

POLS 8790 Special Topics in American Politics: Public Opinion

Spring 2019

Thursday, 3:30-6:15pm

Baldwin Hall 302

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Office Hours: Wednesday, 2:30-4:30pm

Course Description

This seminar is introduction to U.S. public opinion research. We will cover a variety of topics in this area, ranging from the sources and structures of political attitudes to the representation of these preferences by political elites. Throughout the course our focus will be on public opinion of the mass public rather than the opinions of political elites and elected officials. In addition to examining substantive themes, we will address issues of methodology, like how researchers measure the concepts they are studying, different empirical approaches to studying public opinion, and the effectiveness of different statistical techniques scholars employ to answer their questions. Finally, we will examine the normative implications of the research in this area to assess the health of American democracy.

Structure

This is a seminar and participation by everybody is essential to us having a successful semester. The course will revolve around thoughtful discussion of the course material and I expect everybody to come to class prepared to discuss the following questions about each reading:

1. What are the research questions?
2. How the author(s) define and measure the concepts they are studying? Are these valid and/or reliable measures?
3. What's the theory? What are the hypotheses?
4. What methodological strategy or strategies do they employ to test these hypotheses?
5. Key findings? How dependent of measurement and/or research design are the findings?
6. How do the findings from a given paper fit into the broader theme of a given week? In other words, how does the reader "speak" to other readings this week?
7. What are the implications for how we understand public opinion and American democracy?
8. What questions remain unanswered?

Assignments & Expectations

Attendance & Participation – You are expected to attend every class, read all materials carefully, and contribute to all seminar discussions. In short, you are expected to actively participate in every single class. If you are not participating, you are hurting yourself & your chance to be successful in this class.

Readings – In addition to the required books, each week we will read academic articles. I expect that you will locate most of the readings for class. At times I will provide the reading for you by posting it to eLC. Those readings are noted in the syllabus.

Reaction Paper – Each student will be required to write a one-page (single-spaced) reaction paper every other week. The paper should cover a broad topic discussed in multiple articles, a book, or all of the readings for a week. The papers should be emailed to the class by 5pm on the Wednesday before class.

Short Paper & Discussion Leader – Each student is required to write a 7-8 page (double-spaced) paper on the readings for one session during the semester. The student will also lead seminar discussion this session. The paper and the discussion should address the questions raised in the “structure” section above. The paper should be emailed to the class by 5pm on the Wednesday before class.

Final Presentation – Our final class session will be devoted to students presenting the results from their final papers. Details will be provided during the semester.

Term Paper - You are required to complete a 25-page term paper, due **Monday, April 29** by 5:00pm. The paper should be roughly 20 pages of text with the being some combination of tables, figures, appendices, and references. Place a **hardcopy** in my mailbox in the main office or bring it by my office. Electronic copies will not be accepted. Late papers will be accepted only under extraordinary conditions. There are three options for the paper.

1. Literature Review: Identify a body of literature on a topic(s) that you would like to examine in depth. The paper must (1) identify the research questions that animate this body of work and explain why the questions are important; (2) elaborate the key concepts and theoretical frameworks in the literature; (3) summarize the types of data scholars have examined and explain how they key concepts have been measured; (4) summarize the key findings and assess the persuasiveness of the evidence; and (5) offer two new research questions the extant literature has failed to address and/or answer.
2. Research Design: Specify a question (or set of questions) that you would like to examine and then develop a plan that will let you to answer it. The paper must (1) describe the research question(s) and explain why it’s important; (2) review the relevant literature and explain how your study contributes to it; (3) define the concepts, develop a theoretical framework, and derive testable hypotheses from this framework; (4) describe the data you plan to collect and how the key concepts will be measured; and (5) explain how you plan to analyze the data.
3. Research Paper: Specify a question (or set of questions) that you would like to examine and then conduct original research to answer it. The paper must (1) describe the research question(s) and explain why it’s important; (2) review the relevant literature and explain how your study contributes to it; (3) define the concepts, develop a theoretical framework, and derive testable hypotheses from this framework; (4) collect data and describe how the key concepts are measured; and (5) analyze these relationships using appropriate methods.

Required Books (order online; not available in campus bookstore)

1. Hopkins, Daniel. 2018. *The Increasingly United States: How and Why American Political Behavior Nationalized*. University of Chicago Press.
2. Kinder, Donald and Nathan Kalmoe. 2017. *Neither Liberal nor Conservative*. University of Chicago Press.
3. Mason, Lilliana. 2018. *Uncivil Agreement: How Politics Became Our Identity*. University of Chicago Press.

