

FALL 2015
POLS 8124: Public Opinion
458 Gladfelter Hall
Tuesday 5:40pm – 8:10pm

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Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 3:30pm – 4:30pm, or by appointment

Course Description

This course examines the substantive and empirical foundations of attitudes and opinions in American politics. For instance, we will survey and discuss the empirical literature concerned with how people develop political preferences, the ways in which apathy, political ignorance, and ambivalence affect the meaning and measurement of public opinion. In addition, we will consider the role that political parties, social groups, and human psychology play in the development of political attitudes. Last, we will spend some time exploring how political opinions are shaped by mass media and political rhetoric, as well as how public opinion affect government policy and, in turn, are affected by government policy.

Course Materials

The readings for this course are drawn primarily from journal articles and book chapters, all of which I have made available on Blackboard. The assigned readings appear in the “Content” tab on Blackboard, and are labeled to correspond with the topic of the week. It is your responsibility to download and read the assigned readings *prior* to class. I also encourage you to bring a physical or electronic copy of the reading to class, so that we can closely interrogate the assigned reading together as a class.

The following book is required for graduate students. You can buy it on-line.

Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Recommended (Undergraduates)

Clawson, Rosalee, and Zoe M. Oxley. *Public Opinion: Democratic Ideals, Democratic Practice*. 2nd ed. Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2013. (Designated as C&O below)

Clawson, Rosalee, and Zoe M. Oxley. *Conducting Empirical Analysis: Public Opinion in Action*. Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2013.

Course Requirements

Class Discussion (20% of course grade)

The course will be conducted in **seminar** format. This means that each week we will meet as a group and discuss a set of readings devoted to a particular topic or a related set of topics. To accomplish this, it is imperative that everyone participates in the discussion, as it will be the primary vehicle for sharpening your understanding of the material. I will not lecture on topics. Instead, I expect students to fully participate and lead class discussions, so I will ask each of you, one week in advance, to volunteer to present one of the papers on our agenda for the next week.

To help structure your approach to the assigned texts, consider the following questions as you read:

- 1) What's the research question and why is it important?
- 2) What's the theoretical argument and does it help us understand the question better than before?
- 3) What evidence do the authors offer to support their theoretical claims and is that evidence credible?
- 4) What are the strengths and weaknesses of the study?

Memos (30% of course grade)

Each student is required to write seven brief memos. These memos should try to engage the concerns of a set of readings, by, for example, juxtaposing and commenting on alternative explanations or approaches; critique theoretical or methodological approaches; consider the implications of a theoretical argument or an empirical finding; propose new lines of research, hypotheses, and/or methodological approaches.

These memos are **not** summaries of the readings, so please do as little summarizing as possible. Instead, the memos should briefly state your reaction to whichever of the week's reading are of interest to you. Note, though, that each essay must address a topic that will be discussed in class that day, not a reaction to something we have already discussed. These memos are *no more than* 2-3 double-spaced pages, and are due at 5PM on the Tuesday before class. Please post your memo on Blackboard for me *and* your fellow classmates to read. It will improve the discussion if everyone has a chance to read the memos prior to class. Memos must contain an argument, and the argument must be justified with reasoned logic. Well-written and clear

prose without grammatical or spelling errors is expected. The first memo is due on 9/15.

Memos will be graded on a five-point scale:

5 – Outstanding: Tightly focused argument that makes trenchant insights into the reading. Well-written, lucid prose.

4 – Very Good: Focused argument that demonstrates a firm grasp of key concepts and articulates novel ideas. Well written, lucid prose.

3 – Good: Focused argument that demonstrates an understanding of key concepts and a thoughtful critique. Well written, lucid prose.

2 – Fair: Weakly constituted argument that betrays a cursory understanding of the material. And/or poorly written prose.

1 – Poor: Lacks argument or demonstrates no understanding of the reading. And/or poorly written prose.

