



Seminar: 215F22

Political Culture & Norms: How Societies Change

Version: April 20, 2022

Section: Political Behavior

Term: Spring term 2022

Time: Wed 14.15 pm – 17.00 pm

Lecture Room: 1330-038

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Office: Building 1340, Room 234

Office hours: Wed 17.00 pm; immediately after class

Course description:

- MA seminar
- 3 hours per week
- Language: English
- Exercises & exams:
 1. Literature review
 2. Presentation of research idea
 3. Peer review during mini conferences
 4. Term paper (\approx 7000-9000 words; 100 % of your grade)

What is political culture? How can we measure it? How does it affect political preferences? And how does culture change across space and time? In this course, we will try to compile answers to these questions which have been at the heart of political science since its early beginnings. Reading and discussing classic work along with research from economics and social psychology, but also non-academic readings (e.g. Philip Roth, “The Plot Against America”), the diverse reading list tries to provide an encompassing perspective on political culture and norms. We will learn that political culture is a complex concept and deeply connected to how our political environment and we ourselves perceive politics. Political culture is often sticky, but significant changes in political systems – such as new extreme parties emerging – changes our perception of norms in society and eventually political culture. To better understand when political culture changes, we will discuss and analyse historical examples during which norms in society eroded and extremism became the only game in town – e.g. fascist regimes during the 1930s – and will try to link these periods with developments today – e.g. “The Trump election and Presidency”. To understand which effects political culture and norms have, a key component of the course will be to better understand methods of causal inference.

Introductory Readings:

- **General readings:** The following readings are helpful to support you in the process of conducting your own research assignments throughout your studies. Specifically the readings on how to write appear to have a crucial impact on the quality of your writing.

Writing:

1. Graff, G. and Birkenstein, C. (2014). *They Say, I Say – The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*. W.W. Norton Company, New York
2. Zinsser, W. (2001). *On Writing Well*. Quill

Research Design:

3. Cunningham, S. (2021). *Causal Inference: The Mixtape*. Yale University Press, New Haven & London
4. Angrist, J. D. and Pischke, J.-S. (2009). *Mostly Harmless Econometrics: An Empiricist's Companion*. Princeton University Press, Princeton & Oxford
5. Imai, K. (2018). *Quantitative Social Science: An Introduction*. Princeton University Press, Princeton

Theories, concepts, mechanisms:

6. Levitsky, S. R. and Ziblatt, D. (2018). *How Democracies Die*. Crown, New York
7. Putnam, R. D. (1993). *Making Democracy Work*. Princeton University Press, New Haven
8. Bicchieri, C. (2016). *Norms in the wild: How to diagnose, measure, and change social norms*. Oxford University Press, Oxford <https://oxford.universitypressscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190622046.001.0001/acprof-9780190622046>

- **Non-scientific reading:** Besides the academic readings I can highly recommend reading: **Philip Roth, “The Plot Against America”**. Great novel, timely, and a great piece of counterfactual thinking in contemporary literature.

My teaching approach:

Each session will be based on lecturing parts by me, presenting, discussing and expanding the readings. In these parts students are encouraged to bring in any questions they have as well as critically discuss the readings. Besides lecturing and class discussion each session will provide students with peer/group-work exercises during which we critically examine and apply the ideas introduced in the readings.

I will also assign peers. Your peer will not only discuss your presentation during the conference season but also be a constant point of interaction throughout the seminar – both within as well as hopefully outside of the seminar. The idea here is also that a peer will provide you with new perspectives on a matter/concern/question you have. You can learn from them as much as they can learn from you.

Expectations:

- **Active participation**
- Students write a brief **“literature review”** (1 pager; font size 12; 1.5 spacing; justified text) that critically discusses one reading of one seminar session. It is not sufficient to repeat the key arguments of the readings. Instead students need to a) reproduce the key arguments/concepts/mechanisms in the readings, b) discuss potential shortcomings/contradictions in the readings (logic of argumentation; empirical & methodological concerns) and c) present the key contributions/strength of one reading assigned in the course. The key component I’m looking for here is an independent and critical engagement with an academic piece of work.

