

Syllabus - Autumn 2025: Identity and politics

Autumn 2025 | Wed, 10:15 - 11:45 pm | B6, Room A 104

Leonie Rettig, M.A. - University of Mannheim

 B6, Room A 104



 leonie.rettig@uni-mannheim.de

Office Hours:  [Book an appointment](#)

In this seminar, we will dive into how our sense of self shapes our political beliefs and actions, and how identity plays a crucial role in shaping societies. Since the late 1960s, political science has recognized the profound influence of identities on politics, making it an essential subject for both political and social scientists to study. We will explore this complex relationship by covering classical theoretical literature from socio-psychology and political science on identity and politics. Firstly, we will establish a shared foundation for our journey through identity politics by examining the concept of (social) identity. We will explore classical and recent literature to understand the relationship between identity and politics using interactive discussions and thought-provoking exercise to apply them on contemporary political issues. We are aiming to not only learn about the current state of identity research, but also to improve your academic skills through academic writing exercises during the semester. Active Participation in class exercises, as well as assignments, is thus recommended for a successful learning experience.

Language: This seminar will be held in English, but students may choose to submit written assignments in either English or German.

Recommended for: B.A. Political Science, 3rd Semester

ECTS-Points: 5

Special Needs: If you require support in order to ensure your success in my course for any reason, please feel free to contact me! I will gladly make reasonable accommodation to facilitate a better learning experience for everyone. Please contact me at the beginning of the semester in such cases.

Learning objectives

1. Understanding the role of identity - as a (political) determinant and outcome, its usage in political science and its limitations.
2. Critical reading of scientific literature
 1. Understanding and criticising a theoretical argument
 2. Evaluating a research design
 3. Interpret empirical results
3. Formulation and discussion of a theoretical argument and hypotheses
4. Formulation and discussion of a research design

Requirements

All papers start with a blank page – and this blank page can be pretty scary. In this seminar, you will learn how to go from that blank page to a pre-registration version of a research paper. In addition to introducing the topic, the required readings illustrate different theoretical approaches and research designs, serving as an inspiration for your own work. To better understand the (dis-)advantages that these different approaches and designs offer, and get a broader idea about the existing literature, we will on the one hand side discuss the compulsory literature approaches. On the other hand we will hear five group presentations on articles that are related to the compulsory literature of one session. These presentations take 10 minutes and are accompanied by a follow-up discussion. Most sessions will start with quizzes about the compulsory literature.

During the semester, you will collect literature (1) and develop (2) a theoretical argument with corresponding hypotheses responding to a research question you chose from a list of questions. You will develop (3) a research design that tests your hypotheses and outline/present (4) your term paper (progress) in total. Thus, most of the work for your term paper will already be done at the end of the semester. After the semester you mainly have to finalise and possibly expand/improve what you have written during the semester. To make sure that all of you achieve the best possible outcome, you will participate in a peer review process.

- (1) In the first round, you will collect literature and summarise it in an annotated bibliography on your chosen question.
- (2) In the second round, you will write a first draft of your theoretical argument and derive corresponding hypotheses. These will be commented on by me.
- (3) In the third round, you will write a first draft of your research design which builds on your previously developed and revised theoretical argument.
- (4) In the last round, we will have a joint research session where we discuss your approaches, questions and problems all together.

At the end of the semester, you will submit a term paper including an introduction, theoretical argument with hypotheses, a research design, a hypothetical result chapter, and conclusion. The term paper is basically an extension of your previously developed theoretical argument and research design. Since you will have already

developed at least an outline of your research proposal, including the theoretical argument, hypotheses, and research design, over the course of the seminar, the term paper is simply an extension of your proposal.

Beyond the preparation of your term paper, we will practise literature research during the semester. Each student has to submit an annotated bibliography. In class you'll have the opportunity to control your reading competence with exercises like literature quizzes. For Session 8, group presentations have to be prepared and presented. At the end of the semester, we will have a joint research session where each is presenting their research proposal in a 3-5 minute pitch presentation.

To pass the seminar, all partial performances must be graded at least "sufficient". The submission of the tasks, the exposé and the timely preparation of the analysis are prerequisites for admission to the seminar paper and the acquisition of ECTS points. Texts are mostly available via the links on the syllabus (you need to access most via University VPN). Texts which are not accessible online and assignments are available via the internet platform ILIAS. You can register for the ILIAS group directly from the [student portal](#). If necessary, messages about the event will also be sent via ILIAS. Please note that all messages will be sent to your university address (xxxx@students.uni-mannheim.de). Therefore, please check this address regularly.

