

POLS 4790
Special Topics in American Politics: Political Behavior
SPRING 2019

Instructor: Mr. Sam Marcotte

Time and Location: MWF 2:30 - 3:20, Baldwin 101D

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Office Hours: Tuesday 2:00 - 4:00 Baldwin 109B

Overview and Objectives

This course provides an introduction to the continuously growing research on public opinion and mass political behavior, especially in the American political context. For this purpose, we will focus almost exclusively on the behavior of non-elite political actors (i.e. individual voters as well as groups of voters). The significance of this course lies in its departure from the Rational Choice paradigm that dominated prior political science research to a large extent. Instead, we will examine the psychological mechanisms that shape citizens' attitudes, values, voting decision, as well as other forms of political participation. Thereby, we will answer questions that are important for our understanding of *actual*, rather than ideal, democratic decision-making such as: How do people form opinions? How do people process information to form political evaluations? Do people care more about their party's victory than political issues? What is affective polarization and how does it impact American democracy? Throughout the course, we will also examine commonly used methodological tools in political behavior research such as survey research and experiments.

Requirements

This course is a seminar— a format that only works if you have read and critically thought about the week's readings and if you actively participate in the discussion so please come prepared. In order to help you accomplish this goal, there will be three pop quizzes throughout the course of the semester. You will also write one paper critically analyzing one of two required texts: Klar and Krupnikov **OR** Fiorina et al. This essay should try to engage the text by doing one or more of the following: juxtaposing and commenting on alternative explanations or approaches to the substantive topic; criticizing the methodologies used and proposing other strategies of research; criticizing the conceptualization and/or measurement of a particular construct; analyzing the implications of a set of findings; suggesting new questions or hypotheses for research; developing similarities and contrasts with arguments or research found in the readings from previous weeks. More generally, this paper should *contain an argument*, not a summary or description of the text. This paper should run about 3-5 pages double spaced and is due by 6:30 PM on the date of the final exam (05/08) via

email. There will be 2 exams— a midterm and a final exam. As this is a discussion-based seminar, you will also be graded on your attendance and participation. You have two free absences. The grading scale is as follows.

- **Quizzes: 20%**
- **Paper: 20%**
- **Participation/Attendance: 15%**
- **Midterm 20%**
- **Final: 25%**

Required Texts

- Klar, Samara, and Yanna Krupnikov. 2016. *Independent politics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Fiorina, M. P., Abrams, S. J., and Pope, J. 2006. *Culture war?: The myth of a polarized America*. Longman Publishing Group.
- Theiss-Morse, E.A., Wagner, M.W., Flanigan, W.H. and Zingale, N.H., 2018. *Political Behavior of the American Electorate* CQ Press.
- Required articles can be found online via JSTOR or Google Scholar.

Grading Scale

93 - 100	A	90 - 92	A-	
87 - 89	B+	84-86	B	80-83
77 - 79	C+	74-76	C	70-73
60 - 69	D			
0 - 59	F			

Grading Policy

Formal grade appeals must be made in writing, and in the case of a paper, I will re-grade your entire paper. Therefore, your grade can go up or down. A final grade of “Incomplete” will only be given in this course under exceptional circumstances and is solely at the discretion of the instructor. If an incomplete is given, it is the student’s responsibility to complete the necessary requirements as early in the following semester as possible. Legitimate excuses for absence from class (e.g., religious holiday, medical emergency, or illness) must be presented to me prior to the class when feasible. Late assignments will be docked 5 percent per day (half letter grade), for each day that a project is late (including weekends).

Office Hours

Students who are having difficulty with the course materials and/or assignments are encouraged to make an appointment with me. Don't be afraid to come by. However, please note that office hours are for clarification of material, not for recreating a lecture if you skipped class. If you like to talk to me, feel free to stop by my office during office hours but please email me in advance if possible.

Culture of Honesty Policy

You are responsible for knowing and complying with the policy and procedures relating to academic honesty. To understand what constitutes dishonest work, as defined by the University, please carefully review the policy here: <https://ovpi.uga.edu/academichonesty/academic-honesty-policy>

Course Outline

Introduction (1/9, 1/11)

- The Syllabus. Read the syllabus. Please.
- Theiss-Morse et al. Introduction.
- Zaller, J., and Feldman, S. 1992. A simple theory of the survey response: Answering questions versus revealing preferences. *American journal of political science*, 579-616.