Monday before the upcoming seminar meeting literature reviews should be uploaded to brightspace.

The literature reviews are a critical component for the seminar: they tell me how you engage with the readings, which troubles you might have with it, and they are a key piece for the in-class discussions.

- The **presentation** (10 minutes) takes place at the end of the term. Content of the presentation should be each student's individual research idea. Thus, students should not present a literature review, but aim to provide a first insight about the ideas they want to work on in their term papers.

The presentations are key to the success of your paper. Use them to get an understanding if your idea flies; to discuss current issues you might encounter; challenges you haven't answered yet etc.

- The **term paper** is a written paper to be submitted at the end of the course (\approx journal article length (7000-9000 words including bibliography); font size 12; 1.5 spacing; justified text). More on the formal requirements can be found here: [Formal requirements for submission of take-home assignments](#) . Please list the number of characters (with blanks) on the frontpage of your paper.*

Term papers should develop an original argument and test this argument empirically. Term papers contain an 1) introduction 2) literature review 3) theoretical argument 4) research design 5) results 6) conclusion section. It is key to re-capture the original arguments/discussion in the academic literature, to develop an own argument on the subject and to test this argument rigorously. Thereby, the paper needs to be based on a student's presentation and might as well be based on the literature review.

- **Norms of interaction:** It is central to academic seminars that we all engage together in a respectful manner: Let others be part of the conversation, seek to understand their perspective, engage with it and never use strong, discouraging language or strategies of bullying. Any form of intolerance or discrimination is not welcomed in any of my seminars.

Grading:

- How will I evaluate your papers? A brief indicative overview: 1) Motivation of research questions (academically and beyond) 2) structure and logic of argumentation 3) quality of literature review (e.g. debate covered exhaustively; quality of discussion; structure) 4) adequate expansion of readings used in the seminar 5) quality of theoretical argument (e.g. mechanisms clear; logical derivation of hypotheses) 6) quality of research design (e.g. limitations correctly discussed) 7) correct, adequate and embedded discussion of findings 8) meaningful discussion of limitations, scope conditions and frame.

Work load (an example):

- 1 ECTS = 25-30 hours (according to Bologna rules)
- 15 ECTS \times 25 hours = 375 hours
- Weekly = 375 hours / 14 term weeks \approx 26.8 hours per week

Table 1: Work load, a pessimistic approximation:

	week	term
Seminar attendance	2.75	38.5
Readings	6	84
Literature Review		4
Presentation		9
Term paper	4	56
Σ	12.75	191.5

All in all the workload should be way below the actual goals of Bologna.

*I don't care much about these – I will not recount them – but the formal requirement is given in characters (max. 56,000 character which corresponds to 9000 words, 23 pages approximately.)

Prerequisites:

- Knowledge of key concepts in political science, more specifically in Comparative Politics & Political Behavior.
- Knowledge of basic quantitative methods in political science (OLS regression (*needed*); panel data analysis (*preferred*); intro to causal inferences (*at best*))

Key dates!!!:

1. Upload literature review **Monday** before the session for which the reading is assigned in the syllabus
2. Presentation slots **27.04.** or **04.05.** or **11.05.**
3. Handing in of term paper **07.06.2022**, see: [Exam schedules - Master](#)

Relevant techniques and tricks to navigate an academic seminar:

- *Reading scientific papers:* There is tons of information on the web how to read and engage with scientific articles. Many of these push you to a) read faster b) read more c) find the key information from papers quicker. Some of the readings I encourage you to use here are: "[How to Read a Paper by Keshav](#)", "[How to Read Political Science: A Guide in Four Steps by Green](#)" or "[How to read and understand a scientific paper: a guide for non-scientists by Jennifer Raff](#)". In many ways the starting point to read a paper is to classify it quickly into which type of a paper it is and how you can then extract the relevant info you need from it. There is also no shortcut to reading: you need to read! The more you read the better you get at it and writing as well.
- *Writing scientific papers:* it is key for you that you engage with your term paper as early as possible. In each session we will work on parts of your term paper. We will begin by trying to understand how in the world you can come up with a research topic and question all the way to understand the key parts you need to discuss in your research design section. The goal of this is to provide you as much guidance as possible for your term paper. There are many good readings to help you navigate academic writing, e.g.: <https://www.uvm.edu/~cbeer/ps174/ResearchPaper.html>, "[Writing a Political Science Essay by King](#)" or Graff, G. and Birkenstein, C. (2014). *They Say, I Say – The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*. W.W. Norton Company, New York. In my experience the key part if to get started as soon as you enter a seminar, try to find out what interests you the most and dig into it.

