

**POLI 490**  
**Analyzing European public opinion**

Fall 2020

**Instructor**

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**Meeting times**

Lecture (Online): Tu/Th 1:15-2:30  
Lecture hall: Chapman 211  
Office hours (Online): Tu/Th 10:00-11:00

Course website: [https://sakai.unc.edu/portal/site/poli490\\_fa20](https://sakai.unc.edu/portal/site/poli490_fa20)

**Course description**

The course introduces students to the theory and practice of studying European public opinion. The course is split into four parts. In the first part, we will discuss core concepts and important problems in the study of public opinion. In the second part, we will study tools and common data sets for the analysis of European public opinion. In the third part, we will examine several recent contributions on different aspects of European public opinion. In the fourth part, students will develop a research project in small groups.

After attending the course, students...

- ... are familiar with the basic concepts and research designs in the study of public opinion.
- ... are aware of important debates in the field of European public opinion.
- ... are able to interpret and critically evaluate survey research.
- ... are able to design and conduct a survey research project.
- ... are able to present their research findings in a written report.

**Class format**

Since the College of Arts and Sciences has moved their classes online, we will meet during the scheduled class time over Zoom. You can access the class at:  
<https://unc.zoom.us/j/96222191088>

**Course requirements**

- Data analysis quiz: 10%
- Short data analysis (Due September 30): 20%
- Group project: Research proposal (Due October 20): 20%
- Group project: Research paper (Due November 20): 30%
- Group project: Presentation: 20%
- Group project: Participation: 10%

### Data analysis quiz (10%)

For the first step in the research project, we will familiarize ourselves with the programming language R and the basics of data analysis using the Swirl package in R (<https://swirlstats.com>). You are expected to complete the following modules:

#### “R Programming”

- Chapters 1-9, 12, 15

#### “Statistical Inference”

- Chapters 1-3, 5-6, 9-11

#### “Regression Models”

- Chapters 1, 5-8, 12, 13

At the end of this section, there will be a quiz on these modules.

### Short data analysis (20%)

After the introduction to R and the basics of data analysis, we will discuss common data sets for the study of European public opinion. You are expected to choose one of these data sets and conduct a small analysis. To complete the assignment, you need to write R code to analyze a research question of your choice. In the code, you are expected to provide brief comments on the function of the individual code pieces as well as a brief interpretation of the results. The code should be written in a way that the analysis can be replicated on a different machine. At a minimum, your code should contain the following elements:

- Loading the data
- Recoding the data as necessary
- Conducting a cross-tabulation
- Presenting a scatterplot of two variables
- Calculating a correlation
- Calculating a regression model

Be sure to add the following pieces of information to your code: Name, course, semester, date of submission. You should also add a statement that you have complied with the Honor Code in your assignment. The code is turned in via email to [nyhuis@unc.edu](mailto:nyhuis@unc.edu). The document name should be in the following format: `lastname_firstname_opinion_fa20_analysis.R` (all lower case).

### Group project: Research proposal (20%)

The main goal of the class is to conduct a full analysis in a small research group. The first task is to identify a research question on European public opinion and to find suitable data to answer that question. You are expected to draft a short research proposal (no more than four pages) that presents your research question and how you intend to study the question. I will not grade the quality or viability of the research proposal (although the project needs to be viable eventually), but the clarity and the structure of your proposal.

The research proposals should be formatted as follows: Font Arial, 12 pt., double-spaced, 1-inch margins, no color. Please provide the following pieces of information on the cover page of your report: Authors, course, semester, date of submission. Be sure to add a statement that you have complied with the Honor Code. The pages should be numbered. The essays are turned in via email to nyhuis@unc.edu. The documents should be in the PDF format and the document names should be in the following format: lastname\_et\_al\_opinion\_fa20\_proposal.pdf (all lower case).

Group project: Research paper (30%)

After conducting your research project, you are expected to draft a report on your results (approximately 15 pages). We will discuss the structure and content of the report in class. In general, the report should contain the following elements:

- Introduction, including...
  - o ... research question
  - o ... relevance of the research question
  - o ... overview of the structure of the report
- Short literature review
- Data and methodology, including...
  - o ... research design
  - o ... case selection
  - o ... strategy for the data analysis
- Data analysis
- Conclusion, including...
  - o ... short summary of the research interest and findings
  - o ... implications of the findings
  - o ... potential shortcomings of the study
  - o ... possibilities for future research

The grade will not be based on the quality of the project results, but on whether your report contains all relevant features, how well you elaborate the components of the research design, findings, and potential shortcomings.

Please use the same formatting guidelines as before and the following document name: lastname\_et\_al\_opinion\_fa20\_report.pdf (all lower case).

Group project: Presentation (20%)

In the final sessions, you are expected to give a presentation on your research findings. Choose one project member to present for your group. Be sure to include all relevant features from the project report. Send me the slides for your presentation via email no later than 48 hours before class.

