

political attitudes & behavior

PSCI 7031
FALL 2020
MONDAYS, 11:00 A.M. - 1:30 P.M.
ONLINE

JENNIFER WOLAK
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ONLINE OFFICE HOURS: WED., 10 A.M. – 12 P.M.
AND BY APPOINTMENT

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.

- Fraga, Bernard L. 2018. *The Turnout Gap: Race, Ethnicity, and Political Inequality in a Diversifying America*. New York: Cambridge 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.
- Piston, Spencer. 2018. *Class Attitudes in America: Sympathy for the Poor, Resentment of the Rich, and Political Implications*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Tesler, Michael. 2016. *Post-Racial or Most-Racial? Race and Politics in the Obama Era*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

For those interested in additional background reading, an excellent public opinion textbook is:

- Erikson, Robert S., and Kent L. Tedin. 2019. *American Public Opinion: Its Origin, Contents, and Impact*. 10th edition. New York: Routledge.

requirements

PARTICIPATION (40% of your final grade)

One important prerequisite of participation is class attendance. Please be in touch if you must miss one of our seminars.

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). Your grade will reflect the quality of your preparation, as well as the quantity and quality of class discussion you generate. You will also be asked to turn in a short memo outlining your plan for discussion leadership for each session you lead.

RESEARCH PAPER (worth 45% of your final grade)

You will also be asked to write an empirical 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, development of a theoretical argument and testable hypotheses, tests of these explanations, and interpretation of what you find. Expectations for the research paper are outlined in a separate handout.

Canvas is your friend

This syllabus, assignments, and other exciting material can be accessed on the class website on canvas.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. Opinion stability. Levels of political knowledge.

- Berelson, Bernard. 1952. "Democratic Theory and Public Opinion." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 16:313-330.
- Converse, Philip E. 1964. "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics." In David Apter, ed. *Ideology and Discontent*. New York: The Free Press.
- 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.
- 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.

Monday, September 7 Class does not meet

3. misperception and misinformation

Monday, September 14

Misperceptions. Misinformation. Alternative facts. Conspiracy theories.

- Jerit, Jennifer, and Yangzi Zhao. 2020. "Political Misinformation." *Annual Review of Political Science* 23:77-94.
- Kuklinski, James H., Paul J. Quirk, Jennifer Jerit, David Schwieder, and Robert F. Rich. 2000. "Misinformation and the Currency of Democratic Citizenship." *The Journal of Politics* 62(3):790-816.
- Miller, Joanne M., Kyle L. Saunders, and Christina E. Farhart. 2016. "Conspiracy Endorsement as Motivated Reasoning: The Moderating Roles of Political Knowledge and Trust." *American Journal of Political Science* 60(4): 824-844.

- Oliver, J. Eric, and Thomas J. Wood. 2018. *Enchanted America: How Intuition and Reason Divide Our Politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. p. 1-86, p. 107-128. (Introduction – Chapter 3, Chapter 5).
- Ahler, Douglas J., and Gaurav Sood. 2018. "The Parties in Our Heads: Misperceptions about Party Composition and Their Consequences." *The Journal of Politics* 80(3):964-981.

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.
- Green, Donald, Bradley Palmquist, and Eric Schickler. 2002. *Partisan Hearts and Minds : Political Parties and the Social Identities of Voters*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. Chapters 1 (skim), 2, and 3.
- 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.
- MacKuen, Michael B., Robert S. Erikson, and James A. Stimson. 1989. "Macropartisanship." *American Political Science Review* 83(4):1125-1142.
- Klar, Samara, and Yanna Krupnikov. 2016. *Independent Politics: How American Disdain for Parties Leads to Political Inaction*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1-3.

