

## Course EVS185

Public opinion in the EU      Fall 2015    6 ECTS

Class meeting time and place: Thu 1:30-3pm, room U43

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*Office Hours: Mon 3-4pm, Wed 2-3pm; and by appointment.*

### Course description

What is public opinion? Should public opinion play an important role in a political system? Why do citizens support the European Union? How do media influence citizens' attitudes towards the EU? This course will provide answers to these and many other questions regarding public opinion in the European Union. We will first discuss how different theories view citizens' role in a democracy. Then we will talk about what public opinion is and how it is measured. Then we will focus on the attitude that is most widely studied by public opinion researchers in the European Union (EU): Mass public support for the EU. We will explore research explaining why citizens support the EU and how media influence citizens' attitudes. Then we will move to the issue of citizens' competence and discuss citizens' political knowledge of the EU. Finally, we will explore the relationship between citizens and elites.

**Welcome to the course!**

### Course materials

- Required readings consist of articles and book chapters
- All readings will be available in the library, online, or on the class website
- There is no required textbook for this class

### Course objectives

By the end of this course, you should be able to do the following:

- Describe the role of public opinion in a democratic society from four theoretical perspectives and apply these perspectives to empirical research.;
- Understand and evaluate research on public opinion in the EU.;
- Explain the main explanations of public opinion in the EU.;
- Describe the main empirical findings regarding public opinion in the EU.

### Course requirements and grading

- Participation (15%).

This class is driven by student discussion and interaction; thus, attendance is critical. Students are allowed a maximum of 1 unexcused absence; any more unexcused absences will lower the participation score. Absences can be excused only in extenuating circumstances (such as medical emergency). In most cases, you will be required to provide documentation of an emergency.

Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the day's readings. As part of getting ready for class, students are required to submit **2 discussion questions** regarding week's readings (by 5pm the day before class).

**Students should bring the day’s readings and careful notes to class with them.**

In class discussions, a thoughtful and careful assessment of the readings is expected. Informed and knowledgeable participation will make class time productive and enjoyable. In some cases, there is not a single “right” answer; rather, there are better and worse arguments. Thus, I value a range of perspectives and arguments.

- Quizzes (10%). I expect to give about 8-10 short quizzes during the semester. The quizzes will regard the assigned readings and they will be administered online, through the IS.
- Seminar paper (30%). In the seminar paper you will have an opportunity to analyze two academic resources in detail. The paper will be 4-5 double-spaced pages long. In order to help you write a good paper, you are encouraged work on your paper in stages. The paper will be graded on a score from 0 to 30. Each of the preparatory stages will win you extra 1 point towards your score on the paper. In the first stage, you will put together a paper outline. Then you will write your first draft (stage 2) and edit it multiple times, helping each other with the edits (stages 3 and 4). In total, you can earn 4 extra points towards your score on the paper by working on the paper according to the recommended calendar. Detailed instructions for the seminar paper will be available on course website. Your paper must follow the instructions.  
Late-paper policy: Late submissions of the paper outline and of the early drafts will not be accepted. Late final draft of the seminar paper will be penalized by taking 2 points off the score on the paper for each day the final draft is late (for example, if the final draft is submitted two days after the deadline, you lose 4 points out of 30).
- Exams (Midterm 1 is worth 20%; Final exam is worth 25%). Exams will be a mix of multiple choice, short answer, and short essay questions. An exam-review sheet will be provided to help you study for the exams.

**Please note that you have only one attempt to take the midterm exam. Make up midterm exams will be allowed only in extenuating circumstances (such as medical emergency). In most cases, you will be required to provide documentation of an emergency.**

I will not grade on a curve. I will use this grading scale:

A	92-100%	D	68-75%
B	84-91%	E	60-67%
C	76-83%	F	0-59%

**Academic Integrity**

You are required to adhere to Masaryk University regulations. This involves following the rules of academic integrity. According to the university regulations, students are obliged to maintain academic honesty by refraining from plagiarism and from cheating during exams. Violations of academic integrity will result in sanctions. These sanctions range from taking points off the particular part of the grade to assigning F as the final grade in the class. Serious

violations of academic honesty will be reported to the FSS Disciplinary Committee. The decision about the sanction for academic dishonesty is entirely at the discretion of the instructor.

### **Course Format**

In this course, you will be learning new knowledge and skills in multiple ways:

- you will practice critical reading skills and acquire factual knowledge during your preparation for class (through critical reading of the assigned material and preparing discussion questions)
- you will practice discussion skills and critical analysis skills in class discussions
- you will learn additional empirical knowledge as well as practice critical writing skills in your seminar papers

### **Class rules**

Before coming to class, **please turn off anything that beeps or rings.**

Please, help create a nice learning environment for yourself and your classmates. Reading any material that is not related to the class, texting, or browsing the internet during the class is rude and will not be tolerated.

