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INTL 4305: Comparative Public Opinion and Participation
Spring 2017
The University of Georgia

Dr. Joshua Dix
mail: jadix@uga.edu
Class: MWF 1:25 - 2:15pm
Place: Caldwell 107
Office Hours: M/W 3-4pm
(or by appointment)
Final Exam: Monday, May 1, 12-3PM

In this course, we look at political participation and public opinion and their roles in the theory and practice of democracy. You will learn about both concepts and how they affect democracy. We will look at the US experience of public opinion and participation and compare it to that of other Western democracies. In the first section of the course, we look at public opinion and its role in public policy. By the end of the section, you should be aware of the various problems regarding national-level surveys and surveys that span nations. In the second section of the course, we will look at political participation. We will look at participation and voting, what specific motives guide voting behaviors (or the lack thereof), and to what extent American experiences in participation affect the world.

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COURSE READING & MATERIALS REQUIREMENTS

1. Dalton's *Citizen Politics: Public Opinion and Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies*, 2014, 6th edition 978-1-4522-0300-3
2. Scholarly articles available on eLC
3. The University of Georgia is a member of the Roper Center's public opinion polling service. Domestically, this service provides access to daily US public opinion polls from 1935 to today. From an international perspective, there are thousands of public opinion polls available. Datasets are available as well. You should create an account with iPOLL; it will help you on your research:
<http://ropercenter.cornell.edu.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/CFIDE/cf/action/registration/register.cfm>
4. Students are expected to attend regularly and to have read the assigned materials prior to class meetings. Course updates will be posted to eLC. Students are encouraged to keep up with the news and pay attention to analyses of events related to developments in international politics. *The Economist* and *Bloomberg News* are good options in this regard.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Understanding of what public opinion and participation are and their effects on each other and the overall systems across states.
2. Understanding polls, how they work, their limits, how to interpret them.
3. Understanding the different ways that public opinion polls are crafted and their effects on overall outcome.

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GRADE COMPONENTS

Participation: 15%
Media Paper: 15%
Short Essay: 10%
Presentation: 10%
Final Paper: 20%
Final Exam: 30%

Attendance Policy – None, but in order to gain participation points, students need to earn them in the class.

Participation (15%) & Presentation (10%)

This class will largely be driven by student discussion. The students who do best will come to class to participate in discussions. Also, students will choose days to present the important readings for the for their specific class dates (~12 minute presentations). Students will also be required to lead discussions with poignant questions regarding the substance of the readings.

Short Essay

Due as noted on the reading guide -- “How much pre-election coverage/opinion polling should be done? Why?”

Media Paper

Each student will be responsible for researching and presenting an analysis of a specific media event. There are a number of choices listed below. Pick one. In this paper, you will analyze media coverage of the event, specifically from a public opinion perspective. While your paper will have a number of academic sources, you should analyze at least 6 articles from 4 different news outlets. Save the trees: no more than three-and-a-half (3.5) pages, 12pt Times New Roman, single-spaced, 2” Left Margins.

The 2016 US Presidential Election, Brexit, Sandy Hook Shooting, Paris Agreement

Final Paper

In the final paper, you will be answering the following question, “What is the relationship between public opinion and participation?” The paper can be broad or narrowly focus on a particular set of issues we will discuss over the course of the semester. This will be a theory driven paper. You are to use the academic literature we discuss in the course and outside of it, if you wish.

Final Examination

The final examination will be *cumulative*, as the concepts from throughout the course build upon one another.

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GRADE SCALE

93-100 = A 73-76 = C
90-92 = A- 70-72 = C-
87-89 = B+ 67-69 = D+
83-86 = B 63-66 = D
80-82 = B- 60-62 = D-
77-79 = C+ 0-59 = F

Students who have questions about the grading scale/policies should refer to the grading policy file on eLC first, and then make an appointment with the instructor or attend office hours.

Withdrawals from the course before the midterm withdrawal deadline will receive a WP; withdrawals after the deadline will receive a WF.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

All academic work must meet the standards contained in a “Culture of Honesty”(http://www.uga.edu/honest/ahpd/culture_honesty.htm). You are responsible to inform yourself about those standards. Don’t Cheat. Students caught cheating will receive a failing grade and referred to the University’s Disciplinary System. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Period.

GRADE APPEALS

If you believe an exam or assignment has been graded wrongly, you can appeal your grade in writing within 48 hours of the assignment or exam being returned. Comparisons to other students’ graded work will not be accepted as evidence for the complaint. The written statement must provide the specific reasons for reconsideration as well as the student’s assessment of the particular grade the assignment deserves. The original copy of the graded assignment must be submitted with the letter. When the appeal has been submitted according to these guidelines, the assignment will be regraded. The new grade may be the same, higher, or lower than the original grade. It will be final.

CLASS POLICIES

Make sure your cell phones are turned off before class. While class is in session, please refrain from any rude or distracting activities. Such behavior includes sleeping, reading or studying for other classes, text messaging, surfing the Internet, completing the crossword puzzle in the Red & Black, etc. If you are observed doing any of these things, it will greatly impact your course participation grade. Also, since this class revolves around the discussion of politics, culture, and current events, we will sometimes delve into controversial topics. Please remember to respect others’ opinions, even if you do not agree. Repeated offenses in this regard will result in a significant reduction of your participation grade.

MAKE-UP EXAMS

Make-ups are offered for University excused absences. It is the students’ responsibility to contact the instructor immediately with conflicts or issues regarding test dates. Students who are ill or experience an emergency of some kind on the date of an examination must contact me within 24 hours noting the absence and have proper documentation (doctor’s note, etc) when returning to class.

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DRC ARRANGEMENTS

Students with documented disabilities receive accommodations through the University DRC. Contact the instructor if this applies.

DISCLAIMER

This syllabus details the instructor's expectation of students. It should also be viewed as a general plan for the course. Deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary. Should deviations become necessary, the instructor may announce them over email.

READING SCHEDULE -- SEE SPREADSHEET FOR READINGS AND DUE DATES