Project participation (10%)

To prevent shirking on the group project, we will use a mutual evaluation at the end of the project.

### Grading scale

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B+	87-89	A	94-100	A-	90-93
C+	77-79	B	84-86	B-	80-83
D+	67-69	C	74-76	C-	70-73
F	<60	D	60-66		

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### **Course materials**

All readings are published on Sakai. I will upload additional course materials and slides that we will use throughout the course.

### **Important dates**

- Data analysis quiz: September 10
- Due date short analysis: September 30
- Due date research proposal: October 20
- Due date research paper: November 20

### **Expectations**

#### Office hours (online)

Everyone is welcome to see me during my online office hours or write me an email. To speak in person, please send me an email request and I will send you a Zoom link.

#### Honor code

The Honor Code is in effect in this class. I am committed to treating Honor Code violations seriously and urge all students to become familiar with its terms set out at

<http://instrument.unc.edu>.

If you have questions, it is your responsibility to ask about the Code's application. All exams, written work, and other projects must be submitted with a statement that you have complied with the requirements of the Honor Code in all aspects of the submitted work.

## Course schedule

Date	Topic	Readings
Aug. 11	Introduction	–
<b><u>Basic concepts and research designs</u></b>		
Aug. 13	Public opinion	(Glynn et al., 2016, chap. 1)
Aug. 18	Measuring public opinion	(Glynn et al., 2016, chap. 3)
Aug. 20	Designing questionnaires	(Rasinski, 2008)
<b><u>Survey data analysis</u></b>		
Aug. 25	R basics I	–
Aug. 27	R basics II (Independent study)	–
Sept. 1	R basics III (Independent study)	–
Sept. 3	R basics IV (Independent study)	–
Sept. 8	R basics V (Independent study)	–
Sept. 10	Data analysis quiz	–
Sept. 15	Data sets I	–
Sept. 17	Data sets II	–
<b><u>Research findings</u></b>		
Sept. 22	National identity I	(Schild, 2001)
Sept. 24	National identity II	(Carey, 2002)
Sept. 29	European identity	(Scheuer and Schmitt, 2009)
Oct. 1	Attitudes towards European integration	(Gabel, 1998) (McLaren, 2002)
Oct. 6	Right-wing populism	(Oesch, 2008)
Oct. 8	Policy attitudes: Welfare state I	(van Oorschot, 2006)
Oct. 13	Policy attitudes: Welfare state II	(Blekesaune, 2013)
Oct. 15	Policy attitudes: Foreign and defense policy	(Peters, 2014)
Oct. 20	Policy attitudes: Immigration	(Sides and Citrin, 2007)

**Group project**

Oct. 22 Group project (Independent study) –

Oct. 27 Group project (Independent study) –

Oct. 29 Group project (Independent study) –

Nov. 3 Group project (Independent study) –

Nov. 5 Group project (Independent study) –

**Presentations**

Nov. 10 Presentations I –

Nov. 12 Presentations II –

Nov. 17 Review and conclusions –

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## Literature

- Blekesaune, M., 2013. Economic strain and public support for redistribution: A comparative analysis of 28 European countries. *J. Soc. Policy* 42, 57–72.
- Carey, S., 2002. Undivided loyalties: Is national identity an obstacle to European integration? *Eur. Union Polit.* 3, 387–413.
- Gabel, M., 1998. Public support for European integration: An empirical test of five theories. *J. Polit.* 60, 333–54.
- Glynn, C.J., Herbst, S., Lindeman, M., O’Keefe, G.J., Shapiro, R.Y., 2016. *Public opinion*. Routledge, New York.
- McLaren, L.M., 2002. Public support for the European Union: Cost/benefit analysis or perceived cultural threat? *J. Polit.* 64, 551–66.
- Oesch, D., 2008. Explaining worker’s support for right-wing populist parties in Western Europe: Evidence from Austria, Belgium, France, Norway, and Switzerland. *Int. Polit. Sci. Rev.* 29, 349–73.
- Peters, D., 2014. European security policy for the people? Public opinion and the EU’s common foreign, security and defence policy. *Eur. Secur.* 23, 388–408.
- Rasinski, K.A., 2008. Designing reliable and valid questionnaires, in: Donsbach, W., Traugott, M.W. (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Public Opinion Research*. Sage, London, pp. 361–73.
- Scheuer, A., Schmitt, H., 2009. Dynamics in European political identity. *J. Eur. Integr.* 31, 551–68.
- Schild, J., 2001. National v. European identities? French and Germans in the European multi-level system. *J. Common Mark. Stud.* 39, 331–51.
- Sides, J., Citrin, J., 2007. European opinion about immigration: The role of identities, interests and information. *Br. J. Polit. Sci.* 37, 477–504.
- van Oorschot, W., 2006. Making the difference in social Europe: Deservingness perceptions among citizens of European welfare states. *J. Eur. Soc. Policy* 16, 23–42.