Assignments & Deadlines

Deadline	Submission
Tue, 30-09-25: 1 pm	Annotated Bibliography
Tue, 07-10-25: 1 pm	Outline theoretical argument to answer research question (1-2 pages + references)
Mon, 20-10-25: 1 pm	Submission presentation slides
Thu, 6-11-25: 1 pm	Exposé (2-4 pages + references)
Wed, 12-11-25: 10 am	Preparation Feedback Session
Tue, 25-11-25: 1 pm	Submission pitch-presentation slides
Wed, 10-12-25: 5 pm	Term paper (3500 words +/- 10%)

Annotated Bibliography

- Collect 10 articles, chapters or books that are related to your preliminary term paper subject.
- The aim is to review literature on a particular subject, summarizing the main arguments and findings of each source.
- Note why the literature is useful for your research. E.g.: Is it fundamental for your theoretical argument? Does it help with deciding on a research design? Does it show limitations that you have to consider?

Outline theoretical argument to answer research question

- 1-2 pages + references
- Formulate a research question that you want to answer in your term paper.
 - related to social identity and politics
- Outline a theoretical argument that potentially answers your research question.
 - Derive (max. 3) hypotheses from your theoretical argument.

Article presentation

- Each of the presentation articles in Session 8 are presented by a group of 6-7.
- 10 minute presentation by each group
 - Split work fairly among group members (2 - 3 present, 2 are (most) responsible for slides, 2 create a summary handout)
 - Presentation should include a summary of the article, the theoretical argument, the research design, and the main findings.
 - Prepare a handout for the class with a summary of the article (max. 2 pages)
- Visit me a week before presentation to discuss & resolve questions - if you have questions.

Preparation Feedback Session

- Peer review groups (3 people each) are assigned a week in advance to Session 11.
- Read exposés of your peers carefully and prepare constructive feedback notes.
- Feel free to provide additional thoughts, literature or methodological advice for your peers.

Exposé

- 2-4 pages + references
- Revised version of your theoretical argument outline with an additional research design section
 - What data set will be used?
 - What are the variables and how are they measured?
 - What method(s) will be used to test hypotheses?

Term Paper

Your term papers allow me to evaluate to what extent you met the learning objectives of this seminar. It should deepen your understanding of the role of identity by developing a theoretical argument and research design to test this argument. Your development of both parts of a research paper should be build on the existing literature, and hence show your understanding and critical engagement with the literature. Following the idea of a research proposal it should include an introduction, theoretical argument including hypotheses, and a research design.

Your term papers will be answering one of the five questions I offer you to choose from:

1. How does feelings of uncertainty influence the strength of national identity (in Country)?
2. To what extent does descriptive representation by gender increase political efficacy among women (in Country)?
3. Does strong partisan identity increase opposition to climate action?
4. How do political parties (in Country) use identity cues in election campaigns?
5. When does class identity become relevant for migration attitudes?

Your introduction chapter introduces the puzzle/question your going to tackle within your paper and summarise what is written in the following. In the theory chapter you are presenting the current state of the literature in regard of your puzzle/question. Based on existing theoretical explanations and empirical evidence you derive your own theoretical argument (that adds on the pre-existing) and testable hypotheses. The research design chapter should explain how you are going to test your hypotheses. This implies describing the data and measurements used to test your hypotheses as well as the method(s) used to analyse the data (e.g. linear or logistic regression). Preferably you use an existing data set to (hypothetically) test your hypotheses. If you prefer to do an empirical analysis, do so. (I will give feedback, but won't grade this section of your paper. However, if you decide to submit an analysis, please remember to send the data and syntax as well.)

Term papers will be the only graded assignment, while the other assignments are mandatory to term paper submission. The term paper should be 3500 words +/- 10% long and should be submitted by the 10th of December 2025 via ILIAS. If your submission is shorter or longer than the allowed range, up to 5 point will be deducted from your grade. Submissions after the deadline will not be accepted!