Research Paper (40% of course grade)

Over the course of the semester, you should be working on a paper that proposes or showcases original research on a topic relevant to the course. The methodological approach may be quantitative or qualitative, and you can analyze existing or originally collected data. The paper should be written in the format and style of the typical political science journal article. It should comprise the following elements: 1) an introduction that briefly describes the research question (including why it is important); 2) a literature review that briefly synthesizes the relevant literature, making clear the lacunae you propose to fill; 3) a clear statement of the theoretical framework and hypotheses that address gaps identified in the literature; 4) a thorough description of your research design and data; 5) a concise presentation of research findings; 6) a conclusion that ties everything together and suggests paths for future research.

1. **GRADUATE**: I expect graduate students to prepare a research proposal for a project that might be (and, ideally, will be) (1) submitted to national grant or fellowship competitions and/or (2) carried out at a later point in your graduate career. This is not intended to be a completed research project, but rather the basis and design for a piece of research. Papers will typically be 20 or so pages, and show an understanding of the current state of knowledge in a chosen area as well proposing an idea for extending that knowledge. It will include a literature review, a statement of the research problem, and a presentation of the research design. The design could make use of existing data sources, in which case you should detail the questions you would use, and justify why they are suitable for

your problem. Or the design might require original data collection, in which case you should outline and justify your proposed research methods. The proposed research must be doable, within the context of resource constraints. The goal of this exercise is for you to prepare a proposal that can be submitted to national grant and fellowship competitions. Please use APSA style to cite references.

2. **UNDERGRADUATE:** I expect undergraduate capstone and honor students to prepare an empirical paper involving an *original* analysis of a topic relevant to the study of public opinion. *Original* here means not submitted as an assignment for another course. These papers will typically be 20 or so pages, and show an understanding of the current state of knowledge in a chosen area as well an idea for extending that knowledge. It will include a literature review, a statement of the research problem, presentation of results, and conclusion. Please use APSA style to cite references.

Please submit a brief prospectus (1-2 pages) that states your research question, identifies the key literature(s) to which you are contributing, and outlines your theoretical and empirical approach. Topic proposals are due 10/6. The final paper due: 12/8.

Peer Review (10% of course grade)

I will ask each of you to submit early drafts (11/17) of your research papers/research proposals for peer review, a quality control process through which your work is independently evaluated. The review process is typically double blind, meaning that identifying information of the author is withheld from the reviewer and vice versa. For this assignment, you will be required to complete an anonymous review of a classmate's work, and, likewise, required to submit your own paper for anonymous review. These reviews will be due on **12/1**. It is expected that each student will revise their papers in a way that reflect the comments provided in the review. This assignment will be described on Blackboard.

Course Policies

Assignments. I do not accept late work. Memos are due the evening before class and other due dates are explicitly marked on the course schedule. If you can't make it to class for some reason, it is your responsibility to send me (and other students in the case of memos) the assignments before class. As a general rule, I do not move due dates. In rare circumstances I will make an exception, but in order to be considered for an exception, please contact me with your request before the due date.

Academic Honesty. Temple University's Office of Student Conduct and Community standards maintain that "plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to, the use, by

paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another without full and clear acknowledgement. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials (e.g., parts of this syllabus were borrowed from Arceneaux 2013 and McGraw 2015). Quotes should be placed around phrases and sentences that come from another source (published or unpublished) and the author(s) should be cited in both the text and in a reference section at the end of the paper. If you paraphrase the words or ideas of another person, you should also attribute credit to the source by citing it in the text and in the references. Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. It will earn you an immediate F in the course and be reported the Chair and Dean. If you are unclear about whether a source needs to be documented, consult a style guide or ask me.

Decorum. I am fully committed to offering a safe and respectful space in which to explore any issues that should emerge. Please keep your comments respectful, but don't hesitate to challenge your fellow colleagues or me.

Mental and Physical Health

A recent American College Health Survey found stress, sleep problems, anxiety, depression, interpersonal concerns, and alcohol use among the top ten health impediments to academic performance. Students experiencing personal problems or situational crises during the semester are encouraged to contact the Tuttleman Counseling Services (215-204-7276) for assistance, support and advocacy. This service is free and confidential. Moreover, if at any time during the semester issues come up that are affecting your classwork and class participation, please come talk to me ASAP so we can make the appropriate arrangements. It will be a lot easier for me and for you if we deal with the situation in a timely manner.

