1. **Title of the module**

POLI6550 (PO655) Public Opinion and Polling

1. **School or partner institution which will be responsible for management of the module**

Politics and International Relations

1. **The level of the module (Level 4, Level 5, Level 6 or Level 7)**

Level 6

1. **The number of credits and the ECTS value which the module represents**

15 credits (7.5 ECTS)

1. **Which term(s) the module is to be taught in (or other teaching pattern)**

Autumn or Spring

1. **Prerequisite and co-requisite modules**

POLI6570 – Political Research and Analysis, or equivalent. Due to the complex nature of some of the sources on which the module will draw, and in the interests of progression, entry onto the module will be restricted to Stage 3 students.

1. **The programmes of study to which the module contributes**

An optional module for all Politics and International Relations BA students. Available as a wild module to the wider university.

1. **The intended subject specific learning outcomes.  
   On successfully completing the module students will be able to:**

1: Show an advanced understanding of the nature and meanings of public opinion.

2: Identify and analyse different theories of the attitude formation process, including understanding the role played in attitude formation by external contexts and actors.

3: Identify different perspectives on the role of sample surveys in measuring public opinion

4: Critically appraise the construction of surveys and survey questions, and identify good practice in their design.

5: Identify and critically evaluate the main debates over the appropriate role of public opinion in modern democracies.

1. **The intended generic learning outcomes.  
   On successfully completing the module students will be able to:**

1: Think critically about political events, ideas and institutions

2: Apply theory to help conceptualise and understand the issues involved in questions of public concern

3: understand the problematic character of inquiry in the discipline

4: Communicate with their peers in both an academic and professional setting

5: Be equipped to use a variety of tools effectively to conduct research

6: Engage effectively in independent research and learning required for further study or professional work, demonstrating initiative, self-organisation and time-management

7: Understand the process of interpreting primary sources and materials, and be able to distinguish between different types of interpretation

1. **A synopsis of the curriculum**

Democracy rests on the will of citizens. But how can we identify this ‘will’? Elections are one method; but more regular expressions of citizen views are possible via opinion polls. Indeed, a range of public and private bodies routinely use polls to identify popular attitudes. But what are the ‘opinions’ supposedly revealed by these polls, how do surveys go about identifying opinions and how valid are their results?

This module introduces students to the theory and practice of public opinion and its measurement. The module focuses on two main questions. First, what is public opinion? How far do people’s attitudes pre-exist and how far are they instead ‘shaped’ by the way questions are asked? Are attitudes informed and considered, or are they largely knee-jerk responses based on little information? If, in fact, citizens know little about politics, are there ways in which they can, nonetheless, form meaningful views on important public issues? The answers to these questions are central to the task of assessing the proper role of public opinion in modern democracies. The second question asks how public opinion is measured. What are the main features of social surveys, and how well do they measure public attitudes? This section of the module pays particular attention to the ways that different types of survey can affect the responses that people give, and to the principles and practices of effective survey design.

1. **Reading list (Indicative list, current at time of publication. Reading lists will be published annually)**

* Floyd Fowler, Survey Research Methods, , Sage (2013)
* Carroll Glynn et al, Public Opinion, Westview Press (2016)
* Vincent Price, Public Opinion, Sage (1992)
* Roger Tourangeau et al, The Psychology of Survey Response, Cambridge (2000)
* John Zaller, The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion, Cambridge (1992)

1. **Learning and teaching methods**

Total contact hours: 22

Private study hours: 128

Total study hours: 150

1. **Assessment methods**
   1. Main assessment methods

* Essay, 3000 words, 60%
* Survey specification, 2500 words, 40%

13.2 Reassessment methods

Reassessment instrument: 100% coursework

1. **Map of module learning outcomes (sections 8 & 9) to learning and teaching methods (section12) and methods of assessment (section 13)**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Module learning outcome** | 8.1 | 8.2 | 8.3 | 8.4 | 8.5 | 9.1 | 9.2 | 9.3 | 9.4 | 9.5 | 9.6 | 9.7 |
| **Learning/ teaching method** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Private Study | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** |
| Lectures | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** |  |  |  | **x** |
| Seminars | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** |
| **Assessment method** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Essay | **x** | **x** |  |  | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** |
| Survey specification |  |  | **x** | **x** |  | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** |  |  |

1. **Inclusive module design**

The School recognises and has embedded the expectations of current equality legislation, by ensuring that the module is as accessible as possible by design. Additional alternative arrangements for students with Inclusive Learning Plans (ILPs)/declared disabilities will be made on an individual basis, in consultation with the relevant policies and support services.

The inclusive practices in the guidance (see Annex B Appendix A) have been considered in order to support all students in the following areas:

a) Accessible resources and curriculum

b) Learning, teaching and assessment methods

1. **Campus(es) or centre(s) where module will be delivered**

Canterbury

1. **Internationalisation**

Examples of international contexts and organisations will be used where applicable to illustrate the subject content. Students will have the opportunity to develop the ability to think globally and have an understanding of international cultures through working with team members and students within their cohort, from diverse range of backgrounds.

**FACULTIES SUPPORT OFFICE USE ONLY**

**Revision record – all revisions must be recorded in the grid and full details of the change retained in the appropriate committee records.**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date approved | Major/minor revision | Start date of the delivery of revised version | Section revised | Impacts PLOs (Q6&7 cover sheet) |
| 09/01/19 | Major | September 2020 | 8,11,13 | No |
|  |  |  |  |  |

Revised FSO Feb 2018