

Public Opinion, Elections and Voting (POL302)

1. Course:

Public Opinion, Elections and Voting (POL302)

2. Instructor

Amir ABDUL REDA

I am an Assistant Professor in computational political science at Mohammed VI Polytechnic University (Rabat, Morocco). My research focuses on public opinion, social movements, and migration using big data and Natural Language Processing. In the past, I did my PhD at the University of Toronto, and my work is published (or forthcoming) with Sociological Method and Research, Comparative Sociology, and Middle Eastern Studies.

3. Learning Objectives:

What is public opinion? How can we—and do we—measure it? What actors and other social dynamics affect public opinion through time and across societies? This course will answer these questions—amongst others—with a focus on public opinion relevant to elections and voting. By the end of this course, students should have a solid understanding of:

- Key data collection methods used to study public opinion, elections, and voting.
- Key trends in the literature on public opinion related to elections and voting.

4. Evaluation:

4.1 Midterm Exam (30 %):

The midterm exam will cover material from the first half of the course. Both readings and classroom discussions will be taken into account in the elaboration of this exam, which will count for 30% of the final grade. Its date and time will be fixed by the faculty and duly communicated to students in advance.

4.2 Final Exam (30%):

The final exam will cover material from the entire course. It will make up for 30% of the final grade. Its date and time will be fixed by the faculty and duly communicated to students in advance.

4.3 Literature Review Presentation (20%):

Students will be responsible for presenting a literature review of one topic of their choice during the last class of our course. This assignment can be completed in group—with two students maximum per group. Students are expected to consult at least 20 sources and present their analysis of the literature for 10 minutes, and submit a PowerPoint presentation on the course's Canvas before the presentation takes place. Please use the Chicago style for in text citation (whether Author-Date or end of page notes) and bibliography formatting when citing during your PowerPoint presentations. You can read more on the subject here. If you have any technical questions on the subject, please write them on the appropriate discussion board.

Important questions to answer are the following:

- What is studied by the literature?
- How is it defined? Is there a consensus in the literature regarding the definition at hand?
- What is the puzzle approached by the literature when studying the concept in question?
- Why does the puzzle matter?
- What are the larger trends of the debate?

- Amongst others, trends can be shaped by specific views adopted by some in the literature, or changing methods through time, or even changing question/puzzles through time.

4.4 Oral Presentation (10%):

Students will be given a grade out of 10% for an oral presentation of all the readings for one of the course's class—both mandatory and recommended readings. A brief, 10-minute presentation is expected per student.

4.5 Student Participation (10%):

Course attendance is mandatory and to encourage both assiduity and in-class participation 10% of the final grade for the course will be allocated to student's active participation in the course. Engaging in class discussions and attending the course on time will ensure a good evaluation on this component of the final grade.

5. Textbooks:

We will not use a textbook in this course—all readings are mentioned—and often linked—in the appropriate section of the syllabus for each class.

6. Final Grade Breakdown:

Student Participation: 10%
 Oral Presentation: 10%
 Literature Review Presentation: 20%
 Midterm Exam: 30%
 Final Exam: 30%

8. Detailed Course Outline:

Classes	Detailed Contents & Evaluations
Session I (2 hours)	<p>Class Title: Introduction (1.5 hours)</p> <p>Class Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o What is public opinion? What are elections and voting? o Who do we study when we study public opinion, election and voting? o Society, elites, and mass publics <p>Mandatory Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllabus <p>Class Title: Public Opinion & Numbers (1/2 hour)</p> <p>Class Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The language of precision • A quick review of observational and experimental methods • Survey techniques: How do we design surveys? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of different survey techniques o From a largely observational discipline—with opinion surveys—to the focus on experimental data • Zoom in on Afrobarometer, Arab barometer, WVVS, CMEGID, Tafra data, experimental data research. <p>Mandatory Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zaller, John, and Stanley Feldman. 1992. "A Simple Theory of the Survey Response: Answering Questions versus Revealing Preferences." <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> 36 (3): 579–616. https://doi.org/10.2307/2111583.