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Detailed course outline

Each session is based on several readings. Out of these readings usually **two readings** are assigned to be read by each student *before* the session takes place. It is expected that students not only read the texts, but also critically engage with them. You should be able to summarize the key arguments of each assigned reading and come-up with at least three discussion points for each reading.

Legend:

reading - stuff you need to read

lit - stuff you might want to read

📄 - link to replication data & code

02.02. Organization

- Logistics
- How to find a research question & how to write a paper

lit Graff, G. and Birkenstein, C. (2014). *They Say, I Say – The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*. W.W. Norton Company, New York

Introductory lecture

09.02. Lecture: What are culture and norms? How can we approach them scientifically?

- This session aims to motivate the reasons why we should study political culture and norms
- What is political culture?
- What is a norm and how does it relate to culture?
- What are the standard approaches to approximate culture/norms?
- What are the key issues with measuring culture/norms?
- What is social desirability bias and why does it matter in particular when we measure culture/norms?

reading Cialdini, R. B. and Trost, M. R. (1998). Social Influence: Social Norms, Conformity and Compliance. In Daniel, G., Fiske, S. T., and Lindzey, G., editors, *The Handbook of Social Psychology*, page 151. Wiley

reading Henrich, J., Heine, S. J., and Norenzayan, A. (2010). The weirdest people in the world? *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 33(2-3):61–83

reading Bicchieri, C. (2016). *Norms in the wild: How to diagnose, measure, and change social norms*. Oxford University Press, Oxford <https://oxford.universitypressscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190622046.001.0001/acprof-9780190622046>

lit Putnam, R. D. (1993). *Making Democracy Work*. Princeton University Press, New Haven

lit Fehr, E. and Hoff, K. (2011). Introduction: Tastes, Castes and Culture: The Influence of Society on Preferences. *Economic Journal*, 121(556):396–412

lit Schmidt, M. F., Butler, L. P., Heinz, J., and Tomasello, M. (2016). Young Children See a Single Action and Infer a Social Norm: Promiscuous Normativity in 3-Year-Olds. *Psychological Science*, 27(10):1360–1370

lit Herrmann, B., Thöni, C., and Gächter, S. (2007). Antisocial Punishment Across Societies. *Science*, 317(july):4

lit Boyd, R. and Richerson, P. J. (1985). *Culture and the Evolutionary Process*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago

lit Silver, B. D., Anderson, B. A., and Abramson, P. R. (1986). Who Overreports Voting? *American Political Science Review*, 80(2):613–624

lit Gibbs, J. P. (1965). Norms: The Problem of Definition and Classification. *American Journal of Sociology*, 70(5):586–594

podcast [The Ezra Klein show: “How Democracies Die”](#)

16.02. Reading week: Please read as much as you can!

- We will not meet during this week. The goal of this week is to read as much as you can from the course readings of last week: catch up on the key concepts, theories and ideas. Find your way through them and identify what you mostly care about in order to get your ideas for your paper started.