5. party polarization

Monday, September 28

Affective polarization, partisan sorting, origins of party polarization

- Iyengar, Shanto, Yphtach Lelkes, Matthew Levendusky, Neil Malhotra, and Sean J. Westwood. 2019. "The Origins and Consequences of Affective Polarization in the United States." *Annual Review of Political Science* 22:129-146.
- Iyengar, Shanto, and Sean J. Westwood. 2015. "Fear and Loathing across Party Lines: New Evidence on Group Polarization." *American Journal of Political Science* 59:690-707.
- Mason, Lilliana. 2015. "'I Disrespectfully Agree': The Differential Effects of Partisan Sorting on Social and Issue Polarization." *American Journal of Political Science* 59(1):128-145.
- Barber, Michael, and Jeremy C. Pope. 2019. "Does Party Trump Ideology? Disentangling Party and Ideology in America." *American Political Science Review* 113(1):38-54.
- Groenendyk, Eric. 2018. "Competing Motives in a Polarized Electorate: Political Responsiveness, Identity Defensiveness, and the Rise of Partisan Antipathy." *Political Psychology* 39:159-171.
- Levendusky, Matthew S. 2013. "Why Do Partisan Media Polarize Viewers?" *American Journal of Political Science* 57:611-623.

6. retrospective voting

Monday, October 5

Economic voting. Retrospection and prospection in evaluations of government. Presidential approval.

- Healy, Andrew, and Neil Malhotra. 2013. "Retrospective Voting Reconsidered." *Annual Review of Political Science* 16:285-306
- Kinder, Donald R., and D. Roderick Kiewiet. 1981. "Sociotropic Politics: The American Case." *British Journal of Political Science* 11(2):129-161.
- Achen, Christopher H., and Larry M. Bartels. 2016. *Democracy for Realists: Why Elections Do Not Produce Responsive Government*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapter 5.
- MacKuen, Michael B., Robert S. Erikson and James A. Stimson. 1992. "Peasants or Bankers? The American Electorate and the U.S. Economy." *American Political Science Review* 86(3):597-611.
- Ramirez, Mark D. 2013. "The Policy Origins of Congressional Approval." *The Journal of Politics* 75(1):198-209.
- Donovan, Kathleen, Paul M. Kellstedt, Ellen M. Key, and Matthew J. Lebo. Forthcoming. "Motivated Reasoning, Public Opinion, and Presidential Approval." *Political Behavior*.

7. vote choice

Monday, October 12

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.

8. categorical politics

Monday, October 19

The role of groups in public opinion, race, gender, linked fate, group consciousness, rural resentment

- Burns, Nancy, and Donald Kinder. 2012. "Categorical Politics: Gender, Race, and Public Opinion." In Adam J. Berinsky, ed., *New Directions in Public Opinion*. New York: Routledge.
- White, Ismail K., Chryl Laird and Troy Allen. 2014. "Selling Out?: The Politics of Navigating Conflicts Between Racial Group Interest and Self-Interest." *American Political Science Review* 108(4):783-800.
- Morín, Jason L., Yoshira Macías Mejía, and Gabriel R. Sanchez. 2020. "Is the Bridge Broken? Increasing Ethnic Attachments and Declining Party Influence among Latino Voters." *Political Research Quarterly*.
- Kaufmann, Karen M., and John R. Petrocik. 1999. "The Changing Politics of American Men: Understanding the Sources of the Gender Gap." *American Journal of Political Science* 43:864-887.
- Barnes, Tiffany D., and Erin C. Cassese. 2017. "American Party Women: A Look at the Gender Gap within Parties." *Political Research Quarterly* 70(1):127-141.
- Cramer Walsh, Katherine. 2012. "Putting Inequality in Its Place: Rural Consciousness and the Power of Perspective." *American Political Science Review* 106(3):517-532.

9. prejudice

Monday, October 26

Prejudice, racism, sexism, the racialization of politics

- Tesler, Michael. 2016. *Post-Racial or Most-Racial? Race and Politics in the Obama Era*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Schaffner, Brian F., Matthew MacWilliams, and Tatishe Nteta. 2018. "Understanding White Polarization in the 2016 Vote for President: The Sobering Role of Racism and Sexism." *Political Science Quarterly* 133:9-34.

10. inequality and class divides

Monday, November 2

Public opinion about income inequality, class divides in American politics, belief in the American Dream

- Piston, Spencer. 2018. *Class Attitudes in America: Sympathy for the Poor, Resentment of the Rich, and Political Implications*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Condon, Meghan, and Amber Wichowsky. 2020. "Inequality in the Social Mind: Social Comparison and Support for Redistribution." *Journal of Politics* 82(1):149-161.
- Wolak, Jennifer, and David A.M. Peterson. Forthcoming. "The Dynamic American Dream." *American Journal of Political Science*.