Special Accommodations

Any Student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss the specific situation as soon as possible. Contact Disability Resources and Services at 215.204.1280 in 100 Ritter Annex to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Course Schedule

The assigned readings for each week are listed just below the bolded date and topic headline. In many cases, your reading will begin with Don Kinder's *Opinion & Action in the Realm of Politics*, as it will provide you with a general and historical overview of the topic.

- **UNDERGRADUATE:** I want to encourage capstone and honors students to do their best in working through all of the required readings. However, I recognize that this is a heavy load, and that it may be difficult for you to manage this schedule. Therefore, I will, on occasion, provide you with an

abbreviated reading agenda. Moreover, the readings often feature dense arguments and complicated research designs. I do not expect capstone or honor students to understand the technical details of statistical tests and the like, but I would like you to understand the arguments, basic research approach (i.e., what data they collected), and the findings as presented by the author.

These dates are subject to change. It is your responsibility to keep track of these dates and any changes made to them.

8/25 Course Introduction and Memo Assignment

9/1 Meaning and Measurement of Public Opinion

Kinder, pp. 778-784.

Price, Vincent. 1992. Problems of public opinion; conceptualizing the public; conceptualizing opinions (pp. 4-48). From *Public Opinion*. Sage Publications.

Zaller, John. 1994. Positive constructs of public opinion. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 11: 276-287.

Sanders, Lynn. 1999. Democratic politics and survey research. *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 29: 248-280.

Gunnell, John G. 2011. Democracy and the concept of public opinion (pp. 269-283). In Robert Y. Shapiro and Lawrence R. Jacobs (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of American Public Opinion and the Media*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Delli Carpini, Michael X. 2011. Constructing public opinion: A brief history of survey research (pp. 24-301). In Robert Y. Shapiro and Lawrence R. Jacobs (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of American Public Opinion and the Media*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Herbst, Susan. 2011. Critical perspectives on public opinion (pp. 302-314). In Robert Y. Shapiro and Lawrence R. Jacobs (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of American Public Opinion and the Media*. New York: Oxford University Press.

9/8 Democracy and Political Ignorance

Delli Carpini, Michael X., and Scott Keeter. 1996. *What Americans Know About Politics and Why It Matters*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
Chapter 1 & 2.

Delli Carpini, Michael X., and Scott Keeter. 1993. Measuring political knowledge: Putting first things first. *AJPS* 37:1179-1206.

Mondak, Jeffery J. 2001. Developing valid knowledge scales. *AJPS* 45:224-38.

Prior, Markus and Arthur Lupia. 2008. Money, time, and political knowledge: Distinguishing quick recall from political learning skills. *AJPS* 52: 168-182.

Gilens, Martin. 2001. Political ignorance and collective policy preferences. *APSR* 95:379-396.

Bartels, Larry M. 2005. "Homer Gets a Tax Cut: Inequality and Public Policy in the American Mind." *Perspectives on Politics*, 3 (1): 15-31.

Lupia, Arthur, Adam Seth Levine, Jesse O. Manning, and Gisela Sin. 2007. "Were Bush Tax Cut Supporters 'Simply Ignorant?' A Second Look at Conservatives and Liberals in 'Homer Gets a Tax Cut.'" *Perspective on Politics* 5 (4):773-84.

Bartels, Larry M. 2007. "Homer Gets a Warm Hug: A Note on Ignorance and Extenuation." *Perspectives on Politics* 5(4): 785-90.

9/15 Shortcuts to Knowledge: Heuristics

Kinder, pp. 797-800

Lupia, Arthur. 1994. "Shortcuts Versus Encyclopedias: Information and Voting Behavior in California Insurance Reform Elections." *American Political Science Review*, 88 (1): 63-76.

