



FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT

1st Leuven-Montréal Winter School on Elections and Voting Behaviour

*Supported by the
ECPR Standing Group on
Public Opinion and Voting Behaviour in a Comparative Perspective*

15-22 January 2015, Leuven (Belgium)

Elections and voting behaviour are central topics in political science. This leads to a large and continuously expanding literature on voters and their behaviour during elections. Almost by definition, this line of research calls for sophisticated research, both from a theoretical and a methodological point of view. Furthermore, methods to investigate these topics are varied and evolving rapidly. The high quality standards in the field imply that there is a need for specific *training for PhD students* working on these topics. The Leuven-Montréal Winter School addresses this need by offering a program focused on theories and methods in the study of elections and voting behaviour. The Winter School is organized jointly by the universities of Montréal and Leuven, and is based on the expertise of these universities and other well-known scholars on elections and voting behaviour.

Target audience

Graduate students in electoral behaviour, comparative politics or political parties. Given the fact that we envision intensive interaction between students and professors, we foresee between 18 and a maximum of 30 participants. Ideally, we will have a mix of junior and more advanced PhD students.

Objectives

Our aim is to provide students with the core theoretical frameworks and empirical tools in the field of electoral behaviour. Furthermore, we seek to offer a forum where junior scholars can interact and discuss their work with senior scholars in the field. Additionally, students are encouraged to produce high-level research and the feedback received should strengthen the publication potential of their work.

Courses

The school consists of 7 days of teaching, with approximately 42 contact hours. The contact hours are comprised of staff lectures, student presentations and seminar discussions.

Lectures in this first edition will be given by André Blais (Université de Montréal), Ruth Dassonneville (KU Leuven), Patrick Fournier (Université de Montréal), Marc Hooghe (KU Leuven), Romain Lachat (Universitat Pompeu Fabra), Michael S. Lewis-Beck (University of Iowa), and Claes de Vreese (University of Amsterdam). Various topics of electoral behaviour will be covered this period: economic voting, electoral participation, issue voting, political communication, political psychology, and strategic voting. The first day will offer an introduction to theories of electoral behaviour and to measurements and methods for research on elections.

Students are required to submit a 8,000-word paper before the start of the Winter School (at least 7 days before). The paper could take the form of an empirical study, a theoretical discussion, a review of the literature or a research design. Students will be presenting their paper at one of the afternoon sessions and will receive feedback from other students and one of the leading academics who are teaching at the Winter School. The best student paper will be awarded the Victor D'Hondt Prize for Electoral Research.

Students are required to attend all sessions and to actively take part in the discussions that follow the presentations of fellow students and senior specialists. Successful participation in the Winter School will be fully accredited (6 ECTS).

Fees

The program fee is €320 and includes lunches, course material and the social program. Students can also opt to book a €580 package that additionally includes accommodation (sharing a room with another participant). Students from non-OECD countries can apply for a student grant.

Applications

Interested students should send a 500-word abstract of their proposed paper to ruth.dassonneville@soc.kuleuven.be before December 1st 2014. Applications should also contain information on the topic of the students' dissertation, their affiliation, as well as the date of first enrolment in a PhD program.

Venue

The Winter School will take place at the University of Leuven in Belgium. This university was established in 1425, and it combines the tradition of a small and pleasant university town with a drive for scientific excellence. In the most recent Academic Ranking of World Universities in Social Science, it received the 10th place in Europe. Leuven is well connected, both because of the presence of Brussels Airport (15 minutes from Leuven), and the international railway network to Brussels.

More information

Day-to-day schedule

Thursday 15 January	
Morning session	André Blais – Approaches and determinants of voting behaviour
Afternoon session	Ruth Dassonneville – Conducting research on voting behaviour
Friday 16 January	
Morning session	Michael S. Lewis-Beck – Economic voting
Afternoon session	Student papers
Saturday 17 January	
Morning session	André Blais – Strategic voting
Afternoon session	Student papers
Sunday 18 January	Social program
Monday 19 January	
Morning session	Patrick Fournier – Political psychology and voting behaviour
Afternoon session	Student papers
Tuesday 20 January	
Morning session	Claes de Vreese – Media effects on voting behaviour
Afternoon session	Student papers
Wednesday 21 January	
Morning session	Romain Lachat – Issue voting
Afternoon session	Student papers
Thursday 22 January	
Afternoon session	Marc Hooghe – Voting as a form of political participation
Afternoon session	Student papers
Closing session, certificates, reception, winner of the 1st Victor D'Hondt prize	

Location

In 2015, the Winter School takes place in Leuven:

Huis Bethlehem, room 00.18 - raadzaal bethlehem
Schapenstraat 34
B-3000 Leuven (Belgium)

Student accommodation (included in the full package) will be in the Ibis budget hotel in Leuven:
<http://www.ibis.com/gb/hotel-6682-ibis-budget-leuven-centrum/index.shtml>

The Winter School is organized jointly by the universities of Leuven and Montréal. The 2016 edition will take place in Montréal (Canada).