11. trust and mistrust

Monday, November 9

Why people trust and mistrust government, political alienation

- Citrin, Jack, and Laura Stoker. 2018. "Political Trust in a Cynical Age." *Annual Review of Political Science* 21:49-70.
- Intawan, Chanita, and Stephen P. Nicholson. 2018. "My Trust in Government Is Implicit: Automatic Trust in Government and System Support." *Journal of Politics* 80(2):601-614.
- Hetherington, Marc J. 1998. "The Political Relevance of Political Trust." *American Political Science Review* 92:791-808.
- Keele, Luke. 2007. "Social Capital and the Dynamics of Trust in Government." *American Journal of Political Science* 51(2):241-254.
- 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.
- Mutz, Diana C., and Byron Reeves. 2005. "The New Videomalaise: Effects of Televised Incivility on Political Trust." *American Political Science Review* 99(1): 1-15.

12. representation and accountability

Monday, November 16

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.

- Stimson, James A., Michael B. MacKuen and Robert S. Erikson. 1995. "Dynamic Representation." *American Political Science Review* 89(3):543-565.
- Rogers, Steven. 2017. "Electoral Accountability for State Legislative Roll Calls and Ideological Representation." *American Political Science Review* 111(3):555-571.
- Caughey, Devin, and Christopher Warshaw. 2018. "Policy Preferences and Policy Change: Dynamic Responsiveness in the American States, 1936–2014." *American Political Science Review* 112(2):249-266.
- Griffin, John D., and Brian Newman. 2005. "Are Voters Better Represented?" *Journal of Politics* 67(4):1206-1227.
- Hajnal, Zoltan L. 2009. "Who Loses in American Democracy? A Count of Votes Demonstrates the Limited Representation of African Americans." *American Political Science Review* 103(1):37-57.

13. political talk and deliberation

Monday, November 23

How we talk about politics, social influence, the consequences of political talk

- Huckfeldt, Robert, and John Sprague. 1987. "Networks in Context: The Social Flow of Political Information." *American Political Science Review* 81(4):1197-1216.
- 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.
- Bond, Robert M., Christopher J. Fariss, Jason J. Jones, Adam D. I. Kramer, Cameron Marlow, Jaime E. Settle, and James H. Fowler. 2012. "A 61-Million-Person Experiment in Social Influence and Political Mobilization." *Nature* 489:295-298.
- Levitan, Lindsey C., and Brad Verhulst, 2016. "Conformity in Groups: The Effects of Others' Views on Expressed Attitudes and Attitude Change." *Political Behavior* 38(2):277-315.
- Mutz, Diana C. 2002. "Cross-Cutting Social Networks: Testing Democratic Theory in Practice." *The American Political Science Review* 96(1):111-126.
- Karpowitz, Christopher F., Tali Mendelberg, and Lee Shaker. 2012. "Gender Inequality in Deliberative Participation." *The American Political Science Review* 106(3):533-547.

14. voter turnout

Monday, November 30

Explaining why people turn out to vote

- Aldrich, John H. 1993. "Rational Choice and Turnout." *American Journal of Political Science* 37(1): 246-278.
- Brady, Henry, Sidney Verba, and Kay Lehman Schlozman. 1995. "Beyond SES: A Resource Model of Participation." *American Political Science Review* 89(2):271-294.
- Gerber, Alan S. and Donald P. Green. 2000. "The Effect of Canvassing, Telephone Calls, and Direct Mail on Voter Turnout: A Field Experiment." *American Political Science Review* 94:653-663.
- Powell, Jr., G. Bingham. 1986. "American Voter Turnout in Comparative Perspective." *American Political Science Review* 80:17-43.
- McClurg, Scott D. 2003. "Social Networks and Political Participation: The Role of Social Interaction in Explaining Political Participation." *Political Research Quarterly* 56(4):449-464.

15. political participation

Monday, December 7

Political participation. Participatory inequality. Mobilizing political action.

- Fraga, Bernard L. 2018. *The Turnout Gap: Race, Ethnicity, and Political Inequality in a Diversifying America*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Bonilla, Tabitha, and Alvin B. Tillery. 2020. "Which Identity Frames Boost Support for and Mobilization in the #BlackLivesMatter Movement? An Experimental Test." *American Political Science Review* 1-16.