

political attitudes & behavior

PSCI 7031
FALL 2015
MONDAYS, 5-7:30 P.M.
HELLEMS 196

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OFFICE HOURS: MONDAYS, 1-3 P.M.

This course concerns the joy and magic that is the study of political behavior and public opinion. In many ways, public opinion is the currency of a representative democracy. It is the expression of what people expect, desire, and think of their government. And it is what politicians follow, influence, and are held accountable to. Throughout the course, we will consider the structure and dynamics of public opinion, analyzing both what influences it, as well as how it shapes other aspects of politics and public life.

reading assignments

Course readings will be drawn from several texts as well as journal articles. Book chapters will be accessible via the course website.

- Erikson, Robert S., Michael B. MacKuen, and James A. Stimson. 2002. *The Macro Polity*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Karpowitz, Christopher F., and Tali Mendelberg. 2014. *The Silent Sex: Gender, Deliberation, and Institutions*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Lewis-Beck, Michael S., William G. Jacoby, Helmut Norpoth, and Herbert F. Weisberg. 2008. *The American Voter Revisited*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
- Schlozman, Kay Lehman, Sidney Verba, and Henry E. Brady. 2012. *The Unheavenly Chorus: Unequal Political Voice and the Broken Promise of American Democracy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

For those who need additional background reading, a good undergraduate public opinion textbook is:

- Erikson, Robert S., and Kent L. Tedin. 2014. *American Public Opinion: Its Origin, Contents, and Impact*. 9^h edition. New York: Routledge.

requirements

PARTICIPATION (25% of your final grade)

One important prerequisite of participation is class attendance. Class attendance is vital and required.

It is essential to read all of the assigned readings and think carefully about what you have read in advance of the class session. Frantically skimming the articles in the minutes before class begins will limit the quality of our class discussion and impede your ability to learn anything useful. Your education and our class discussion of the readings will both benefit from your careful reading of the articles as well as the time you spend in advance of class reflecting on what you have read and learned.

You will also be expected to actively participate in class discussions in a thoughtful way.

LEADERSHIP OF CLASS DISCUSSION (15% of your final grade)

For three weeks during the semester, you will be responsible for leading class discussion. Your goal is to ensure that the class engages in thoughtful reflection about what we can learn from that week's readings. How you do this is up to you and your fellow discussion leader. You could spend time discussing the articles individually, engaging the themes that cross different articles, connecting that week's topic to prior readings, or discussing ways to extend and elaborate on the week's readings. Your grade will reflect the quality of your preparation, as well as the quantity and quality of class discussion you generate.

You will be graded on your class participation and discussion leadership, which will count toward 40% of your final grade. You can choose which assignments will compose the remainder of your grade from the following options:

AN EXTRA WEEK OF DISCUSSION LEADERSHIP (each worth 5% of final grade, if selected)

RESPONSE PAPERS (each is worth 5% of your final grade, if selected)

In these response papers, you will use the week's readings as inspiration for a possible future research project. In your memo, develop a plan for how you could empirically extend ideas raised in that week's readings. Your proposal might extend ideas raised in the studies, or you might propose an interesting question that the authors do not consider. Describe your research question, why it is important and how it would contribute to the literature, the central hypotheses you would want to test, and how you would test your hypotheses. These papers should be single-spaced and two to three pages in length. Turn them in at the beginning of class on the day we discuss that topic.

BOOK REVIEW AND CRITIQUE (each is worth 10% of your final grade, if selected)

If there is a book on public opinion or political participation that you are interested in that is not on this syllabus, you can choose to read it and write up a book report. When we cover the most closely related topic in class, you will present a short summary of the book to the class and engage some of the strengths and weaknesses of the text. You should also turn in a book review essay (two to four pages) on the same matters, as a hard copy and as an electronic copy for distribution to the rest of the class via the course website.