Please refrain from eating during class. Having something to drink is fine.

**If you have any questions regarding the material being discussed in class, do not hesitate to ask.** If you ask such question, it will help to clarify the issue not only for you but for your peers as well!

In class discussions, be respectful of other students' opinions. You have the right to hold and express whatever opinion on the discussed topic, no matter how unacceptable they may seem to your classmates. They can disagree with you but they must show respect your right to hold your opinion. Likewise, you must respect their right to express their views freely.

### **Course Outline**

Remember, you are required to **read the assigned readings *before*** the day for which they are assigned. Make sure that you submit **two discussion questions** regarding the week's readings **by 5pm the day before class.**

This syllabus is subject to change upon notification. All updates will be announced in class or by email. It is your responsibility to check the lecture notes and/or email for updates to the course outline.

#### **Week 1                      Sept 24**

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Introduction of the course.

What should the role of citizens be in a democratic society?

No discussion questions are required this week.

#### **Week 2                      Oct 1**

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What is public opinion? Studying public opinion empirically.

#### **Required:**

Clawson & Oxley pp. 3-20 and pp. 27-38.

#### **Recommended:**

Asher, Herbert. 2007. *Polling and the Public*. pp. 1-31

Pollock Philip. *The Essentials of Political Analysis*. pp. 113-126

## Week 3 Oct 8

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The most important attitude in public opinion in the EU: Support for the EU.

### Required:

Clawson & Oxley pp. 303-307.

Dalton, Russel. 2014. *Citizen Politics*, 6th edition, CQ Press, pp. 255-259.

Two articles assigned to you in week 2. Do not read these articles in full. Instead, only focus on the section where authors define support for the EU and the section where authors explain how they measure support for the EU. Write down the definition of the concept as well as how it is measured. Be prepared to present this information in class.

*For this class, make sure you complete the research described below, answer the following questions, and bring your written answers to class:*

1) Go to [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/cf/step1.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/cf/step1.cfm). Select item #4 (Membership to the EU) from the "select a question from the list" box.

*Task 1: What is the question wording? What are the answer options?*

2) Click "Step 2 – Choose a region." Select "EU" and click "Step – 3 Define a period."

3) Select September 1973 – May 2011 as the time period. Click "View Barometer results."

4) Click "View chart view" (on the right side of your screen).

*Task 2: What percentage of citizens support the EU? (Write down the range, for example: between 30 and 50%.) Briefly describe the chart (the over-time trend). Is there anything about the chart that surprises you?*

*Task 3: Pick a country of your choice and repeat steps 2-4. How does the country's trend compare to the trend in the entire EU?*

### Recommended:

Easton, D. 1975. "REASSESSMENT OF CONCEPT OF POLITICAL SUPPORT." *British Journal of Political Science* 5 (OCT):435-57.

Introductions to the following books:

Dalton, Russell J. 2004. *Democratic Challenges, Democratic Choices : The Erosion of Political Support in Advanced Industrial Democracies*, Comparative Politics. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press.

Norris, Pippa. 1999. *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Government*. Oxford England ; New York: Oxford University Press.

## Week 4 Oct 15

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Explaining support for the EU. Political economy and rationality.

### Required:

Clawson&Oxley pp.173-176.

Chapter 26 from Cini, Michelle and Pérez-Solórzano Borragán. 2013. *European Union Politics 4th ed.* Oxford: Oxford University Press. (pages 354-365; available in the IS)

Gabel, Matthew and Harvey Palmer. 1995. "Understanding the variation in public support for European integration. *European Journal of Political Research*. 27: 3-19.

### Recommended:

Gabel, M. 1998. "Public support for European integration: An empirical test of five theories." *Journal of Politics* 60 (2):333-54.

- Henjak, Andrija, G. Tóka, and David Sanders. 2012. "Support for European Integration." In *Citizens and the European Polity Mass Attitudes Towards the European and National Politics*, ed. D. Sanders, P. C. Magalhaes and G. Tóka. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Eichenberg, R. C., and R. J. Dalton. 2007. "Post-Maastricht Blues: The Transformation of Citizen Support for European Integration, 1973-2004." *Acta Politica* 42: 128-52.

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**Week 5**                      **Oct 22**

Explaining support for the EU cont. Cueing rationality.