Theory, concepts, big picture

23.02. The origins of political culture and norms

- How can we approach the study of political culture?
- What are the origins of political culture?
- What don't we know about culture?

reading Nunn, N. and Wantchekon, L. (2011). The slave trade and the origins of Mistrust in Africa. *American Economic Review*, 101(7):3221–3252

reading Talhelm, T. and English, A. S. (2020). Historically rice-farming societies have tighter social norms in China and worldwide. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 117(33):19816–19824

lit Boyd, R. and Richerson, P. J. (1995). Why does culture increase human adaptability? *Ethology and Sociobiology*, 16(2):125–143

lit Handwerker, W. P. (1989). The Origins and Evolution of Culture. *American Anthropologist*, 91(2):313–326

lit Alesina, A., Giuliano, P., and Nunn, N. (2013). On the Origins of Gender Roles: Women And The Plough. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 128(May):469–530

lit Foos, F. and Bischof, D. (2021). Tabloid Media Campaigns and Public Opinion: Quasi-Experimental Evidence on Euroscepticism in England. *American Political Science Review*, page (forthcoming)

📖 Nunn & Watchekon, 2011: search for “slave trade” on <https://scholar.harvard.edu/nunn/pages/data-0>

📖 Talhelm et al. 2020: <https://osf.io/q3pjf/>

02.03. The persistence of political culture and norms

- Does political culture persist?
- Which factors drive persistence of political culture?

reading Acharya, A., Blackwell, M., and Sen, M. (2016). The Political Legacy of American Slavery. *Journal of Politics*, 78(3):621–641

- reading** Homola, J., Pereira, M. M., and Tavits, M. (2020). Legacies of the Third Reich: Concentration Camps and Out-group Intolerance. *American Political Science Review*, pages 1–18
- lit Voigtländer, N. and Voth, H.-j. (2015). Nazi indoctrination and anti-Semitic beliefs in Germany. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 112(26):7931–7936
- lit Voigtländer, N. and Voth, H.-j. (2012). Persecution perpetuated: the medieval origins of anti-Semitic violence in Nazi Germany. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 127(3):1339–1392
- lit Fouka, V. and Voth, H.-J. (2021). Collective Remembrance and Private Choice: German-Greek Conflict and Consumer Behavior in Times of Crisis * https://vfouka.people.stanford.edu/sites/g/files/sbiybj4871/f/collective_memory_0.pdf
- lit Grosjean, P. (2014). A History of Violence: The Culture of Honor and Homicide in the US South. *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 12(5):1285–1316
- lit Dell, M. (2010). The Persistent Effects of Peru’s Mining Mita. *Econometrica*, 78(6):1863–1903
- lit Rozenas, A., Schutte, S., and Zhukov, Y. (2017). The political legacy of violence: The long-term impact of Stalin’s repression in Ukraine. *Journal of Politics*, 79(4):1147–1161
- lit Ziblatt, D., Hilbig, H., and Bischof, D. (2021). Wealth of Tongues: Why Peripheral Regions Vote for the Radical Right in Germany <https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/syr84/>
- news [Putin’s Russia Has To Deal With the Legacy of World War II](#)
- news [The Historical Dispute Behind Russia’s Threat to Invade Ukraine](#)
- 📖 Acharya, A., Blackwell, M., and Sen: <https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.7910/DVN/CAEEG7>
- 📖 Homola, J., Pereira, M. M., and Tavits, M: <https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.7910/DVN/JOGBTX>

09.03. When political culture and norms change

- How does change look like?
- Which factors determine change?
- Is there always an identifiable root cause to change?

reading Valentim, V. (2021). Parliamentary Representation and the Normalization of Radical Right Support. *Comparative Political Studies*, pages 1–37

reading Ager, P., Bursztyn, L., Leucht, L., and Voth, H.-J. (2021). Killer Incentives: Rivalry, Performance and Risk-Taking among German Fighter Pilots, 1939–45. *The Review of Economic Studies*, (December):1–36

- lit Nunn, N. (2022). On the Dynamics of Human Behavior: The Past, Present, and Future of Culture, Conflict, and Cooperation <https://www.nber.org/papers/w29804>
- lit Bursztyn, L., Egorov, G., and Fiorin, S. (2020). From extreme to mainstream: The erosion of social norms. *American Economic Review*, 110(11):3522–3548
- lit Bischof, D. and Wagner, M. (2019). Do Voters Polarize When Radical Parties Enter Parliament? *American Journal of Political Science*, 63(4):888–904

lit Mastroianni, A. M. and Dana, J. (2022). Widespread misperceptions of long-term attitude change. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science*

blog [Broadstreet “Social change” by Vicky Fouka](#)

📖 Valentim: <https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.7910/DVN/Z6S26H>

📖 Ager et al.: <https://zenodo.org/record/5518208#.YicX9C8w1t8>

How culture and norms matter in politics ...

