

POLS 8195: Public Opinion

Fall 2023

Tuesdays, 3:55-6:40pm

Baldwin 102

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Office Hours: Wednesday, 2-4pm.

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 distributing it through our class slack channel. 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 distributed to the class by 5pm on the Monday before class.

Short Paper & Discussion Leader – Each student is required to write a 7-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 distributed to the class by 5pm on the Monday 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 term paper on a topic of your choice. The paper should be roughly 20 pages of text with the remainder being some combination of tables, figures, appendices, and references. Email me a digital copy by the deadline. 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

1. Kalmoe, Nathan P. and Lilliana Mason. 2022. "Radical American Partisanship."
University of Chicago Press.
 - a. Should be available as an ebook through UGA library.

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 (8/22)– Foundations, Methods, and Course Overview

Foundations

1. Key, V.O. 1961. *Public Opinion and American Democracy* (C. 1, pp. 3-18). **Dist.**
2. Zaller (Ch. 2). **Dist.**

Methods – Experiments & Surveys

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. Sen, Maya and Omar Wasow. 2016. “Race as a Bundle of Sticks: Designs that Estimate Effects of Seemingly Immutable Characteristics.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 19: 499-522.

Week 2 (8/29)– 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. **Dist.**
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. Arian, Asher and Michal Shamir. 1983. “The Primarily Political Functions of the Left-Right Continuum.” *Comparative Politics* 15(2): 139-158.
4. Claassen et al. 2015. “Ideological Labels in America.” *Political Behavior* 37: 253-278
5. Goggin, Stephen et al. 2019. “What Goes with Red and Blue? Mapping Partisan and Ideological Associations in the Minds of Voters.” *Political Behavior* 42: 985-1013.
6. Jefferson, Hakeem. “The Curious Case of Black Conservatives: Construct Validity and the 7-point Liberal Conservative Scale. *Forthcoming at Public Opinion Quarterly*.
7. Uscinski, Joseph E., Adam Enders, Michelle Seelig et al. 2021. “American Politics in Two Dimensions: Partisan and Ideological Identities versus Anti-Establishment Orientations.” *American Journal of Political Science*. 65(4): 877-895.

Week 3 (9/5) – Party Identification 1 (The Michigan Model & Group Identity) (Group B)

1. Campbell, Angus, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes. 1960. *The American Voter*. New York: John Wiley. Assorted chapters. **Dist.**
2. Green, Donald, Bradley Palmquist, and Eric Schickler. 2002. *Partisan Hearts & Minds*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Chapter 2 **Dist.**
3. Klar, Samara. 2014. “Partisanship in a Social Setting.” *American Journal of Political Science*, 58(3): 687-704.
4. Huddy, Leonie et al. 2015. “Expressive Partisanship: Campaign Involvement, Political Emotion, and Partisan Identity.” *American Political Science Review* 109(1).
5. Bisgaard, Martin. 2019. “How Getting the Facts Right Can Fuel Partisan-Motivated Reasoning.” *American Journal of Political Science* 63(4).
6. Graham, Matthew and Shikhar Singh. 2023. “An Outbreak of Selective Attribution: Partisanship and Blame in the COVID-19 Pandemic.” *American Political Science Review*.

Week 4 (9/12) – Party Identification 2 (Revisionists & Additional Perspectives) (Group A)

1. Fiorina, Morris P. 1981. *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. Chapter 5. **Dist.**
2. Gerber, Alan S. and Gregory Huber. 2010. “Partisanship, political control, and economic assessments.” *American Journal of Political Science* 54(1): 153-173.
3. Lupu, Noam. 2013. “Party Brands and Partisanship: Theory with Evidence from a Survey Experiment in Argentina.” *American Journal of Political Science*. 57(1).
4. Fowler, Anthony. 2020. “Partisan intoxication or policy voting?” *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 15(2): 141-179. Skim the following replies:
 - a. Rogers, Steven. 2019. “Sobering up after “Partisan intoxication or policy voting?”” *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 15(2)
 - b. Fowler, Anthony. 2020. “Defending sober voters against sensationalist scholars: A reply to Rogers.” *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 15(2): 213-219.
5. Mummolo, Jonathan, Erik Peterson, and Sean Westwood. 2019. “The Limits of Partisan Loyalty.” *Political Behavior*

Week 5 (9/19) – Issues and Opinion Change (Group B)

1. Adams, Greg. 1997. “Abortion: Evidence of an issue evolution.” *American Journal of Political Science*. 41(3): 718-737.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. Lenz, Gabriel S. 2012. *Follow the Leader? How Voters Respond to Politicians’ Policies and Performance*.” Chapters 1-3; 8
5. 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.
6. 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 6 (9/26)– 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. **Dist.**
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. Dancy, 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. 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.
7. Kraft, Patrick. 2023. “Women Also Know Stuff: Challenging the Gender Gap in Political Sophistication.” *American Political Science Review*.