**Required:**

- Anderson, C. J. 1998. "When in doubt, use proxies - Attitudes toward domestic politics and support for European integration." *Comparative Political Studies* 31 (5):569-601.
- Review the part about domestic proxies from chapter 26 from Cini and Borragán that you read for last week.

**Recommended:**

- Kritzinger, S. 2003. "The influence of the nation-state on individual support for the European Union." *European Union Politics* 4 (2):219-41.
- Sánchez-Cuenca, Ignacio. 2000. "The Political Basis for Support for European Integration." *European Union Politics* 1 (2):147-71.
- Harteveld, E., T. van der Meer, and C. E. De Vries. 2013. "In Europe we trust? Exploring three logics of trust in the European Union." *European Union Politics* 14 (4):542-65.

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**Week 6**                      **Oct 29**

Explaining support for the EU cont. Political psychology: cognitive mobilization and identity.

**Required:**

- Hooghe, L., and G. Marks. 2004. "Does identity or economic rationality drive public opinion on European integration?" *Ps-Political Science & Politics* 37 (3):415-20.
- In this article pay attention to figures 1 and 2. Be prepared to discuss what the figures show.

*For the two following articles, you are **not** required to read the entire article. Only skim the article and find out what the authors' argument is (in other words, find their main finding, their main claim).*

- McLaren, L. M. 2002. "Public support for the European Union: Cost/benefit analysis or perceived cultural threat?" *Journal of Politics* 64 (2):551-66.
- Serricchio, F., M. Tsakatika, and L. Quaglia. 2013. "Euro-scepticism and the Global Financial Crisis." *Jcms-Journal of Common Market Studies* 51 (1):51-64.

**Recommended:**

- Carey, Sean. "Undivided Loyalties: Is National Identity an Obstacle to European Integration?" *European Union Politics*, Vol. 3 (2002): 387-413.
- De Vreese, Claes H. and Hajo G. Boomgaarden. "Projecting EU Referendums: Fear of Immigration and Support for European Integration." *European Union Politics*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (March 2005): 59-82.
- Azrouit, Rachid, Joost van Spanje and Claes de Vreese. "Talking Turkey: Anti-Immigrant Attitudes and Their Effect on Support for Turkish Membership of the EU." *European Union Politics*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (January 2010): 3-19.

**Week 7**                      **Nov 5**  

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**MIDTERM EXAM** Review material from weeks 1-6.

**Week 8**                      **Nov 12**  

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**Paper outline is due.**

How resilient is public support for the EU to crises?

**Required:**

Ringlerova, Zuzana. N.d. "Weathering the Crisis: Evidence of Diffuse Support for the EU from a Six-Wave Dutch Panel." *European Union Politics* (forthcoming), DOI: 10.1177/1465116515588964.

- in this article, don't worry about the technical aspects of the article, focus on the substantive argument the article makes.

Ringlerova, Zuzana. 2015. Aggregate political support and the 2008 economic crisis. In *Mass public support for the European Union: Diffuse or specific in its character?* Ph.D. diss. Purdue University, pp. 38-49 (available in the IS).

**Week 9**                      **Nov 19**  

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Are citizens pliable? Political socialization.

**Required:**

Clawson & Oxley pp. 43-59

Lutz, Wolfgang, Sylvia Kritzing, and Vegard Skirbekk. 2006. "Population: The Demography of Growing European Identity." *Science* 314: 425-25.

Down, Ian, and Carole J. Wilson. 2013. "A rising generation of Europeans? Life-cycle and cohort effects on support for 'Europe'." *European Journal of Political Research* 52 (4):431-56.

- in case of this article, don't worry about the technical aspects of the article, focus on the substantive argument the article makes.

**Recommended:**

Jennings, K. and Niemi, R. 1968. "The Transmission of Political Values from Parent to Child," *American Political Science Review* 62.

Jennings, K. "Political Socialization," in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior*, ed. Russell J. Dalton and Hans-Dieter Klingemann, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mishler, W., and R. Rose. 2007. "Generation, Age, and Time: The Dynamics of Political Learning During Russia's Transformation." *American Journal of Political Science* 51: 822-34.

**Week 10**                      **Nov 26**  

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**First draft of your seminar paper is due.** Submit the first draft of your paper in the IS.

Are citizens pliable? Media effects.

**Required:**

Clawson & Oxley pp. 69-73, and pp. 81-99

Vliegthart, R., A. R. T. Schuck, H. G. Boomgaarden, and C. H. De Vreese. 2008. "News Coverage and Support for European Integration, 1990-2006." *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 20: 415-39.