Grading

The following are the areas in which you will receive points in this class and the weight that each area has on your final grade.

Participation	20%
Weekly Reaction papers	20%
Short Paper & Discussion Leader	10%
Research Paper	40%
Final Presentation	10%

I use the following scale when assigning letter grades:

Grade	Percent
A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C+	77-79
C	74-76
C-	70-73
D	60-69
F	<60

Course Policies

Valid Absence Excuses

If you have a significant conflict that causes you to miss class (e.g., a personal, family, or medical emergency), you should email me within a week of the missed due date to make sure you can complete the assignment or exam in a timely manner.

Academic Honesty

The University of Georgia has an academic honesty policy. Academic integrity is required for a positive learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own, can result in disciplinary action. Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive an F in the course. Additionally, I will forward your name to the University. You can read the policies in their entirety here: [https://honesty.uga.edu/Academic-Honesty-Policy/Definitions for Purposes of this Policy/](https://honesty.uga.edu/Academic-Honesty-Policy/Definitions%20for%20Purposes%20of%20this%20Policy/)

Disability resource center

If you anticipate needing classroom or exam accommodations due to the impact of a disability or medical condition, you must register for services with the Disability Resource Center. Additional information can be found here: <http://drc.uga.edu/>

Course Schedule

Below you will find the schedule for our semester. This schedule is tentative and I reserve the right to make changes as we proceed through the semester.

Week 1 (1/10)– Foundations & Course Overview

Opinion elicitation

1. Zaller, John and Stanley Feldman. 1992. "A Simple Theory of the Survey Response: Answering Questions versus Revealing Preferences." *American Journal of Political Science* 36: 579-616.
2. Schuldt, Jonathon, Sara H. Konrath, and Norbert Schwarz. 2011. "'Global Warming' or 'Climate Change'? Whether the Planet is Warming Depends on Question Wording." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 75: 115-24
3. Bartels, Larry. 2006. "Democracy with Attitudes." In *Electoral Democracy*, Michael B. MacKuen and George Rabinowitz, eds. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
eLC

Methods – Experiments & Surveys

4. Druckman, et al. 2006. "The Growth and Development of Experimental Research in Political Science." *American Political Science Review*. 100(4): 627-635.
5. Robinson, Joshua, et al. 2018. "An Audit of Political Behavior Research." *SAGE-Open* (1):1-14.

Week 2 (1/17) – SPSA Meeting in Austin, Texas.

- No class

Week 3 (1/24) – Ideology (Group A)

1. Converse, Philip E. 1964. “The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics.” In *Ideology and Discontent*, David Apter, ed. New York: Free Press.
2. Conover, Pamela and Stanley Feldman. 1981. “The Origins and Meaning of Liberal/Conservative Self-Identifications.” *American Journal of Political Science* 25(4): 307-37.
3. Kinder, Donald R. and Nathan P. Kalmoe. 2017. *Neither Liberal nor Conservative: Ideological Innocence in the American Public*. University of Chicago Press.

Week 4 (1/31) – Party Identification (Group B)

1. Campbell, Angus, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes. 1960. *The American Voter*. New York: John Wiley. Chapter 6 eLC.
2. Fiorina, Morris P. 1981. *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. Chapter 5. eLC.
3. Green, Donald, Bradley Palmquist, and Eric Schickler. 2002. *Partisan Hearts & Minds*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Chapters 2 & 3 eLC.
4. Bartels, Larry. M. 2002. “Beyond the Running Tally: Partisan Bias in Political Perceptions.” *Political Behavior* 24: 117-50.
5. Klar, Samara. 2014. “Partisanship in a Social Setting.” *American Journal of Political Science*, 58(3): 687-704.
6. Ahler, Douglas and Gaurav Sood. 2018. “The Parties in Our Heads: Misperceptions about Party Composition and Their Consequences.” *The Journal of Politics*, 80(3): 964-981.