LITERATURE REVIEW (each is worth 20% of your final grade, if selected)

Another option is to write an essay that assesses the current literature on a topic of your choosing (given instructor approval). This essay should be five to eight single spaced pages in length and is due the last week of the semester. The central goal of the paper will be to assess and summarize the research about a particular topic – to identify the central question or questions, highlight the most important literature related to the topic, and provide commentary about the strengths and weaknesses of the current research in the area. More details will be outlined on a separate handout.

RESEARCH PAPER (worth 50% of your final grade, if selected)

You can also choose to develop a research paper that tests an interesting question about public opinion or political behavior. This paper should follow the format of the kinds of academic papers read in class – including development of a research question, a review of relevant literature, theory, tests of these explanations, and interpretation of what you find. Expectations for the research paper are outlined in a separate handout.

D2L is your friend

This syllabus, assignments, and other exciting material can be accessed on the class website on learn.colorado.edu.

special accommodations

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. You can contact the Disability Services office for more information at www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices.

some important comments on academic integrity

Plagiarism and other academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. If you are not familiar with the rules of citing sources in written work or what constitutes plagiarism, you should contact me or refer to the University Honor Code at www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode. Academic dishonesty will result in an F in the course and referral to the Honor Court for additional non-academic sanctions.

All papers are expected to be original work, not previously or simultaneously handed in for credit in another course (unless prior approval of all instructors involved is obtained).

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COURSE SCHEDULE

1. about public opinion and surveys

Monday, August 24

Introduction to the course. Overview of the field. Measuring public opinion.

- if you need background on the study of political behavior: Kinder, Donald R. 2004. "Pale Democracy: Opinion and Action in Postwar America." In Edward D. Mansfield and Richard Sisson, eds., *The Evolution of Political Knowledge*. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press.

2. citizen competence and political knowledge

Monday, August 31

The characteristics of a good citizen. Levels of political knowledge. Political information and vote choice.

- Berelson, Bernard. 1952. "Democratic Theory and Public Opinion." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 16:313-330.
- Delli Carpini, Michael X., and Scott Keeter. 1996. *What Americans Know About Politics and Why It Matters*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Chapters 2 and 6.
- Barabas, Jason, Jennifer Jerit, William Pollock, and Carlisle Rainey. 2014. "The Question(s) of Political Knowledge." *American Political Science Review* 108:840-855.
- Lau, Richard R., and David P. Redlawsk. 1997. "Voting Correctly." *American Political Science Review* 91:585-598.
- Bartels, Larry M. 1996. "Uninformed Votes: Information Effects in Presidential Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 40(1):194-230.

Monday, September 7 Class does not meet

3. ideological constraint and opinion instability

Monday, September 14

Ideology in the American electorate. Ideological constraint. Attitude instability.

- Converse, Philip E. 1964. "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics." In David Apter, ed. *Ideology and Discontent*. New York: The Free Press.
- Conover, Pamela Johnston, and Stanley Feldman. 1981. "The Origins and Meaning of Liberal-Conservative Self-Identifications." *American Journal of Political Science* 25:617-645.
- Alford, John R., Carolyn L. Funk, and John R. Hibbing. 2005. "Are Political Orientations Genetically Transmitted?" *American Political Science Review* 99:153-167.
- Zaller, John R., and Stanley Feldman. 1992. "A Simple Theory of the Survey Response: Answering Questions Versus Revealing Preferences." *American Journal of Political Science* 36:579-616.

- Lavine, Howard. 2001. "The Electoral Consequences of Ambivalence toward Presidential Candidates." *American Journal of Political Science* 45: 915-929.
- skim: Abramowitz, Alan I., and Kyle L. Saunders. 2008. "Is Polarization a Myth?" *Journal of Politics* 70:542-555.