**Recommended:**

- Bruter, M. 2009. "Time Bomb? The Dynamic Effect of News and Symbols on the Political Identity of European Citizens." *Comparative Political Studies* 42: 1498-536.
- Zaller, John. *The nature and origins of mass opinion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- de Vreese, Claes. 2004. "The Effects of Frames in Political Television on Issue Interpretation and Frame Salience." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 81(1).
- Nelson, T. E., Clawson, R. A., and Oxley, Z. M. 1997. "Media framing of a civil liberties conflict and its effect on tolerance." *American Political Science Review*, 567-583.

**Week 11      Dec 3**

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**Second draft of your seminar paper is due.** Submit the draft in the IS.

Political knowledge

**Required:**

Clawson & Oxley 211-228 and pp. 233-238

Clark, Nicholas. N.d.. The EU's information deficit: Comparing political knowledge across levels of governance. *Perspectives on European Politics and Society* (forthcoming). DOI:10.1080/15705854.2014.896158

**Recommended:**

- Clark, Nicholas, and Timothy Hellwig. 2012. "Information Effects and Mass Support for EU Policy Control." *European Union Politics* 13: 535-57.
- Karp, J., S. Banducci and S. Bowler. 2003. "To Know It Is to Love It? Satisfaction with Democracy in the European Union." *Comparative Political Studies*, 36(3): 271-292.

**Week 12      Dec 10**

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**Peer-evaluation of seminar papers is due.** Bring a copy of the evaluation to class.

*First part of the class:* Do citizens organize their political thinking? Does the mass public think about the EU the same way as the elites do?

**Required:**

Clawson & Oxley pp. 102- 105, 131-141, 158-160.

Costello, Rory, Thomassen, Jacques, and Martin Rosema. 2012. European Parliament Elections and Political Representation: Policy Congruence between Voters and Parties. *West-European Politics*, Vol. 35, No. 6, 1226–1248. You are required to read only pages 1226-1238, the rest of the article is a voluntary reading.

**Recommended:**

Marks, G., and M. Steenbergen. 2002. "Understanding Political Contestation in the European Union." *Comparative Political Studies* 35: 879-92.

*Second part of the class:* **Peer-evaluation of seminar papers.**

Read the seminar paper assigned to you. Give feedback you your colleague using the feedback form. Bring both the paper and the feedback form to class.

**Week 13      Dec 17**

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**Third draft of your seminar paper is due.** Revise your paper based on your colleague's feedback. Submit your edited draft in the IS.

## **Required:**

Hooghe, L. and Marks, G. 2009. "A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration: From Permissive Consensus to Constraining Dissensus." *British Journal of Political Science*, 39: 1- 23.

Steenbergen, M. R., E. E. Edwards, and C. E. de Vries. 2007. "Who's Cueing Whom? Mass-Elite Linkages and the Future of European Integration." *European Union Politics* 8: 13-35.

- in case of this article, you are not required to read the entire article. Only skim the article and find out what the authors' argument is (in other words, find their main finding, their main claim).

## **Examination period**

**The final draft of your seminar paper is due on Monday January 11 at 5pm.** Submit your paper to the IS. Make sure that the name of the file includes your surname.

**Final exam** dates will be announced in class.

## **Learning suggestions**

- When reading the assigned readings, read actively (use your own words to take notes summarizing each paragraph; summarize each article using your own words; note down questions, thoughts, critiques etc.). Think about the reading – about what is strong in the reading and what its weaknesses are. Is the argument persuasive? How does it relate to the theories you learned about in the class?
- If English is your second language and you would like to practice the language, I recommend that you socialize in an English speaking environment. You can also listen to English language radio programs or TV (both American and British public TV and radio stations have many excellent programs that are available online and free of charge).
- I recommend you use the *pomodoro technique* to help you use your work time efficiently (more information can be found at <http://pomodorotechnique.com/get-started/>, or at <http://www.tomato-timer.com> )
- Last but not least, **you are very welcome to come to my office hours or to contact me if you have any questions.**

## **Information for students with special needs**

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact me if they have any special needs. Your privacy will be respected. There are adaptive programs offered by Masaryk University which are designed to help students with disabilities. If you want to register to these programs, contact the Support Centre for Students with Special Needs (<http://www.teiresias.muni.cz/?lang=en>).

University regulations allow special accommodations for students who are parents to young children. Students who are parents to young children are encouraged to contact the instructor if they have any special needs.

## **Course caveat**

In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances beyond the instructor's control. Here are ways to get information about changes in this course:

- Course IS website and the instructor's email ([ringler@fss.muni.cz](mailto:ringler@fss.muni.cz))