Schedule

03-09-2025 | Session 1 - Introduction & Welcome

Compulsory literature

Stets, J. E., & Burke, P. J. (2000). Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 63(3), 224. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2695870>

Additional literature

Burke, P. J., & Stets, J. E. (2009). Bases of Identities: Role, Group, and Person. In *Identity Theory* (pp. 112–129). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195388275.001.0001>

Vignoles, V. L., Schwartz, S. J., & Luyckx, K. (2011). Introduction: Toward an Integrative View of Identity. In S. J. Schwartz, K. Luyckx, & V. L. Vignoles (Eds.), *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research* (pp. 1–27). Springer New York. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-7988-9_1

Hogg, M. A., Abrams, D., Otten, S., & Hinkle, S. (2004). The Social Identity Perspective: Intergroup Relations, Self-Conception, and Small Groups. *Small Group Research*, 35(3), 246–276. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1046496404263424>

Weiner, S., & Tatum, D. S. (2021). Rethinking Identity in Political Science. *Political Studies Review*, 19(3), 464–481. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1478929920919360>

10-09-2025 | Session 2 | *Me, myself and us - What motives do people have for seeking social identity?*

Compulsory literature

Huddy, L. (2013). From Group Identity to Political Cohesion and Commitment. In L. Huddy, D. O. Sears, & J. S. Levy (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199760107.013.0023> (Read at least Section 1 & 2)

Hogg, M. A. (2007). Uncertainty–Identity Theory. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 39, 69–126. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601\(06\)39002-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(06)39002-8)

Additional literature

Ellemers, N., Spears, R., & Doosje, B. (2002). Self and Social Identity. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 53(1), 161–186. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.53.100901.135228>

Vignoles, V. L. (2011). Identity Motives. In S. J. Schwartz, K. Luyckx, & V. L. Vignoles (Eds.), *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research* (pp. 403–432). Springer New York. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-7988-9_18

Hogg, M. A. (2021). Self-uncertainty and group identification: Consequences for social identity, group behavior, intergroup relations, and society. In *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* (Vol. 64, pp. 263–316). Elsevier. <https://doi.org/10.1016/bs.aesp.2021.04.004>

17-09-2025 | Session 3 | *Give me some commitment! - How is social identity developed?*

Compulsory literature

Huddy, L. (2013). From Group Identity to Political Cohesion and Commitment. In L. Huddy, D. O. Sears, & J. S. Levy (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199760107.013.0023> (Read at least Section 5 & 6)

Tajfel, H. (1981). *Human groups and social categories: Studies in social psychology*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 12.

Additional literature

Scheepers, D., & Ellemers, N. (2005). When the pressure is up: The assessment of social identity threat in low and high status groups. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 41(2), 192–200. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2004.06.002>

Hogg, M. A., & Abrams, D. (1988). *Social identifications: A social psychology of intergroup relations and group processes*. Taylor & Frances/Routledge. p.6-27.

Crocetti, E., Prati, F., & Rubini, M. (2018). The Interplay of Personal and Social Identity. *European Psychologist*, 23(4), 300–310. <https://doi.org/10.1027/1016-9040/a000336>

Tajfel, H., Billig, M. G., Bundy, R. P., & Flament, C. (1971). Social categorization and intergroup behaviour. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 1(2), 149–178. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2420010202>

Haslam, S. A. (1996). Stereotyping and social influence: Foundations of stereotype sharedness. R. Spears, PJ Oakes, N. Ellemers, & SA Haslam, *The social psychology of stereotyping and group life*. Oxford, UK & Cambridge, USA: Blackwell.

Jenkins, R. (2014). *Social identity*. Routledge.

24-09-2025 | Session 4 | *The lone wolfe dies, but the pack survives. - How social identity becomes political?*

Compulsory literature

Huddy, Leonie. 2013. “From Group Identity to Political Cohesion and Commitment.” In, edited by Leonie Huddy, David O. Sears, and Jack S. Levy, 2nd ed. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199760107.013.0023> (Read at least Section 3)

Simon, B., & Klandermans, B. (2001). Politicized Collective Identity. *American Psychologist*, 56(4), 319–331. <https://doi.org/10.1037//0003-066X.56.4.319>

Huddy, L. (2001). From Social to Political Identity: A Critical Examination of Social Identity Theory. *Political Psychology*, 22(1), 127–156. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0162-895X.00230>