Democratic Beliefs (1/14, 1/16, 1/18)

- Theiss-Morse et al. Chapter 1.
- Feldman, Stanley. 1988. Structure and consistency in public opinion: The role of core beliefs and values. *American Journal of political science*, 416-440.

MLK Day— No Class (1/21)

Elections (1/23)

- Theiss-Morse et al. Chapter 2
- Nate Silver, "On the Maddeningly Inexact Relationship between Unemployment and Re-Election," *FiveThirtyEight* (blog), *New York Times*, June 2, 2011
- Larry Bartels, "2016 Was an Ordinary Election, Not a Realignment," *Monkey Cage* (newsletter), *Washington Post*, November 10, 2016

Comprehensive Exams — No Class (1/25)

- For me not you, don't panic

Elections Part II (1/28, 1/30, 2/1)

- Theiss-Morse et al. Chapter 3
- 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.
- Krupnikov, Yanna. 2011. When does negativity demobilize? Tracing the conditional effect of negative campaigning on voter turnout. *American Journal of Political Science*, 55(4), 797-813.

Partisanship(2/4, 2/6)

- Theiss-Morse et al. Chapter 4
- MacKuen, Michael, Robert Erikson, and James Stimson. Macropartisanship. *American Political Science Review* 83 (4):1126-42.
- Green, Donald, Bradley Palmquist; and Eric Schickler. 1998. Macropartisanship: A Replication and Critique. *American Political Science Review* 92(4):883-99.

Comprehensive Exams Part II — No Class (2/8)

- For me not you, don't panic... again

Partisanship Part II (2/11, 2/13, 2/15)

- Klar and Krupnikov Ch 1-5
- Huddy, L., Mason, L., & Aaroe, L. 2015. Expressive partisanship: Campaign involvement, political emotion, and partisan identity. *American Political Science Review*, 109(1), 1-17.

Group Characteristics (2/18, 2/20, 2/22)

- Theiss-Morse et al. Chapter 5
- Dolan, Kathleen. 2014. "Gender Stereotypes, Candidate Evaluations, and Voting for Women Candidates: What Really Matters?" *Political Research Quarterly* 67(1):96107.
- Weber, C. R., Lavine, H., Huddy, L., & Federico, C. M. 2014. Placing racial stereotypes in context: Social desirability and the politics of racial hostility. *American Journal of Political Science*, 58(1), 63-78.

Public Opinion (2/25, 2/27, 3/1)

- Theiss-Morse et al. Chapter 6 (164-189)
- 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(3):67-83.
- Huddy, L., & Khatib, N. 2007. American patriotism, national identity, and political involvement. *American journal of political science*, 51(1), 63-77.

Midterm Review (3/4)**Midterm** (3/6)**Ideology** (3/8)

- Mason, L., 2015. "I disrespectfully agree": The differential effects of partisan sorting on social and issue polarization. *American Journal of Political Science*, 59(1), pp.128-145.

Spring Break (3/11 - 3/15)

- Have fun!

Ideology Part II (3/18, 3/20, 3/22)

- Theiss-Morse et al. Chapter 6 (191-204)

Ideology Part III: Independents (3/25 3/27, 3/29)

- Klar and Krupnikov, Ch. 6-8)

Ideology Part IV: Polarization(4/1, 4/3, 4/5)

- Fiorina Ch.

Mass Media (4/8, 4/10, 4/12)

- Theiss-Morse et al. Chapter 7
- Gilens, Martin, Lynn Vavreck, Martin Cohen. 2007. "The Mass Media and the Public's Assessments of Presidential Candidates, 1952-2000" *The Journal of Politics* 69 (4), 1160-1175.

Voting (4/15, 4/17, 4/19)

- Theiss-Morse et al. Chapter 8

Political Participation (4/22, 4/24, 4/26)

- Brady, Henry E., Sidney Verba, and Kay Lehman Schlozman. 1995. "Beyond SES: A Resource Model of Political Participation." *American Political Science Review* 89 (2):271-94.
- Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman, Henry Brady, and Norman H. Nie. 1993. "Citizen Activity: Who Participates? What Do They Say?" *American Political Science Review* 87 (2):303-18.
- Valentino, N. A., Brader, T., Groenendyk, E. W., Gregorowicz, K., & Hutchings, V. L. 2011. Election night's alright for fighting: The role of emotions in political participation. *The Journal of Politics*, 73(1), 156-170.

Final Exam Review (4/29, 4/30)**Final Exam** (5/8)

- 3:30-6:30
- Paper due via email