Week 7 (10/3) – Polarization: Political Violence (Group B)

1. Kalmoe, Nathan P. and Lilliana Mason. 2022. “Radical American Partisanship.” University of Chicago Press.
2. Westwood, Sean, Justin Grimmer, Matthew Tyler, and Clayton Nall. 2022. “Current Research Overstate American Support for Political Violence.” PNAS. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2116870119>
3. Kalmoe, Nathan P. and Lilliana Mason. 2022. “A Holistic View of Conditional American Support for Political Violence.” PNAS. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2207237119>
4. Westwood, Sean, Justin Grimmer, Matthew Tyler, and Clayton Nall. 2022. “Reply to Kalmoe and Mason: The Pitfalls of Using Surveys to Measure Low-prevalence Attitudes and Behavior.” PNAS. <https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.2207584119>

Week 8 (10/10) – Identity 1: Race and Racial Attitudes (Group A)

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. 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.
3. 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.
4. Frymer, Paul and Jacob M. Grumbach. 2020. “Labor Unions and White Racial Politics.” *American Journal of Political Science*. DOI: 10.1111/ajps.12537.
5. White, Ismail, Cheryl 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).

6. Pérez, Efrén, Crystal Robertson, and Bianca Vicuña. 2023. "Prejudiced When Climbing Up or When Falling Down? Why Some People of Color Express Anti-Black Racism." *American Political Science Review*.

Week 9 – Identity 2: Gender (Group B)

1. Simien, Evelyn. 2005. "Race, Gender, and Linked Fate." *Journal of Black Studies*. 35(5).
2. Sanbonmatsu, Kira. 2002. "Gender Stereotypes and Vote Choice." *American Journal of Political Science* 46(1).
3. Schaffner, Brian F. et al. 2018. "Understanding White Polarization in the 2016 Vote for President: The Sobering Role of Racism and Sexism." *Political Science Quarterly* 133(1).
4. Cassese, Erin C. and Mirya Holman. "Playing the Woman Card: Ambivalent Sexism in the 2016 U.S. Presidential Race." *Political Psychology* 40(1).
5. Klar, Samara. 2018. "When Common Identities Decrease Trust: An Experimental Study of Partisan Women." *American Journal of Political Science* 62(3).
6. Saha, Sparsha and Ana Catalano Weeks. 2020. "Ambitious Women: Gender and Voter Perceptions of Candidate Ambition." *Political Behavior*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-020-09636-z>
7. Bankert, Alexa. 2020. "Let's Talk About Sexism: The Differential Effects of Gender Discrimination on Liberal and Conservative Women's Political Engagement." *American Politics Research* (48)6: 779-791.

Week 10 (10/24) – Media (Group A)

1. Bartels, Larry M. 1993. "Messages Received: The Political Impact of Media Exposure." *American Political Science Review* 87(2): 267-285.
2. Barabas, Jason and Jennifer Jerit. 2009. "Estimating the Causal Effects of Media Coverage on Policy-Specific Knowledge." *American Journal of Political Science*.
3. Chong, Dennis and James N. Druckman. 2007. "Framing Public Opinion in Competitive Democracies." *American Political Science Review*. 101: 637-56.
4. Lelkes, Yphtach, Gaurav Sood, and Shanto Iyengar. 2015. "The Hostile Audience: The Effect of Access to Broadband Internet on Partisan Affect." *American Journal of Political Science* 61(1): 5:20.
5. Broockman, David E. and Joshua L. Kalla. 2023. "Selective Exposure and Partisan Echo Chambers in Television News Consumption: Evidence from Linked Viewership, Administrative, and Survey Data." *Working Paper*. Access most recent version here: <https://osf.io/b54sx>
6. Guess, Andrew M., et al. 2023. "Reshares on Social Media Amplify Political Views but Do Not Detectably Affect Beliefs or Opinions." *Science*. 381(404-408).
7. Nyhan, Brendan, et al. 2023. "Like-Minded Sources on Facebook are Prevalent but not Polarizing." *Nature*.

Week 11 (10/31) – A class break taking place on Halloween.

- Schedule a meeting during the week to discuss final paper/projects.

Week 12 (11/7) - Trust & Efficacy (Group B)

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. 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.
4. Hetherington, Marc J. and Thomas J. Rudolph. 2008. "Priming, Performance, and the Dynamics of Political Trust." *Journal of Politics*. 70(2): 498-512.
5. 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>
6. Stauffer, Katelyn E. 2021. "Public Perceptions of Women's Inclusion and Feelings of Political Efficacy." *American Political Science Review* 115(4): 1226-1241

Week 13 (11/14) – Representation & Public Opinion

1. Ansolabehere, Stephen, and Philip Edward Jones. 2010. "Constituents' Responses to Congressional Roll-Call Voting." *American Journal of Political Science* 54:583-597.
2. Achen, Christopher and Larry Bartels. 2018. *Democracy for Realists*. Princeton University Press. Ch. 5. **Dist.**
3. Gilens, Martin and Benjamin Page. 2014. "Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens." *Perspectives on Politics*, 12(3): 564-81.
4. Broockman, David E. and Christopher Skovron. 2018. "Bias in Perceptions of Public Opinion among Political Elites." *American Political Science Review* 112(3).
5. Costa, Mia. 2021. "Ideology, Not Affect: What Americans Want from Political Representation." *American Journal of Political Science* 65(2): 342-358.
6. Dancey, Logan, John Henderson, and Geoffrey Sheagley 2023. "The Personal Vote in a Polarized Era." *American Journal of Political Science*

Week 14 (11/21) – No class – Thanksgiving Break

Week 15 (11/28) – Research Paper Presentations

- 12/5 - Final paper due by 5:00pm.