4. partisanship

Monday, September 21

The roots of partisanship, partisanship as an identity, partisan stability and strength

- Campbell, Angus, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes. 1960. *The American Voter*. New York: Wiley. Chapters 6 and 7.
- Achen, Christopher. 2002. "Parental Socialization and Rational Party Identification." *Political Behavior* 24(2): 141-170.
- Weisberg, Herbert F., and Steven H. Greene. 2003. "The Political Psychology of Party Identification." In Michael B. MacKuen and George Rabinowitz, eds., *Electoral Democracy*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Keele, Luke, and Jennifer Wolak. 2006. "Value Conflict and Volatility in Party Identification." *British Journal of Political Science* 36:671-690.
- Erikson, Robert S., Michael MacKuen, and James A. Stimson. 2002. *The Macro Polity*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 4 and 5.
- skim: Bafumi, Joseph, and Robert Y. Shapiro. 2009. "A New Partisan Voter." *The Journal of Politics* 71:1-24.

5. vote choice

Monday, September 28

Understanding the American voter with surveys

- Lewis-Beck, Michael S., William G. Jacoby, Helmut Norpoth, and Herbert F. Weisberg. 2008. *The American Voter Revisited*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

6. political reasoning and persuasion

Monday, October 5

Political persuasion, campaign effects, the psychology of voter decision-making

- Sears, David O., and Richard E. Whitney. 1973. "Political Persuasion." In Ithiel de Sola Pool, Wilbur Schramm, Frederick W. Frey, Nathan Maccoby, and Edwin B. Parker, eds., *Handbook of Communication*. Chicago: Rand McNally. Pages 253-263.
- Beck, Paul Allen, Russell J. Dalton, Steven Greene, and Robert Huckfeldt. 2002. "The Social Calculus of Voting: Interpersonal, Media, and Organizational Influences on Presidential Choices." *American Political Science Review* 96:57-73.
- Gelman, Andrew, and Gary King. 1993. "Why Are American Presidential Election Campaign Polls So Variable When Votes Are So Predictable?" *British Journal of Political Science* 23(4):409-51.
- Lodge, Milton, Marco R. Steenbergen, and Shawn Brau. 1995. "The Responsive Voter: Campaign Information and the Dynamics of Candidate Evaluation." *American Political Science Review* 89:309-326.

- Basinger, Scott J., and Howard Lavine. 2005. "Ambivalence, Information, and Electoral Choice." *American Political Science Review* 99:169-184.
- Taber, Charles S., and Milton Lodge. 2006. "Motivated Skepticism in the Evaluation of Political Beliefs." *American Journal of Political Science* 50(3):755-769.

7. priming, framing, & media effects

Monday, October 12

Media effects, agenda-setting, priming, framing, learning

- Iyengar, Shanto, Mark D. Peters, and Donald R. Kinder 1982. "Experimental Demonstrations of the "Not-So-Minimal" Consequences of Television News Programs." *American Political Science Review* 76:848-858.
- Nelson, Thomas E., Rosalee A. Clawson, and Zoe M. Oxley. 1997. "Media Framing of a Civil Liberties Conflict and Its Effect on Tolerance." *American Political Science Review* 91:567-83.
- Miller, Joanne M., and Jon A. Krosnick. 2000. "News Media Impact on the Ingredients of Presidential Evaluations: Politically Knowledgeable Citizens Are Guided by a Trusted Source." *American Journal of Political Science* 44:301-315.
- Druckman, James N. 2001. "The Implications of Framing Effects for Citizen Competence." *Political Behavior* 23(3):225-56.
- Tesler, Michael. Forthcoming. "Priming Predispositions and Changing Policy Positions: An Account of When Mass Opinion Is Primed or Changed." *American Journal of Political Science*.

8. political talk and deliberation

Monday, October 19

How we talk about politics, institutional influences on deliberation, gender and political talk

- Karpowitz, Christopher F., and Tali Mendelberg. 2014. *The Silent Sex: Gender, Deliberation, and Institutions*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

9. macropolitics

Monday, October 26

Public opinion in the aggregate.