Additional literature

- Klandermans, P. G. (2014). Identity Politics and Politicized Identities: Identity Processes and the Dynamics of Protest. *Political Psychology*, 35(1), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12167>
- Davis, J. L., Love, T. P., & Fares, P. (2019). Collective Social Identity: Synthesizing Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory Using Digital Data. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 82(3), 254–273. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0190272519851025>
- Polletta, F., & Jasper, J. M. (2001). Collective identity and social movements. *Annual review of Sociology*, 27(1), 283–305.
- Devine, C. J. (2015). Ideological Social Identity: Psychological Attachment to Ideological In-Groups as a Political Phenomenon and a Behavioral Influence. *Political Behavior*, 37(3), 509–535. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-014-9280-6>
- Mason, L. (2015). “I Disrespectfully Agree”: The Differential Effects of Partisan Sorting on Social and Issue Polarization: PARTISAN SORTING AND POLARIZATION. *American Journal of Political Science*, 59(1), 128–145. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12089>
- Greene, S. (2004). Social Identity Theory and Party Identification. *Social Science Quarterly*, 85(1), 136–153. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0038-4941.2004.08501010.x>

01-10-2025 | Session 5 | *You can't sit with us.* - *How is identity related to political attitudes?*

Compulsory literature

- Hildebrandt, A., & Trüdinger, E.-M. (2021). Belonging and exclusion: The dark side of regional identity in Germany. *Comparative European Politics*, 19(2), 146–163. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41295-020-00230-5>

Additional literature

- Lindstam, E., Mader, M., & Schoen, H. (2021). Conceptions of National Identity and Ambivalence towards Immigration. *British Journal of Political Science*, 51(1), 93–114. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123418000522>
- Malka, A., & Lelkes, Y. (2010). More than Ideology: Conservative–Liberal Identity and Receptivity to Political Cues. *Social Justice Research*, 23, 156–188. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11211-010-0114-3>
- Huynh, Q. L., Devos, T., & Altman, H. R. (2015). Boundaries of American Identity: Relations Between Ethnic Group Prototypicality and Policy Attitudes. *Political Psychology*, 36(4), 449–468.
- Bonikowski, B., & DiMaggio, P. (2016). Varieties of American Popular Nationalism. *American Sociological Review*, 81(5), 949–980. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122416663683>

08-10-2025 | Session 6 | *Come together, right now, over me. - How (nested) identities can influence policy attitudes?*

Compulsory literature

Zaller, J. (1992). The nature and origins of mass opinion. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 3. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511818691.004>

Transue, J. E. (2007). Identity Saliency, Identity Acceptance, and Racial Policy Attitudes: American National Identity as a Uniting Force. *American Journal of Political Science*, 51(1), 78–91. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2007.00238.x>

Additional literature

Simonovits, G., & Kézdi, G. (2016). Economic Hardship Triggers Identification with Disadvantaged Minorities. *The Journal of Politics*, 78(3), 882–892. <https://doi.org/10.1086/685586>

Charnysh, V., Lucas, C., & Singh, P. (2015). The ties that bind: National identity saliency and pro-social behavior toward the ethnic other. *Comparative political studies*, 48(3), 267-300.

15-10-2025 | Session 7 | *Draft Club - Work in Progress Workshop*

- The aim is to get feedback on your theory drafts and respond to your open questions to help you prepare for the term paper.
- We want to dive deeper into the issues you had so far with developing a theoretical argument.

22-10-2025 | Session 8 | *One ring to represent them all - Groups and their representation*

Compulsory literature

Banducci, S. A., Donovan, T., & Karp, J. A. (2004). Minority Representation, Empowerment, and Participation. *The Journal of Politics*, 66(2), 534–556. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2508.2004.00163.x>

Pitkin, H. F. (1967). The concept of representation. University of California Press. Chapter 4.

Additional literature

Gerring, J., Jerzak, C. T., & Öncel, E. (2023). The Composition of Descriptive Representation. *American Political Science Review*, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055423000680>

Wolak, J. (2020). Descriptive Representation and the Political Engagement of Women. *Politics & Gender*, 16(2), 339–362. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X18000910>

Hayes, M., & Hibbing, M. V. (2017). The Symbolic Benefits of Descriptive and Substantive Representation. *Political Behavior*, 39, 31–50. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-016-9345-9>

29-10-2025 | Session 9 | *I identify therefore I vote. - Does identity shape citizens voting behaviour? (Presentation Session)*

Compulsory literature

Campbell, A., Converse, P. E., Miller, W. E., & Stokes, D. E. (1980). *The American voter* (Unabridged ed). University of Chicago Press. (Chapter 4 - Partisan Choice)

Presentation literature

Bergh, J., & Bjørklund, T. (2011). The Revival of Group Voting: Explaining the Voting Preferences of Immigrants in Norway. *Political Studies*, 59(2), 308–327. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9248.2010.00863.x>