16.03. Social norms and turnout

- Which role can social norms play for elections?
- Which type of references matter for our electoral choice?

reading Gerber, A. S., Green, D. P., and Larimer, C. W. (2008). Social pressure and voter turnout: Evidence from a large-scale field experiment. *American Political Science Review*, 102(1):33–48

reading Doherty, D., Dowling, C. M., Gerber, A. S., and Huber, G. A. (2017). Are Voting norms conditional? how electoral context and peer behavior shape the social returns to voting. *Journal of Politics*, 79(3):1095–1100

lit Sinclair, B., McConnell, M., and Michelson, M. R. (2013). Local Canvassing: The Efficacy of Grassroots Voter Mobilization. *Political Communication*, 30(1):42–57

lit Gerber, A. S. and Rogers, T. (2009). Descriptive Social Norms and Motivation to Vote: Everybody’s Voting and so Should You. *Journal of Politics*, 71(1):178–191

lit Coppock, A. and Green, D. P. (2016). Is Voting Habit Forming? New Evidence from Experiments and Regression Discontinuities. *American Journal of Political Science*, 60(4):1044–1062

lit Blais, A. (2000). *To vote or not to vote?* University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh

📖 Gerber et al.: <https://isps.yale.edu/research/data/d001>

📖 Doherty et al.: <https://isps.yale.edu/research/publications/isps17-021>

23.03. Norms, discrimination and racism

- What is the link between social norms and hate?
- Which relevance do media play for social norms?
- What can we do to encounter hate?

reading Ang, D. (2020). The Birth of a Nation: Media and Racial Hate <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1s2eBQT7hRghn/view>

reading Tankard, M. E. and Paluck, E. L. (2017). The Effect of a Supreme Court Decision Regarding Gay Marriage on Social Norms and Personal Attitudes. *Psychological Science*, page 095679761770959

lit Paluck, E. L., Shepherd, H., and Aronow, P. M. (2016). Changing Climates of Conflict: A social Network Experiment in 56 schools. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 113(3):566–571

lit Riaz, S., Bischof, D., and Wagner, M. (2022). Out-group Threat and Xenophobic Hate Crimes - Evidence of Local Intergroup Conflict Dynamics between Immigrants and Natives <https://osf.io/2qusg/>

newspaper [Economist “How a racist film helped the Ku Klux Klan grow for generations”](#)

📖 Ang: [not available yet]

📖 Tankard, Paluck: <https://osf.io/mkxf7>

30.03. Norms, gender inequality and misogyny

- What are reasons and origins for misogyny?
- Why are gender norms extremely sticky?
- What role can institutions play to change these norms?

reading Mackie, G. (1996). Ending Footbinding and Infibulation: A Convention Account. *American Sociological Review*, 61(6):999–1017

reading Maloney, E. (2021). The Gender Wage Gap: A Product of Misogyny and Gender Norms https://www.economics.uci.edu/files/docs/2021/gradjobmarket/maloney_elizabeth.pdf

lit Efferson, C., Vogt, S., Elhadi, A., Ahmed, H. E. F., and Fehr, E. (2015). Female genital cutting is not a social coordination norm. *Science*, 349(6255):1446–1447

lit Skorge, Ø. S. (2021). Mobilizing the Underrepresented: Electoral Systems and Gender Inequality in Political Participation. *American Journal of Political Science*, 00(0):1–15

lit Rivera, L. A. (2017). When Two Bodies Are (Not) a Problem: Gender and Relationship Status Discrimination in Academic Hiring. *American Sociological Review*, 82(6):1111–1138

📖 Mackie: [nothing to replicate]

📖 Maloney: [not available yet]

06.04. The role of protest for change

- We have learned that institutions and key political figures can change the perception of social norms. But which role do the people play? Do social movements matter?
- What are key conditions for social movements to matter?

