

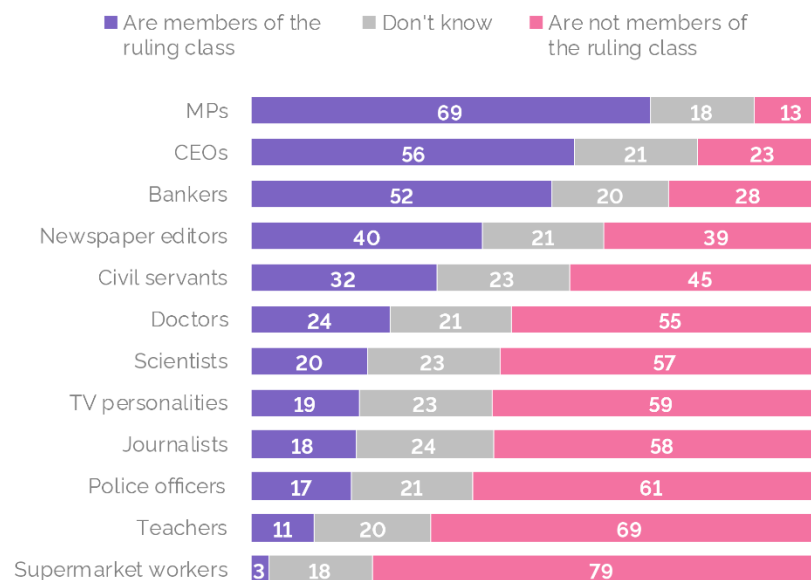
ELITES AND MASSES: Political behaviour amongst politicians and the public

New Course Design for the
PGCertHE 18/19, Module 2
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Who do Britons see as being members of the ruling class?

Do you think people in the following occupations are or are not members of the ruling class in Britain? %



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Rationale

- Prevailing public and media discourse: elites versus masses
- Prevailing literature: elites and, separately, masses
- Gap in Department of Government provision
- Overview of a sub-discipline suits second year undergraduates

Intended Learning Outcomes

1. Critique the concepts of elites and masses, and relate them to broader theories of social structure
2. Evaluate the utility of competing conceptions and definitions of populism
3. Critically evaluate the core assumptions of sociological, psychological, and rational choice explanations for political behaviour
4. Analyse the applicability of sociological, psychological, and rational choice explanations for political behaviour to elites and masses
5. Make holistic arguments about the relationships between different explanations for political behaviour
6. Relate the key concepts of the module to live political debates and events

Learning and Teaching

- Aims to promote higher learning (Biggs 1996, 351-352):
 - ‘Relational. The components are integrated into a coherent whole, with each part contributing to the overall meaning (understanding as appreciating relationships).
 - Extended abstract. The integrated whole at the relational level is reconceptualised at a higher level of abstraction, which enables generalisation to a new topic or area, or is turned reflexively on oneself (understanding as far transfer, and as involving metacognition).'
- Taught via weekly two-hour seminars, plus two fieldtrips
- Students as co-producers of knowledge

Mapping Assessments

Assessment			ILOs
1. Formative: 1,000 word critical literature review of key concepts. Assessed by unit leader.	3. Summative: 300 word responses to readings for half of the weekly topics. Assessed by unit leader. 30% of unit mark.	4. Summative: 2,000 word essay on topics picked from a list, or proposed by students. Assessed by unit leader. 30% of unit mark.	1. Critique the concepts of elites and masses, and relate them to broader theories of social structure.
			2. Evaluate the utility of competing conceptions and definitions of populism.
			3. Critically evaluate the core assumptions of sociological, psychological, and rational choice explanations for political behaviour.
2. Formative: 750 word blog linking concepts to politics in practice. Assessed by peers.		5. Summative: 5,000 word research project and presentation, created in groups. Assessed by unit leader, external expert, and peers. 40% of unit mark.	4. Analyse the applicability of sociological, psychological, and rational choice explanations for political behaviour to elites and masses.
			5. Make holistic arguments about the relationships between different explanations for political behaviour.
			6. Relate the key concepts of the module to live political debates and events.

Conclusion

- Drawing on Biggs (1996) but also, crucially, hooks (1994):
 - Shared links to constructivist and social constructivist (Carlile and Jordan 2005) approaches to teaching;
 - Engaged pedagogy emphasises challenging, exciting, and inclusive learning environments;
 - Trusting students to be co-producers of knowledge promotes relational and extended abstract thinking.
- Key forum for the exercise of the above is seminars; emphasis on students leading discussion (departing from prompts).
- Assessments varied, and mapped onto ILOs.

References

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- Rosemary O'Leary, 'The Great Man Theory of Teaching Is Dead', *Journal of Public Administration Education*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (May, 1997), pp. 127-131.

Appendix: Full Assessment Mapping

Assessment	ILOs
1. Formative: Critical literature review covering the concepts of elites, masses, and social structure. This will constitute the first formative assessment of the unit.	1. Critique the concepts of elites and masses, and relate them to broader theories of social structure 2. Evaluate the utility of competing conceptions and definitions of populism
2. Formative: 750 word blog post applying at least one of the key concepts or theories of the module (elites, masses, social structure, populism, and sociological, psychological, and rational choice accounts of political behaviour) to experiences of the two fieldtrips. This will constitute the second formative assessment of the unit and will be peer reviewed.	6. Relate the key concepts of the module to live political debates and events

Appendix: Full Assessment Mapping

Assessment	ILOs
3. Summative: 300 word responses to at least one reading each week for half of the unit, briefly summarising their key points, evaluating them, and making links to other ideas or politics in practice. This will constitute the first summative assessment of the unit, and will contribute 30% of the overall unit mark.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Critique the concepts of elites and masses, and relate them to broader theories of social structure2. Evaluate the utility of competing conceptions and definitions of populism3. Critically evaluate the core assumptions of sociological, psychological, and rational choice explanations for political behaviour4. Analyse the applicability of sociological, psychological, and rational choice explanations for political behaviour to elites and masses5. Make holistic arguments about the relationships between different explanations for political behaviour6. Relate the key concepts of the module to live political debates and events

Appendix: Full Assessment Mapping

Assessment	ILOs
4. Summative: 2,000 word essay on topics relating to the first four ILOs of the unit. This will constitute the second summative assessment of the unit, and will contribute 30% of the overall unit mark.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Critique the concepts of elites and masses, and relate them to broader theories of social structure2. Evaluate the utility of competing conceptions and definitions of populism3. Critically evaluate the core assumptions of sociological, psychological, and rational choice explanations for political behaviour4. Analyse the applicability of sociological, psychological, and rational choice explanations for political behaviour to elites and masses

Appendix: Full Assessment Mapping

Assessment	ILOs
5. Summative: 5,000 word capstone research report and associated presentation, created in groups. This will constitute the third summative assessment of the unit, with marks awarded by the unit leader (35%), an external expert (35%), and peers (30%), and the weighted mark contributing 40% of the overall unit mark.	<p>5. Make holistic arguments about the relationships between different explanations for political behaviour</p> <p>6. Relate the key concepts of the module to live political debates and events</p>