

# POPULISM IN WESTERN EUROPE

Fall Term 2022/23

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## Course Description

Populism is on the rise across the world, but especially Western Europe has experienced an increase in populist parties and their voter base. Scholarly interest as well as public attention have grown alike. Research currently focuses to explain the success of populist parties but also why people get so appealed by them. Further it tries to explain if populism challenges democracy and to which extent. Also, it discusses if populism can be understood as a collecting tank for people that otherwise do not feel represented. The course gives an introduction to current debates in populism research with a strong focus on Western Europe.

## Objectives:

Students will learn state of the art research on populism with a strong focus on populism in Western Europe. The course will focus on comparative politics approaches in populism research but will also go beyond that. Thus, the course aims to provide an overview on (i) current definitions of populism; (ii) the effect of populism on democracy; (iii) populist party and voter behaviour; (iv) populist communication strategies and (v) the future of populism in reference to Covid-19 and conspiracy theories.

Further, students will learn how to read scientific paper and discuss them in class. We will focus on pitfalls, but also strengths of the required readings, so that students are prepared to write their own term paper at the end of the course. Also, students will get an insight into emerging text-as-data techniques in Political Science research. Using populism research as an example, we will look at current state of the art research in the emerging field of Computational Social Sciences. The course is designed as a introductory comparative politics course with a strong substantive focus on populism in Western Europe.

## Pre-Requirements:

Students should have taken the introductory Political Science courses in the first year of their undergraduate studies. Further, they should be able and willing to read English literature and participate in English during the course. No other formal requirements are needed.

## Course Requirements:

Students are required to have done the assigned readings before each class. Further on students are required to participate in the course and take part in the discussions. The course is designed in an interactive way. Thus, all listed readings are mandatory. Students can decide if they want to take the course for credits for a term paper (Modulabschlussprüfung – AP) or for credits for participation (Beteiligungsnachweis – BN).

**Requirements for the Modulabschlussprüfung:** A term paper of 4500-5000 words and a short oral presentation (about 5 minutes) of the topic of the term paper at the last day of the course (see *Small Research Colloquium*).

**Requirements for the Beteiligungsnachweis:** Four brief response papers of any of the

mandatory readings. Response papers should not exceed 500 words.

## Tentative Course Outline:

### Day 1 (Friday): Introduction to Populism

#### 10:00 – 13:00: Definition of Populism

Session 1:

- Welcome and general introduction, organisational questions
- What is Populism? How would you define populism? → Group Work

Session 2:

- Current Definitions of Populism in Political Science
- **Literature:**
  - Bonikowski, Bart and Noam Gidron. 2016. "Multiple traditions in populism research: Toward a theoretical synthesis." *APSA Comparative Politics Newsletter* 26(12):7-14.
  - Mudde, Cas. 2004. The Populist Zeitgeist. *Government and Opposition* 39(4):541-563.

#### 13:00 – 14:00: Lunch Break

#### 14:00 – 17:00: Populism and Democracy

Session 3:

- **Literature:**
  - Mudde, Cas and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser. 2012. Populism: corrective and threat to democracy. In: *Populism in Europe and the Americas: Threat Or Corrective for Democracy?* ed. Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser. Cambridge University Press. pp. 205–222.

Session 4:

- **Literature:**
  - Urbinati, Nadia. 2019. "Political Theory of Populism." *Annual Review of Political Science* 22(1):111–127.

### Day 2 (Saturday): Demand and Supply Side of Populism

#### 10:00 – 13:00: Populist Parties

Session 5:

- **Literature:**
  - Rooduijn, Matthijs. 2019. "State of the Field: How to Study Populism and Adjacent Topics? A Plea for Both More and Less Focus." *European Journal of Political Research*. 58(1):362-372.

Session 6:

- **Literature:**

Otjes, Simon and Tom Louwense. 2015. "Populists in Parliament: Comparing Left-Wing and Right-Wing Populism in the Netherlands." *Political Studies*. 63(1):60-79.

**13:00 – 14:00: Lunch Break**

**14:00 – 17:00: The Populist Vote**

Session 7:

- **Literature:**

Akkerman, Agnes, Cas Mudde and Andrej Zaslove. 2014. "How Populist Are the People? Measuring Populist Attitudes in Voters." *Comparative Political Studies* 47(9):1324-1353.

