end of the course, students will be able to define key concepts in the study of social networks, to identify major trends in the study of networks and political behavior, to describe the differences between them, and demonstrate how to apply them in an independent research paper.

Course/Module aims:
  We begin with an overview of a network approach in political science, defining the concepts and tools that characterize network research in the social and natural sciences, and the historical roots of network research in politics, from the1940s election studies onwards. Following the review, we will examine the effects of social network characteristics on a variety of behaviors and perceptions. The course will be based on examples from studies conducted in different countries at different time periods, and focused on behaviors that are intended to influence politics directly or indirectly.

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:
  Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to define key concepts in the study of social networks, to identify major trends in the study of networks and political behavior, to describe the differences between them, and demonstrate how to apply them in an independent research paper.

<u>*Attendance requirements(%):*</u>
  80

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Class discussions, computer lab use, presentations, individual advising

<u>*Course/Module Content:*</u>
  List of topics

Part I: Introduction and Basic Concepts

* What is a social network? Description and concepts
* Whole networks and ego-based network
* Flow, diffusion of information in networks
* Social capital in networks

Part II : Impact of Social Networks

* Participation: conventional and non-conventional
* Electoral choices and voting preferences
* Opinion formation
* Political knowledge and expertise networks

Part III : Ego Network Analysis

* Databases - Ego-based networks
* Databases - Online Networks

Part IV : Presentation of group projects

Part V: Networks within cultural and technological context

* Differences between networks in different countries
* Social networks and computer-mediated
* Online networks and new participatory repertoires
* Online SNS social netowrking sites and "the bubble"
* Personal advising sessions for writing and research
* Presentations on research projects

<u>*Required Reading:*</u>

Required reading material:

* Reading list consists of theoretically-driven empirical studies
* Every week assignes the articles required in preparation for discussion, as well as further reading, in order to allow students to deepen their interests.
A full reading list appears in the moodle system (pdf).

<u>*Additional Reading Material:*</u>
  Additional reading material:

* Suggestions for further reading are presented in the context of any discussion and debate.

<u>*Course/Module evaluation:*</u>
 End of year written/oral examination 0 %
 Presentation 30 %
 Participation in Tutorials 0 %
 Project work 0 %
 Assignments 0 %
 Reports 30 %
 Research project 40 %
 Quizzes 0 %
 Other 0 %

<u>Additional information:</u>
  * Note: This is not a final version, there may be changes; please see the course site in Moodle for the most updated version.

I / Requirements:

1 . Attendance, weekly reading of articles before the lecture and informed participation in discussion. Informed participation indicates proficiency in the course content is based on a close reading in advance and attendance in lectures. It is a component of the final grade.
2 . Submit a research proposal to the professor. Length: 2-3 pages, double-spaced.
3 . Report of a research team in front of class on your case, at the end of the first semester. Group/pairs assignment.
4 . Presentation ("Referat") on your final seminar paper at the end of the second semester. Individual presentation.
5 . Original research paper. Length: up to 20 pages, double-spaced, font 12. Page count excludes the reference list and appendixes.

II / Grading:

A. 100 % of the grade class (4 credit points) : proficiency in reading material , informed participation, involvement in the project study group, group presentation, peer-review, and a presentation at the end of the course on your individual seminar paper.
B. 100 % of the grade of the seminar (4 additional credit points): a seminar paper. Due date on July 2020. There is a bonus grade for early submission before deadline :-)