	<p>Recommended Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alwin, Duane F., and Jon A. Krosnick. 1991. "The Reliability of Survey Attitude Measurement: The Influence of Question and Respondent Attributes." <i>Sociological Methods & Research</i> 20 (1): 139–81. https://doi.org/10.1177/0049124191020001005. Bassili, John N., and Joseph F. Fletcher. 1991. "RESPONSE-TIME MEASUREMENT IN SURVEY RESEARCH A METHOD FOR CATI AND A NEW LOOK AT NONATTITUDES." <i>Public Opinion Quarterly</i> 55 (3): 331–46. https://doi.org/10.1086/269265.
<p>Session 2 (2 hours)</p>	<p>Class Title: Public Opinion & Numbers (1 hour)</p> <p>Class Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The language of precision A quick review of observational and experimental methods Survey techniques: How do we design surveys? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overview of different survey techniques From a largely observational discipline—with opinion surveys—to the focus on experimental data Zoom in on Afrobarometer, Arab barometer, WVVS, CMEGID, Tafra data, experimental data research. <p>Mandatory Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zaller, John, and Stanley Feldman. 1992. "A Simple Theory of the Survey Response: Answering Questions versus Revealing Preferences." <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> 36 (3): 579–616. https://doi.org/10.2307/2111583. <p>Recommended Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alwin, Duane F., and Jon A. Krosnick. 1991. "The Reliability of Survey Attitude Measurement: The Influence of Question and Respondent Attributes." <i>Sociological Methods & Research</i> 20 (1): 139–81. https://doi.org/10.1177/0049124191020001005. Bassili, John N., and Joseph F. Fletcher. 1991. "RESPONSE-TIME MEASUREMENT IN SURVEY RESEARCH A METHOD FOR CATI AND A NEW LOOK AT NONATTITUDES." <i>Public Opinion Quarterly</i> 55 (3): 331–46. https://doi.org/10.1086/269265. <p>Class Title: The Study of Opinion Formation (1 hour)</p> <p>Class Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main Theories Converse, Zaller Almond & Verba, Inglehart <p>Mandatory Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Converse. 1964. "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics" <p>Recommended Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zaller (1992). <i>The Nature & Origins of Mass Opinion</i> Sartori, Giovanni. 2005. <i>Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis</i>. ECPR Press.
<p>Session 3 (2 hours)</p>	<p>Class Title: The Study of Opinion Formation (1/2 hours)</p> <p>Class Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main Theories Converse, Zaller Almond & Verba, Inglehart <p>Mandatory Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Converse. 1964. "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics" <p>Recommended Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zaller (1992). <i>The Nature & Origins of Mass Opinion</i>

- Sartori, Giovanni. 2005. *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis*. ECPR Press.

Class Title:

Political Parties: Theory & Introduction (1.5 hours)

Class Objectives:

- What are political parties? How do they tie in with public opinion?

Mandatory Readings:

- Duverger, Maurice. 1972. *Party Politics and Pressure Groups: A Comparative Introduction*. New York: Crowell.
 - Chapter I

Recommended Readings:

- Lipset, Seymour Martin and Stein Rokkan. 1967. "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments." In Seymour Lipset and Stein Rokkan (eds.), *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives*. New York: Free Press.
- Cochrane, Christopher, and Neil Nevitte. 2014. "Scapegoating: Unemployment, Far-Right Parties and Anti-Immigrant Sentiment." *Comparative European Politics; Basingstoke* 12 (1): 1–32. <http://dx.doi.org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.1057/cep.2012.28>.

Session 4 (3 hours)

Class Title:

Political Parties & Opinion Formation (1.5 hours)

Class Objectives:

- Cognitive mobilization and advanced topics in the discussion of the impact of political parties on public opinion

Mandatory Readings:

- [Dalton, Russell J. 1984. "Cognitive Mobilization and Partisan Dealignment in Advanced Industrial Democracies." *The Journal of Politics* 46 \(1\): 264–84](#)

Recommended Readings:

- [Abdul Reda 2019. Determinants of Arab public opinion on the Caliphate: Islamist elites, religiosity and socioeconomic conditions](#)

Class Title:

The Media & Public Opinion (1.5 hours)

Class Objectives:

- What is the impact of the media on mass publics?

Mandatory Readings:

- [Geddes, Barbara, and John Zaller. 1989. "Sources of Popular Support for Authoritarian Regimes." *American Journal of Political Science* 33 \(2\): 319–47.](#)
- Inglehart 1977, 293.

Recommended Readings:

- [Stockmann, Daniela, and Mary E. Gallagher. 2011. "Remote Control: How the Media Sustain Authoritarian Rule in China." *Comparative Political Studies* 44 \(4\): 436–67.](#)
- Zaller (1992). *The Nature & Origins of Mass Opinion*.
 - Review sections on the media
- Stein, Elizabeth A. 2013. "The Unraveling of Support for Authoritarianism: The Dynamic Relationship of Media, Elites, and Public Opinion in Brazil, 1972–82." *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 18 (1): 85–107. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161212460762>.
- Lippmann 1922. *Public Opinion*

Session 5 (2 hours)

Class Title:

Topics in the Study of Public Opinion (2 hours)

Class Objectives:

- Anti-immigrant/anti-refugee sentiment
- Integrated Threat Theory

Mandatory Readings:

- Stephan, WALTER G., and COOKIE WHITE Stephan. 1993. "Chapter 6 - Cognition and Affect in Stereotyping: Parallel Interactive Networks." In *Affect, Cognition and Stereotyping*, edited by Diane M. Mackie and David L. Hamilton, 111–36. San Diego: Academic Press. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-088579-7.50010-7>.
- [Beth Elise Whitaker & Jason Giersch \(2015\) Political Competition and Attitudes towards Immigration in Africa, Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 41:10, 1536-1557.](#)

Recommended Readings:

- Joppke, C. (1998). Why Liberal States Accept Unwanted Immigration. *World Politics*, 50(2), 266–293. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S004388710000811X>
- Hainmueller, J., & Hopkins, D. J. (2014). Public Attitudes Toward Immigration. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 17(1), 225–249. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-102512-194818>

Session 6 (3 hours)

Class Title:

Elections & Voting: Introduction (1.5 hours)

Class Objectives:

- Definitions,
- Electoral Systems: What are the different types of electoral systems? What affects them? How do they affect voting/decisionmaking?

Mandatory Readings:

- [Blais, André & L Massicotte. « Electoral Systems »](#)

Recommended Readings:

- Norris P. Choosing Electoral Systems: Proportional, Majoritarian and Mixed Systems. *International Political Science Review*. 1997;18(3):297-312. doi: [10.1177/019251297018003005](https://doi.org/10.1177/019251297018003005)
- Horowitz, D.L. (2003). Electoral Systems: A Primer for Decision Makers. *Journal of Democracy* 14(4), 115-127. [doi:10.1353/jod.2003.0078](https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2003.0078).
- Golder, Matt. 2005. "Democratic electoral systems around the world, 1946–2000". *Electoral Studies*. Volume 24, Issue 1, P. 103-121. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2004.02.008>
- Bormann, Nils-Christian & Matt Golder. "Democratic Electoral Systems around the world, 1946–2011", *Electoral Studies*, Volume 32, Issue 2, 2013, P. 360-369, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2013.01.005>.

Class Title:

Theories of Vote (1.5 hours)

Class Objectives:

Postmaterialism
The Far Right
Sociotropic Theory
Vote Buying

Mandatory Readings:

- [Lewis-Beck, Michael and Richard Nadeau. 2011. "Economic Voting Theory: Testing New Dimensions."](#)
- [Corstange, Daniel. 2012. "Vote Trafficking in Lebanon". *IJMES*. 44:3. 483-505.](#)

Recommended Readings:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ivarsflaten, Elisabeth. 2008. "What Unites Right-Wing Populists in Western Europe?: Re-Examining Grievance Mobilization Models in Seven Successful Cases." <i>Comparative Political Studies</i> 41 (1): 3–23. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414006294168 Inglehart, Ronald. 1971. "The Silent Revolution in Europe: Intergenerational Change in Post-Industrial Societies." <i>The American Political Science Review</i> 65 (4): 991–1017. https://doi.org/10.2307/1953494
Session 7 (2 hours)	<p>Class Title: Political Marketing & Designing Political Campaigns (2 hours)</p> <p>Class Objectives: Political Marketing & Canvassing: How do we design political campaigns? Positive vs Negative advertising: Does negative advertising always work? Issue Framing</p> <p>Mandatory Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fridkin & Kenney. 2011. "Variability in Citizens' Reactions to Different Types of Negative Campaigns"; <i>American Journal of Political Science</i>. Chong & Druckman. 2007. « Framing Theory » <p>Recommended Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Huckfeldt, Robert, and John Sprague. 1992. "Political Parties and Electoral Mobilization: Political Structure, Social Structure, and the Party Canvass." <i>The American Political Science Review</i> 86 (1): 70–86. https://doi.org/10.2307/1964016. Lipsitz et al. 2006. "What Voters Want from Political Campaign Communication." <i>Political Communication</i>.
Session 8 (3 hours)	<p>Class Title: Elections in imperfect democracies (1.5 hours)</p> <p>Class Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competitive Authoritarian regimes When victory is not an option? Inclusion Moderation? Patron client relations <p>Mandatory Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Levistky & Way, <i>Elections without Democracy</i> Nathan J. Brown, <i>When Victory is Not an Option: Islamist Movements in Arab Politics</i>, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012), 3-5 and 9-10. <p>Recommended Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schwedler, Jillian. 2011. "Can Islamists Become Moderates? Rethinking the Inclusion-Moderation Hypothesis." <i>World Politics</i> 63 (2): 347–76. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0043887111000050 Clark J. Social Movement Theory and Patron-Clientelism: Islamic Social Institutions and the Middle Class in Egypt, Jordan, and Yemen. <i>Comparative Political Studies</i>. 2004;37(8):941-968. doi:10.1177/0010414004267982 <p>Class Title: Elections & Public Opinion in the MENA (1.5 hours)</p> <p>Class Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The rise of nationalism in the MENA From Arabism to Islamism

