Public Opinion and American Democracy
POLS 4510, Fall 2018
MWF 2:30-3:20, Baldwin 301

Instructor: Jamie Monogan

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Office hours: Monday 3:30-6:00, or by appointment.

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Course Description and Goals

This course is designed to teach students about the empirical study of public opinion. As such, the course will both examine public attitudes towards a wide variety of issues while also teaching a variety of statistical techniques. This course is not, however, a mathematical course, at least not as a math department would teach it. We will focus only on those statistical methods that are directly relevant to the study of public opinion. There is not an assumption of a large amount of previous mathematical knowledge, but a desire to learn about statistics is a must. My goal is that at the conclusion of the course, all students will have a solid basis of understanding of the statistics necessary to interpret public opinion.

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Conduct a public opinion survey and evaluate the survey methods of other studies.

- Analyze survey data using statistical tools.

- Ask an original research question, develop a theoretical answer, and use analysis of survey data to evaluate your theory.

- Explain and evaluate prevailing political science theories about public opinion.

Reading

There are two required texts for this course:

- Clawson, Rosalee A. and Zoe M. Oxley. 2017. *Public Opinion: Democratic Ideals, Democratic Practice.* 3rd ed. Washington: CQ Press. ISBN: 978-1-5063-2331-2.

- Clawson, Rosalee A. and Zoe M. Oxley. 2011. *Conducting Empirical Analysis: Public Opinion in Action.* Washington: CQ Press. ISBN: 978-1-60871-673-9.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the UGA Disabilities Services office will be accommodated according to university policy. For more information, contact Disabilities Services at 542-8719. If you have difficulty reaching the classroom or my office, please notify me as soon as possible.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a core value of institutions of higher learning. All students, upon enrolling, must pledge: "I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others." It is your responsibility to avoid plagiarism, cheating, and dishonesty. The university policy on academic integrity is posted at: `http://www.uga.edu/honesty/`. To qualify the application of the policy in this course: exams should be entirely your own work with no assistance from anyone else, papers should be your own work (though you may ask others for suggestions), and homework assignments can (and should) be done with others provided every keystroke or penstroke of the final copy is your own.

Other Policies and Missed Work

Your regular attendance is necessary for success in this class because missing class disrupts your ability to participate and turn in assignments. It also detracts from other students' opportunities to benefit from your insights during discussions. I will take attendance each day.

Missed exams can be made up only in cases of extreme circumstances (prolonged illness or death in the family) or travel related to university activities. If you know you will miss an exam, arrangements can be made at least one week in advance. If a makeup is granted a week ahead of the midterm exam, the makeup will be scheduled to occur during the final exam period at the end of the semester. Otherwise, no late work will be accepted on any assignment.

Student Resources

You can increase your chance of success in this course by using UGA's academic services. The Division of Academic Enhancement offers tutoring in **Collaborative Academic and Retention Effort (CARE)** that can help with overall course performance and in **Writing** that can help with the term paper. You can set an appointment at `http://dae.uga.edu/`, and the phone number is 706-542-7575. You also may check out opportunities at the Miller Learning Center (`http://mlc.uga.edu/`) and the Writing Center (`http://writingcenter.english.uga.edu/`).

How to Succeed in this Course

- Be respectful of your own and others' ideas.
- Attend class consistently.
- Keep up with the readings.
- If something is not clear, ask a question.
- Clarify expectations with the professor.
- Follow the syllabus for daily expectations.

Course Requirements and Evaluation

Your final grade will be based on the sum of points earned from the following assignments:

In-Class Participation and Attendance	15 pts.
Homework	20 pts.
Midterm exam	20 pts.
Final exam	20 pts.
Research paper	25 pts.

Participation is an essential aspect of class, and repeated absences prevent your ability to participate. **Homework** for each day will be assigned one class period ahead of time. The **midterm exam** will take place during our 50 minute class session. The **final exam** will take place during the university-assigned 3 hour period, though it will be written such that you can complete it in one hour. The **research paper** can be turned in on one of two days: The first due date is for students who want extensive written feedback, and the second is the final due date for students who only want to complete the assignment in time.

Grades are constructed to reflect the university standards posted at `http://bulletin.uga.edu/Bulletin_Files/acad/Grades.html`, which are summarized below. Grades will be based on how many points you earn according to the following distribution:

"Excellent"	A-=90-92 pts.	A=93-100 pts.	
"Good"	B-=80-82 pts.	B=83-86 pts.	B+=87-89 pts.
"Satisfactory"	C-=70-72 pts.	C=73-76 pts.	C+=77-79 pts.
"Passing"	D =60-69 pts.		
"Failure"	F =fewer than 60 pts.		

COURSE SCHEDULE

Aug. 13: Course Introduction and Syllabus Review

Aug. 15: Introduction to Conducting Empirical Analysis
Reading: *Conducting Empirical Analysis: Public Opinion in Action*, Chapter 1.

Aug. 17: Walkthrough of the Term Paper Assignment & Previewing Survey Research

Aug. 20: Public Opinion in a Democracy
Reading: *Public Opinion: Democratic Ideals, Democratic Practice*, pages 1-27.

Aug. 22: Studying Public Opinion Empirically
Reading: *Public Opinion: Democratic Ideals, Democratic Practice*, pages 29-42.

Aug. 24: Data Analysis: Political Socialization
Reading: *Conducting Empirical Analysis: Public Opinion in Action*, Chapter 2.

Aug. 27: Childhood Socialization
Reading: *Public Opinion: Democratic Ideals, Democratic Practice*, pages 43-60.

