Intitulé du cours : Public opinion and international relations
Course’s title: Public opinion and international relations
Enseignant(s) : Cécile Leconte
Fonction(s) : Maître de conférences
Type de cours : ☒ Séminaire d’ouverture ☒ Semestre 2

Résumé du cours – Objectif:
By combining political sociology with International Relations, this seminar aims at better understanding the dynamics of public opinion formation on a number of international relations (IR) issues, ranging from military interventions and the use of force to trade liberalization, the international fight against global warming, the legitimacy of international organizations, etc. Analyzing how mass media, elites, interest groups and citizens interact in processes of public opinion formation, it addresses theoretical and practical questions, such as the transnationalization of public debates on IR issues and the impact of average citizens and grassroots mobilizations on domestic foreign policy and international organizations’ agendas.

Syllabus – Targets:
By combining political sociology with International Relations, this seminar aims at better understanding the dynamics of public opinion formation on a number of international relations (IR) issues, ranging from military interventions and the use of force to trade liberalization, the international fight against global warming or the legitimacy of international organizations (etc.). Analyzing how mass media, elites, interest groups and citizens interact in this respect, it addresses theoretical and practical questions, such as the transnationalization of public debates on IR issues and the impact of average citizens and grassroots mobilizations on domestic foreign policies and international organizations’ agendas.

Evaluation: Evaluation: an oral presentation and a written essay
Plan – Séances:

Six classes:

Class 1. Methodological issues and current academic debates
1. Defining, measuring and comparing public opinion
2. Firm preferences and social protests: the end of the “permissive consensus” in foreign policy
3. Political elites, media, citizens, interest groups: who cues whom?
4. Does public opinion have an impact on foreign policy decisions and international agendas?

Class 2. The formation of individual and group preferences on IR issues
1. Individual and collective preferences on IR issues: lessons from electoral sociology
2. Perceptions of “the other”: lessons from political sociology
3. Governmental strategies aimed at influencing domestic and foreign public opinion
4. Sporting events: tools of soft power or tribunes for advocacy coalitions?

Class 3. The media: between increased parochialism and transnational journalism
1. Agenda-setting, priming and framing effects
2. Sociology of the media and international news reporting
3. Geopolitics of the new media
4. The rise of transnational, investigative journalism: a new phenomenon

Class 4. Public opinion and hard power: the use of force and military interventions
1. The role of “expertise”: building the case for military interventions
2. From “CNN effect” to “Black Hawk Down”: interventionism and isolationism in the mass media and in the media industry
3. Military interventions and social mobilizations: a constraint on decision-makers?
4. Explaining the selectivity of interventions

Class 5. Public opinion, regional and global governance
1. Public support for institutions of regional and global governance
2. Public opinion and the legitimacy of international courts
3. Analyzing attitudes towards trade liberalization
4. Do international organizations have an influence on public opinion?
Class 6. The transnationalization of advocacy coalitions and social mobilizations

1. How do advocacy coalitions transnationalize?
2. Towards a transnationalization of social movements?
3. Of “European public spheres” and “Arab streets”: a regionalization of public opinion?
4. World public opinion: myth or work in progress?

Bibliographie:


Fraser, Nancy and Nash, Kate (2014) *Transnationalizing the Public Sphere*. Cambridge: Polity Press.