Week 5 (2/7) – Long-Term Predispositions & Political Values (Group A)

1. Hurwitz, Jon and Mark Peffley. 1987. “How are Foreign Policy Attitudes Structured? A Hierarchical Model.” *American Political Science Review* 81: 1099-1120.
2. Feldman, Stanley. 1988. “Structure and Consistency in Public Opinion: The Role of Core Beliefs and Values.” *American Journal of Political Science* 32: 416-40.
3. Feldman, Stanley and John Zaller. 1992. “The Political Culture of Ambivalence: Ideological Responses to the Welfare State.” *American Journal of Political Science* 36: 268-307.
4. Goren, Paul. 2004. “Political Sophistication and Policy Reasoning: A Reconsideration.” *American Journal of Political Science* 48: 462-478.
5. Alford, John R., Carolyn L. Funk, and John R. Hibbing. 2005. “Are Political Orientations Genetically Transmitted?” *American Political Science Review* 99: 153-67.
6. Barker, David C. and James Tinnick. 2006. “Competing Visions of Parental Roles and Ideological Constraint.” *American Political Science Review*, 100(2): 249-263.

Week 6 (2/14) – Issues and Opinion Change (Group B)

1. Carsey, Thomas and Geoffrey Layman. 2006. “Changing Sides or Changing Minds? Party Identification and Policy Preferences in the American Electorate.” *American Journal of Political Science*. 50(2): 464-77.
2. Dancy, Logan and Paul Goren. 2010. “Party Identification, Issue Attitudes, and the Dynamics of Political Debate.” *American Journal of Political Science* 54(3): 686-99.
3. Lenz, Gabriel S. 2012. *Follow the Leader? How Voters Respond to Politicians’ Policies and Performance*.” Chapters 1-3; 8

4. Tesler, Michael. 2014. "Priming Predispositions and Changing Policy Positions: An Account of When Mass Opinion Is Primed or Changed." *American Journal of Political Science*. 59(4): 806-24.
5. Barber, Michael and Jeremy C. Pope. 2019. "Does Party Trump Ideology? Disentangling Party and Ideology in America." *American Political Science Review*.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055418000795>

Week 7 (2/21) – Political Knowledge/Sophistication (Group A)

1. Delli Carpini, Michael X. and Scott Keeter. 1996. *What Americans Know About Politics and Why It Matters*. Yale University Press. Ch. 4. eLC.
2. James Kuklinski et al. 2000. "Misinformation and the Currency of Democratic Citizenship." *Journal of Politics*, 62: 790-816.
3. Prior, Markus and Arthur Lupia. 2008. "Money, Time, and Political Knowledge: Distinguishing Quick Recall and Political Learning Skills." *American Journal of Political Science*, 52(1): 169-83.
4. Dancey, Logan and Geoffrey Sheagley. 2013. "Heuristics Behaving Badly: Party Cues and Voter Knowledge." *American Journal of Political Science*. 57(2): 312-25.
5. Barabas, Jason, Jennifer Jerit, William Pollock, and Carlisle Rainey. 2014. "The Question(s) of Political Knowledge." *American Political Science Review*, 108:840-855.
6. Bullock et al. 2015. "Partisan Bias in Factual Beliefs about Politics." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*. 10: 519-578.
7. Miller, Joanne M., Kyle L. Saunders, and Christina E. Farhart. 2015. "Conspiracy Endorsement as Motivated Reasoning: The Moderating Roles of Political Knowledge and Trust." *American Journal of Political Science*, 60(4): 824-44.

Week 8 (2/28) – Race (Group B)

1. Kinder, Donald R. and David O. Sears. 1981. "Prejudice and Politics: Symbolic Racism Versus Racial Threats to the Good Life." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 40(3): 414-34.
2. Kinder, Donald R. and Tali Mendelberg. 2001. "Individualism Reconsidered." In *Racialized Politics: The Debate about Racism in America*, David O. Sears, Jim Sidanius, and Lawrence Bobo, eds. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. eLC
3. Sniderman, Paul M., Gretchen C. Crosby, and William G. Howell. 2001. "The Politics of Race." In *Racialized Politics: The Debate about Racism in America*, David O. Sears, Jim Sidanius, and Lawrence Bobo, eds. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. eLC
4. Feldman, Stanley and Huddy, Leonie, 2005. "Racial resentment and white opposition to race-conscious programs: Principles or prejudice?" *American Journal of Political Science*, 49(1), pp.168-183.
5. Tesler, Michael. 2012. "The Spillover of Racialization into Health Care: How President Obama Polarized Public Opinion by Race and Racial Attitudes." *American Journal of Political Science* 56: 690-704.
6. DeSante, Christopher D. 2013. "Working Twice as Hard to Get Half as Far: Race, Work Ethic, and America's Deserving Poor." *American Journal of Political Science* 57(2): 342-356.
7. Valentino, Nicholas A., Fabian G. Neuner, and L. Matthew Vandenbroek. 2018. "The Changing Norms of Racial Political Rhetoric and the End of Racial Priming." *Journal of Politics*, 80(3): 757-771.