- Page, Benjamin I., and Robert Y. Shapiro. 1992. *The Rational Public: Fifty Years of Trends in American Policy Preferences*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 1, 2, 7, and 8.
- Erikson, Robert S., Michael B. MacKuen, and James A. Stimson. 2002. *The Macro Polity*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1, 2, and 3.
- Durr, Robert H., John B. Gilmour, and Christina Wolbrecht. 1997. "Explaining Congressional Approval." *American Journal of Political Science* 41:175-207.
- Durr, Robert H., Andrew D. Martin, and Christina Wolbrecht. 2000. "Ideological Divergence and Public Support for the Supreme Court." *American Journal of Political Science* 44:768-776.

10. public opinion and policy representation

Monday, November 2

Public opinion as an explanation of policy outcomes. Public opinion and political accountability.

- Ansolabehere, Stephen, and Philip Edward Jones. 2010. "Constituents' Responses to Congressional Roll-Call Voting." *American Journal of Political Science* 54:583-597.
- Erikson, Robert S., Michael B. MacKuen, and James A. Stimson. 2002. *The Macro Polity*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 6-11.
- Jacobs, Lawrence R., and Benjamin I. Page. 2005. "Who Influences U.S. Foreign Policy?" *American Political Science Review* 99:107-123.

11. trust in government

Monday, November 9

Why people trust and mistrust government

- Miller, Arthur H. 1974. "Political Issues and Trust in Government: 1964-1970." *American Political Science Review* 68: 951-972.
- Citrin, Jack. 1974. "Comment: The Political Relevance of Trust in Government." *American Political Science Review* 68: 973-988.
- Hetherington, Marc J. 1998. "The Political Relevance of Political Trust." *American Political Science Review* 92:791-808.
- Hibbing, John R., and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse. 2001. "Process Preferences and American Politics: What the People Want Government to Be." *American Political Science Review* 95: 145-153.
- Tyler, Tom R. 2001. "The Psychology of Public Dissatisfaction with Government." In John R. Hibbing and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse, eds. *What is it About Government that Americans Dislike?* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

12. groups, ethnocentrism, and prejudice

Monday, November 16

The role of groups in public opinion, prejudice, racial cues

- Kam, Cindy, and Donald R. Kinder. 2012. "Ethnocentrism as a Short-Term Force in the 2008 American Presidential Election." *American Journal of Political Science* 56(2): 326-40.
- Sears, David O., Carl P. Hensler, and Leslie K. Speer. 1979. "Whites' Opposition to "Busing": Self-Interest or Symbolic Politics?" *American Political Science Review* 73(2):369-384.
- Feldman, Stanley, and Leonie Huddy. 2005. "Racial Resentment and White Opposition to Race-Conscious Programs: Principles or Prejudice?" *American Journal of Political Science* 49:168-183.
- Valentino, Nicholas A., Vincent L. Hutchings, and Ismail K. White. 2002. "Cues that Matter: How Political Ads Prime Racial Attitudes During Campaigns." *American Political Science Review* 96:75-90.
- Tesler, Michael. 2013. "The Return of Old-Fashioned Racism to White Americans' Partisan Preferences in the Early Obama Era." *Journal of Politics* 75:110-123.

fall break

Monday, November 23

13. voter turnout

Monday, November 30

Assorted explanations for why people turn out to vote

- Aldrich, John H. 1993. "Rational Choice and Turnout." *American Journal of Political Science* 37(1): 246-278.
- Beck, Paul Allen, and M. Kent Jennings. 1982. "Pathways to Participation." *The American Political Science Review* 76(1):94-108.
- Brady, Henry, Sidney Verba, and Kay Lehman Schlozman. 1995. "Beyond SES: A Resource Model of Participation." *American Political Science Review* 89(2):271-294.
- Powell, Jr., G. Bingham. 1986. "American Voter Turnout in Comparative Perspective." *American Political Science Review* 80:17-43.
- Rosenstone, Steven J., and John Mark Hansen. 1993. *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company. Chapter 6.

14. political participation & equality

Monday, December 7

Political participation. Political inequality.

- Schlozman, Kay Lehman, Sidney Verba, and Henry E. Brady. 2012. *The Unheavenly Chorus: Unequal Political Voice and the Broken Promise of American Democracy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.