	<p>Mandatory Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharabi, Hisham. 1965. "The Transformation of Ideology in the Arab World." <i>Middle East Journal</i> 19 (4): 471–86. <p>Recommended Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tibi. 1997. <i>Arab Nationalism: Between Islam and the Nation-State</i>. Part II of the book • García-Rivero, Carlos, and Hennie Kotzé. 2007. "Electoral Support for Islamic Parties in the Middle East and North Africa." <i>Party Politics</i> 13 (5): 611–36. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068807080088.
<p>Session 9 (3 hours)</p>	<p>Class Title: Elections & Public Opinion in Africa (1.5 hours)</p> <p>Class Objectives: Independence, francAfrique, & Coups</p> <p>Mandatory Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bratton, Michael. "Second Elections in Africa." <i>Journal of Democracy</i>, vol. 9 no. 3, 1998, p. 51-66. Project MUSE, doi:10.1353/jod.1998.0041. <p>Recommended Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bratton et al. 2005. <i>Public Opinion, Democracy, and Market Reforms in Africa</i>. • Cheibub, J., & Hays, J. (2017). <i>Elections and Civil War in Africa. Political Science Research and Methods</i>, 5(1), 81-102. • Staffan I. Lindberg (2003) 'It's Our Time to "Chop"': Do Elections in Africa Feed Neo-Patrimonialism rather than Counter-Act It?, <i>Democratization</i>, 10:2, 121-140, DOI: 10.1080/714000118 • Johan de Smedt, 'No Raila, No Peace!' Big Man Politics and Election Violence at the Kibera Grassroots, <i>African Affairs</i>, Volume 108, Issue 433, October 2009, Pages 581–598. <p>Class Title: Electoral Systems: The Case of Morocco (1.5 hours)</p> <p>Class Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Moroccan Parliamentary System: History & Analysis • Political Parties in Morocco • How do elections work in Morocco today? <p>Mandatory Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bennani-Chraïbi, Mouna. 2021. <i>Partis Politiques et Protestations au Maroc (1934-2000)</i>. Rennes, France : Presses Universitaires de Rennes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduction only <p>Recommended Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leveau, Rémy. "Chapitre I. Retour sur l'expérience électorale fondatrice : 1960-1963". Bennani-Chraïbi, Mounia, et al.. <i>Scènes et coulisses de l'élection au Maroc : Les législatives de 2002</i>. Aix-en-Provence : Institut de recherches et d'études sur les mondes arabes et musulmans, 2005. (pp. 55-67) http://books.openedition.org/iremam/648 DOI : https://doi.org/10.4000/books.iremam.648. • Yom & Gause, "Resilient Royals: How Arab Monarchies Hang On". • Maghraoui, Driss. 2019. "On the relevance or irrelevance of political parties in Morocco".
<p>Session 10 (2 hours)</p>	<p>Class Title: Epilogue I (1 hour)</p> <p>Class Objectives: The study of Public Opinion & Voting today: Social Media Data</p> <p>Mandatory Readings:</p>

- Joe Murphy, Michael W. Link, Jennifer Hunter Childs, Casey Langer Tesfaye, Elizabeth Dean, Michael Stern, Josh Pasek, Jon Cohen, Mario Callegaro, Paul Harwood, Social Media in Public Opinion Research: Executive Summary of the Aapor Task Force on Emerging Technologies in Public Opinion Research, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Volume 78, Issue 4, Winter 2014, Pages 788–794, <https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfu053>

Recommended Readings:

- Klačnja, M., Barberá, P., Beauchamp, N., Nagler, J., & Tucker, J. A. (2015). Measuring public opinion with social media data. In *The Oxford Handbook of Polling and Polling Methods* (pp. 555-582). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190213299.013.3>
- Shannon C McGregor, “Taking the Temperature of the Room”: How Political Campaigns Use Social Media to Understand and Represent Public Opinion, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Volume 84, Issue S1, 2020, Pages 236–256, <https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfaa012>
- Han et al. 2020. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health* 2020, 17(8), 2788; <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17082788>
- Michael & Agur. “The Bully Pulpit, Social Media, and Public Opinion: A Big Data Approach”

Class Title:

Epilogue II (1 hour)

Class Objectives:

Final paper presentations

Mandatory Readings:

None

10. Complementary activities:

Activities	Detailed Contents & evaluations
Tutorial	<p>Objective(s): The objective of this activity is to offer a formal timeframe through which students can sit down in groups—on MS Teams—to go through the readings for the next planned class(es). This formal timeframe should help students better organize the</p> <p>Evaluations: Some of these tutorials will require reading notes upon completion.</p>