Sevi, S. (2021). Do young voters vote for young leaders? *Electoral Studies*, 69, 102200. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2020.102200>

Arnesen, S., Duell, D., & Johannesson, M. P. (2019). Do citizens make inferences from political candidate characteristics when aiming for substantive representation? *Electoral Studies*, 57, 46–60. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2018.10.005>

Houle, C., Kenny, P. D., & Park, C. (2018). The Structure of Ethnic Inequality and Ethnic Voting. *The Journal of Politics*, 81(1), 187–200. <https://doi.org/10.1086/700200>

Additional literature

Goodyear-Grant, E., & Tolley, E. (2017). Voting for ones own: Racial group identification and candidate preferences. *Politics, Groups, and Identities*, 7(1), 131–147. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21565503.2017.1338970>

Egan, P. J. (2012). Group Cohesion without Group Mobilization: The Case of Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals. *British Journal of Political Science*, 42, 597–616. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123411000500>

Campbell, R., & Heath, O. (2017). Do Women Vote for Women Candidates? Attitudes toward Descriptive Representation and Voting Behavior in the 2010 British Election. *Politics & Gender*, 13(02), 209–231. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X16000672>

05-11-2025 | Session 10 | *On Wednesdays we wear pink. - How do elites use social identity?*

Compulsory literature

Thau, M. (2021). The Social Divisions of Politics: How Parties' Group-Based Appeals Influence Social Group Differences in Vote Choice. *The Journal of Politics*, 83(2), 675–688. <https://doi.org/10.1086/710018>

Additional literature

Huber, L. M., & Dolinsky, A. O. (2023). How parties shape their relationship with social groups: A roadmap to the study of group-based appeals [Preprint]. <https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/szaqw>

Bonilla, T., & Tillery, A. B. (2020). Which Identity Frames Boost Support for and Mobilization in the #BlackLivesMatter Movement? An Experimental Test. *American Political Science Review*, 114(4), 947–962. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055420000544>

Funk, K. D., & Hinojosa, M. (2023). Descriptive Presentation: Invoking Identity as a Claim for Descriptive Representation. *Politics & Gender*, 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X22000563>

12-11-2025 | Session 11 | *Nobody goes off-trail. And nobody walks alone! (Peer-Review Session)*

- Read and note review comments on your groups exposés.
- Some help on how to be a good peer reviewer:  [How to Write Effective Peer Review Comments](#)

19-11-2025 | Session 12 | *The identity has awoken, its heard its master's call. - How public actors shape social identity?*

Compulsory literature

Scheufele, D. A. (2000). Agenda-Setting, Priming, and Framing Revisited: Another Look at Cognitive Effects of Political Communication. *Mass Communication and Society*, 3(2–3), 297–316. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327825MCS0323_07

Boyer, M. M., & Lecheler, S. (2022). Social mobility or social change? How different groups react to identity-related news. *European Journal of Communication*, 026732312211051. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02673231221105168>

Additional literature

Hart, P. S., & Nisbet, E. C. (2012). Boomerang Effects in Science Communication: How Motivated Reasoning and Identity Cues Amplify Opinion Polarization About Climate Mitigation Policies. *Communication Research*, 39(6), 701–723. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650211416646>

Wojcieszak, M., & Garrett, R. K. (2018). Social Identity, Selective Exposure, and Affective Polarization: How Priming National Identity Shapes Attitudes Toward Immigrants Via News Selection. *Human Communication Research*, 44(3), 247–273. <https://doi.org/10.1093/hcr/hqx010>

Bruter, M. (2009). Time Bomb?: The Dynamic Effect of News and Symbols on the Political Identity of European Citizens. *Comparative Political Studies*, 42(12), 1498–1536. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414009332465>

26-11-2025 | Session 13 | *The world is changed. I feel it in the water. I feel it in the earth. I smell it in the air. - Context changing identity*

Compulsory literature

Jardina, A., Kalmoe, N., & Gross, K. (2021). Disavowing White Identity: How Social Disgust can Change Social Identities. *Political Psychology*, 42(4), 619–636. <https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12717>

Additional literature

Egan, P. J. (2020). Identity as Dependent Variable: How Americans Shift Their Identities to Align with Their Politics. *American Journal of Political Science*, 64(3), 699–716. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12496>

03-12-2025 | Week 14 | *Tying Up Loose Ends - Wrap-Up, Feedback and Farewell*