reading Wasow, O. (2020). Agenda Seeding: How 1960s Black Protests Moved Elites, Public Opinion and Voting. *American Political Science Review*, 114(3):638 – 659

reading Hager, A., Hensel, L., Hermle, J., and Roth, C. (2021). Group Size and Protest Mobilization across Movements and Countermovements. *American Political Science Review*, pages 1–16

lit Ayoub, P. M., Page, D., and Whitt, S. (2021). Pride amid Prejudice: The Influence of LGBT+ Rights Activism in a Socially Conservative Society. *American Political Science Review*, 115(2):467–485

lit Mazumder, S. (2018). The Persistent Effect of U.S. Civil Rights Protests on Political Attitudes. *American Journal of Political Science*, 62(4):922–935, but see also: Marbach, M. (2021). Causal Effects, Migration and Legacy Studies <https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/2rctz/>

📖 Wasow: <https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.7910/DVN/HVRCKM>

📖 Hager et al.: <https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.7910/DVN/MUSFYH>

13.04. no coursework, you are on culture; it's Easter.

20.04. After autocracy: the rise of young democracies

- Do political regimes matter for citizens' democratic values?
- When authoritarian regimes fall, will citizens adapt to democracy?
- What are the long-running effects of authoritarian regimes?

reading Simpser, A., Slater, D., and Wittenberg, J. (2018). Dead but Not Gone: Contemporary Legacies of Communism, Imperialism, and Authoritarianism. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 21:419–439

reading Alesina, A. and Fuchs-Schündeln, N. (2007). Good-bye Lenin (or not?): The effect of communism on people's preferences. *American Economic Review*, 97(4):1507–1528

lit In relation to the Alesina/Fuchs-Schündeln text, also consider: Becker, S. O., Mergele, L., and Woessmann, L. (2020). The separation and reunification of Germany: Rethinking a natural experiment interpretation of the enduring effects of communism. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 34(2):143–171

lit Dinas, E. and Northmore-Ball, K. (2020). The Ideological Shadow of Authoritarianism. *Comparative Political Studies*, 53(12):1957–1991

lit Dinas, E., Martinez, S., and Valentim, V. (2020). The Normalization of Stigmatized Political Symbols https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3516831

lit Levitsky, S. R. and Ziblatt, D. (2018). *How Democracies Die*. Crown, New York

lit Weingast, B. R. (1997). The Political Foundations of Democracy and the Rule of the Law. *American Political Science Review*, 91(2):245–263

📖 Simpser et al.: [nothing to replicate]

📖 Alesina/Fuchs-Schündeln : <https://www.openicpsr.org/openicpsr/project/116293/version/V1/view>

It's conference time: get your slides ready, iron your shirts!

27.04. Mini Conference I

- Presentation & discussion of research ideas

04.05. Mini Conference II

- Presentation & discussion of research ideas

11.05. Mini Conference III

- Presentation & discussion of research ideas

References

- Acharya, A., Blackwell, M., and Sen, M. (2016). The Political Legacy of American Slavery. *Journal of Politics*, 78(3):621–641.
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- Alesina, A. and Fuchs-Schündeln, N. (2007). Good-bye Lenin (or not?): The effect of communism on people's preferences. *American Economic Review*, 97(4):1507–1528.
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- Becker, S. O., Mergele, L., and Woessmann, L. (2020). The separation and reunification of Germany: Rethinking a natural experiment interpretation of the enduring effects of communism. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 34(2):143–171.
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- Bursztyn, L., Egorov, G., and Fiorin, S. (2020). From extreme to mainstream: The erosion of social norms. *American Economic Review*, 110(11):3522–3548.
- Cialdini, R. B. and Trost, M. R. (1998). Social Influence: Social Norms, Conformity and Compliance. In Daniel, G., Fiske, S. T., and Lindzey, G., editors, *The Handbook of Social Psychology*, page 151. Wiley.
- Coppock, A. and Green, D. P. (2016). Is Voting Habit Forming? New Evidence from Experiments and Regression Discontinuities. *American Journal of Political Science*, 60(4):1044–1062.
- Cunningham, S. (2021). *Causal Inference: The Mixtape*. Yale University Press, New Haven & London.
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