Session 8:

- How to write a term paper for the course
- Group Work → What research are you interested? Possible research questions for a term paper

**Day 3 (Friday): Populist Communication**

**10:00 – 13:00: Communication Strategies of Populist Actors**

Session 9:

- **Literature:**

Reinemann, Carsten, James Stanyer, Toril Aalberg, Frank Esser and Claes H. de Vreese. 2019. *Communicating Populism: Comparing Actor Perceptions, Media Coverage, and Effects on Citizens in Europe*. Routledge. (Chapter 1)

Session 10:

- **Literature:**

Busby, Ethan C., Joshua R. Gubler and Kirk A. Hawkins. 2019. Framing and Blame Attribution in Populist Rhetoric. *The Journal of Politics* 81(2):616-630.

**13:00 – 14:00: Lunch Break**

**14:00 – 17:00: Text-As-Data Approaches in Populism Research**

Session 11:

- **Literature:**

Rooduijn, Matthijs and Teun Pauwels. 2011. Measuring Populism: Comparing Two Methods of Content Analysis. *West European Politics* 34(6):1272-1283.

Session 12:

- Hands-on lab session in R → short introduction to R and its usage for text-as-data approaches
- Creating a populism dictionary and application in R → Group Work

## Day 4 (Saturday): The Future of Populism

### **10:00 – 13:00: Populism During the Covid-19 Crisis**

Session 13:

- **Literature:**

Ringe, Nils, and Lucio Rennó. 2022. Populists and the Pandemic: How Populists Around the World Responded to COVID-19. In: *Populists and the Pandemic*. ed. Nils Ringe and Lucio Rennó. Routledge. pp. 1-18.

Session 14:

- **Literature:**

Eberl, Jakob-Moritz, Robert A. Huber and Esther Greussing. 2021. "From populism to the "plandemic": why populists believe in COVID-19 conspiracies." *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 31(Supl. 1), 272-284.

### **13:00 – 14:00: Lunch Break**

### **14:00 – 17:00: Small Research Colloquium**

Session 15 and Session 16:

- Short Presentation about research topic for term paper
  - Presentation should be about 5 minutes and focus on the research question, hypothesis and possible data sources to answer the research question
  - Everyone in the course is expected to give a short statement/idea towards the presentation (irrespective of writing a term paper or not)
- Conclusion, pending questions and evaluation of the course

## References:

- Akkerman, Agnes, Cas Mudde and Andrej Zaslove. 2014. "How Populist Are the People? Measuring Populist Attitudes in Voters." *Comparative Political Studies* 47(9):1324-1353.
- Bonikowski, Bart and Noam Gidron. 2016. "Multiple traditions in populism research: Toward a theoretical synthesis." *APSA Comparative Politics Newsletter* 26(12):7-14.
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- Eberl, Jakob-Moritz, Robert A. Huber and Esther Greussing. 2021. "From populism to the "pandemic": why populists believe in COVID-19 conspiracies." *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 31(Supl. 1), 272-284.
- Mudde, Cas. 2004. The Populist Zeitgeist. *Government and Opposition* 39(4):541-563.
- Mudde, Cas and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser. 2012. Populism: corrective and threat to democracy. In: *Populism in Europe and the Americas: Threat Or Corrective for Democracy?* ed. Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser. Cambridge University Press. pp. 205–222.
- Otjes, Simon and Tom Louwerse. 2015. "Populists in Parliament: Comparing Left-Wing and Right-Wing Populism in the Netherlands." *Political Studies*. 63(1):60-79.
- Reinemann, Carsten, James Stanyer, Toril Aalberg, Frank Esser and Claes H. de Vreese. 2019. Communicating Populism: Comparing Actor Perceptions, Media Coverage, and Effects on Citizens in Europe. Routledge. (Chapter 1)
- Ringe, Nils, and Lucio Rennó. 2022. Populists and the Pandemic: How Populists Around the World Responded to COVID-19. In: *Populists and the Pandemic*. ed. Nils Ringe and Lucio Rennó. Routledge. pp. 1-18.
- Rooduijn, Matthijs and Teun Pauwels. 2011. Measuring Populism: Comparing Two Methods of Content Analysis. *West European Politics* 34(6):1272-1283.
- Rooduijn, Matthijs. 2019. "State of the Field: How to Study Populism and Adjacent Topics? A Plea for Both More and Less Focus." *European Journal of Political Research*. 58(1):362-372.
- Urbinati, Nadia. 2019. "Political Theory of Populism." *Annual Review of Political Science* 22(1):111–127.