Aug. 29: Political Events and Socialization
Reading: *Public Opinion: Democratic Ideals, Democratic Practice*, pages 60-72.

Aug. 31: Data Analysis: Mass Media
Reading: *Conducting Empirical Analysis: Public Opinion in Action*, Chapter 3.

Sept. 3: NO CLASS, UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY

Sept. 5: News Media and Political Reporting
Reading: *Public Opinion: Democratic Ideals, Democratic Practice*, pages 73-88.

Sept. 7: Are Citizens Affected by the Mass Media?
Reading: *Public Opinion: Democratic Ideals, Democratic Practice*, pages 88-106.

Sept. 10: Are Americans' Attitudes Stable?
Reading: *Public Opinion: Democratic Ideals, Democratic Practice*, pages 107-118.

Sept. 12: The Psychology of Attitudes
Reading: *Public Opinion: Democratic Ideals, Democratic Practice*, pages 118-136.

Sept. 14: Data Analysis: Attitude Stability and Attitude Change
Reading: *Conducting Empirical Analysis: Public Opinion in Action*, Chapter 4.

Sept. 17: Converse and His Critics
Reading: *Public Opinion: Democratic Ideals, Democratic Practice*, pages 137-151.

Sept. 19: Ideology and Partisanship
Reading: *Public Opinion: Democratic Ideals, Democratic Practice*, pages 151-170.

Sept. 21: Data Analysis: Political Ideology
Reading: *Conducting Empirical Analysis: Public Opinion in Action*, Chapter 5.

Sept. 24: Personality
Reading: *Public Opinion: Democratic Ideals, Democratic Practice*, pages 171-182.

Sept. 26: Self-Interest, Values, and Historical Events
Reading: *Public Opinion: Democratic Ideals, Democratic Practice*, pages 182-192.

Sept. 28: Data Analysis: Pluralistic Roots of Public Opinion
Reading: *Conducting Empirical Analysis: Public Opinion in Action*, Chapter 6.

Oct. 1: Race
Reading: *Public Opinion: Democratic Ideals, Democratic Practice*, pages 193-208.

Oct. 3: Gender
Reading: *Public Opinion: Democratic Ideals, Democratic Practice*, pages 208-216.

Oct. 5: Data Analysis: Public Opinion and the 2008 Election
Reading: *Conducting Empirical Analysis: Public Opinion in Action*, Chapter 12.

Oct. 8: Using SurveyMonkey.com

Oct. 10: Review for Midterm Exam

Oct. 12: **MIDTERM EXAM**

Oct. 15: Data Analysis: Political Knowledge
Reading: *Conducting Empirical Analysis: Public Opinion in Action*, Chapter 7.

Oct. 17: Follow-Up on Midterm Exams and Withdrawal Deadline

Oct. 19: How Knowledgeable are Citizens?
Reading: *Public Opinion: Democratic Ideals, Democratic Practice*, pages 217-238.

Oct. 22: Why Are Some Citizens More Knowledgeable than Others?
Reading: *Public Opinion: Democratic Ideals, Democratic Practice*, pages 238-248.

Oct. 24: Data Analysis: Support for Civil Liberties
Reading: *Conducting Empirical Analysis: Public Opinion in Action*, Chapter 8.

Oct. 26: NO CLASS, UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY

Oct. 29: Are Americans Tolerant?
Reading: *Public Opinion: Democratic Ideals, Democratic Practice*, pages 249-268.

Oct. 31: Civil Liberties Post-9/11
Reading: *Public Opinion: Democratic Ideals, Democratic Practice*, pages 268-280.

Nov. 2: **PRELIMINARY DATA ANALYSIS DUE**
Data Analysis: Support for Civil Rights
Reading: *Conducting Empirical Analysis: Public Opinion in Action*, Chapter 9.

Nov. 5: Civil Rights: Whom Would Americans Elect President?
Reading: *Public Opinion: Democratic Ideals, Democratic Practice*, pages 281-292.

Nov. 7: Support for Civil Rights Policies
Reading: *Public Opinion: Democratic Ideals, Democratic Practice*, pages 292-310.

Nov. 9: To be announced.

Nov. 12: **FIRST RESEARCH PAPER DUE DATE—WITH FEEDBACK**
Data Analysis: Trust in Government and Social Capital
Reading: *Conducting Empirical Analysis: Public Opinion in Action*, Chapter 10.

Nov. 14: Trust in Government
Reading: *Public Opinion: Democratic Ideals, Democratic Practice*, pages 311-336.

Nov. 16: Social Capital
Reading: *Public Opinion: Democratic Ideals, Democratic Practice*, pages 336-346.

Nov. 19-23: NO CLASS—UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY

Nov. 26: Data Analysis: Impact of Public Opinion on Policy
Reading: *Conducting Empirical Analysis: Public Opinion in Action*, Chapter 11.

Nov. 28: Is Public Opinion Related to Policy?
Reading: *Public Opinion: Democratic Ideals, Democratic Practice*, pages 347-359.

Nov. 30: Do Politicians Follow or Lead the Public?
Reading: *Public Opinion: Democratic Ideals, Democratic Practice*, pages 360-376.

Dec. 3: What Do We Make of Public Opinion in a Democracy?
Reading: *Public Opinion: Democratic Ideals, Democratic Practice*, pages 377-385.

Dec. 4 (Tues.): **FINAL RESEARCH PAPER DUE DATE—NO FEEDBACK**
Review for Final Exam

Dec. 12 (Wed.): **FINAL EXAM, 3:30-6:30pm**