Week 9 (3/7)– Political Polarization (Group A)

1. Fiorina, Morris P. and Samuel J. Abrams. 2008. “Political Polarization in the American Public. *Annual Review of Political Science*. 11, 563-88.
2. Abramowitz, Alan I., and Kyle L. Saunders. 2008. “Is Polarization a Myth?” *Journal of Politics* 70:542- 555.
3. Mason, Lilliana. 2017. *Uncivil Agreement*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Week 10 (3/14) – Spring Break

- No class

Week 11 (3/21) – National vs. Personal Politics (Group B)

1. Lapinski, John et al. 2016. “What Do Citizens Want from Their Member of Congress?” *Political Research Quarterly*, 69(3): 535-45/
2. Hopkins, Daniel. 2018. *The Increasingly United States: How and Why American Political Behavior Nationalized*. University of Chicago Press.
3. Dancy, Logan, John Henderson, and Geoffrey Sheagley. 2019. “The Personal Vote in a Polarized Era.” *Working Paper*.

Week 12 (3/28) - Trust in Gov’t & Views of lawmaking (Group A)

1. Miller, Arthur H. 1974. “Political Issues and Trust in Government: 1964-1970.” *American Political Science Review* 68: 951-972.
2. Citrin, Jack. 1974. “Comment: The Political Relevance of Trust in Government.” *American Political Science Review* 68: 973-988.
3. Hetherington, Marc J. 1998. “The Political Relevance of Political Trust.” *American Political Science Review* 92:791-808.
4. 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.
5. Hetherington, Marc J. and Thomas J. Rudolph. 2008. “Priming, Performance, and the Dynamics of Political Trust.” *Journal of Politics*. 70(2): 498-512.
6. Intawan, Chanita and Stephen P. Nicholson. 2018. “My Trust in Government is Implicit: Automatic Trust in Government and System Support.” *The Journal of Politics*. <https://doi.org/10.1086/694785>

Week 13 (4/4) - No class – MPSA Meeting in Chicago, IL

- Meetings about final papers

Week 14 (4/11)- Representation I - Opinion Aggregation (Group B)

1. Page, Benjamin I. and Robert Y. Shapiro. 1992. *The Rational Public*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 1-2, 7-8 eLC.
2. Stimson, James A., Michael MacKuen, and Robert Erikson. 1995. “Dynamic Representation.” *American Political Science Review*, 89(3): 543-65.
3. Althaus, Scott. 1998. “Information Effects in Collective Preferences.” *American Journal of Political Science*. 92(3): 545-58.
4. Kuklinski, James H., and Paul J. Quirk. 2000. “Reconsidering the Rational Public: Cognition, Heuristics, and Mass Opinion.” In *Elements of Reason: Cognition, Choice, and the Bounds of Rationality*, ed. Arthur Lupia, Matthew D. McCubbins, and Samuel L. Popkin. New York: Cambridge University Press, 153–82. eLC.

5. Gilens, Martin. 2001. "Political Ignorance and Collective Policy Preferences." *American Political Science Review*. 95(2): 379-96.

Week 15 (4/18)- Representation II – Mass-Elite Opinion Convergence

Public Responsiveness to Elite Behavior

1. Ansolabehere, Stephen, and Philip Edward Jones. 2010. "Constituents' Responses to Congressional Roll- Call Voting." *American Journal of Political Science* 54:583-597.
2. Sulkin, Tracy., Testa, Paul., & Usry, Kaye. 2015. "What Gets Rewarded? Legislative Activity and Constituency Approval." *Political Research Quarterly*, 68(4), 690-702.
3. Achen, Christopher and Larry Bartels. 2018. *Democracy for Realists*. Princeton University Press. Ch. 5. eLC.

Elite Responsiveness to Mass Opinion

4. Bartels, Larry M. 2008. *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Chapter 9. eLC.
5. Jacobs, Lawrence R., and Benjamin I. Page. 2005. "Who Influences U.S. Foreign Policy?" *American Political Science Review* 99:107-123.
6. Gilens, Martin and Benjamin Page. 2014. "Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens." *Perspectives on Politics*, 12(3): 564-81.

Week 16 (4/25) – Symposium

- 4/29 - Final paper due by 5:00pm.