Arceneaux, Kevin, and Robin Kolodny. 2009. "Educating the Least Informed: Group Endorsements in a Grassroots Campaign." *American Journal of Political Science*, 53 (4): forthcoming.

Lau, Richard R. and David P. Redlawsk. 1997. "Voting Correctly." *American Political Science Review*, 91 (3): 585-98.

Lau, Richard R., and David P. Redlawsk. 2001. "Advantages and Disadvantages of Cognitive Heuristics in Political Decision Making." *American Journal of Political Science*, 45 (4): 951-71.

Dancey, Logan and Geoffrey Sheagley. 2013. Heuristics behaving badly: Party cues and voter knowledge. *AJPS* 57: 312-325.

9/22 Information Processing

Kinder, pp. 812-815

Lodge, Milton, Kathleen McGraw, and Patrick Stroh. 1989. An impression-driven model of candidate evaluation. *APSR* 83: 399-420.

Lodge, Milton and Marco Steenbergen, with Shawn Brau. 1995. The responsive voter: Campaign information and the dynamics of candidate evaluation. *APSR* 89:309-326.

Rahn, Wendy, Jon Krosnick, and Marijke Breuning. 1994. Rationalization and derivation processes in survey studies of political candidate evaluation. *AJPS* 38:582-600

Mitchell, Dona-Gene. 2012. It's about time: The lifespan of information effects in a multiweek campaign. *AJPS* 56: 298-311.

Hill, Seth J., James Lo, Lynn Vavreck, and John Zaller. 2013. How quickly we forget: The duration of persuasion effects from mass communication. *Political Communication* 30: 521-547.

Redlawsk, David. 2001. You must remember this: A test of the on-line model of voting. *JOP* 63:29-58.

Zaller, John and Stanley Feldman. 1992. A simple theory of the survey response: Answering questions versus revealing preferences. *AJPS* 36:579-618.

9/29 Attitude Stability and Attitude Change

Empirical Analysis Lab: **[UNDERGRAD]**: TBA.

Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. **Chapters 1-9. [GRAD ONLY]**

10/6 Ideological Constraint?

Kinder, pp. 793-797

Converse, Philip E. 1964. The nature of belief systems in mass publics. In David E. Apter (ed.), *Ideology and Discontent*. Free Press.

Achen, Christopher H. 1975. Mass political attitudes and the survey response. *APSR* 69:1218-1231.

Sullivan, John L., James Piereson, and George E. Marcus. 1979. Ideological constraint in the mass public. *AJPS* 22:223-249.

Jacoby, William G. 2011. Attitude organization in the mass public: The impact of ideology and partisanship (pp. 436-451). In Robert Y. Shapiro and Lawrence R. Jacobs (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of American Public Opinion and the Media*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Knight, Kathleen. 2006. Transformations of the concept of ideology in the 20th century. *APSR* 100: 619-626.

Jost, John T., Christopher Federico, and Jaime L. Napier. 2009. Political ideology: Its structure, functions, and elective affinities. *Annual Review of Psychology* 60: 307-337.

10/13 Self-Interest or Symbolic Interests?

Kinder, pp. 800-803

Sears, David O. and Carolyn L. Funk. 1990. Self-interest in Americans' political opinions. In Jane J. Mansbridge (ed.), *Beyond Self-Interest*. University of Chicago.

Tedin, Kent. 1994. Self-interest, symbolic values and the financial equalization of the public schools. *JOP* 55:628-649.

Green, Donald Philip, and Ann Elizabeth Gerken. 1989. Self-interest and public opinion toward smoking restrictions and cigarette taxes. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 53: 1-16.

Campbell, Andrea L. 2002. Self-interest, social security, and the distinctive participation patterns of senior citizens. *APSR* 96: 565-574.

White, Ismail K., Chryl N. Laird, and Troy D. Allen. 2014. Selling out?: The politics of navigating conflicts between group interest and self-interest. *APSR* 108: 783-800.

Chong, Dennis, Jack Citrin, and Patricia Conley. 2001. "When Self-Interest Matters." *Political Psychology* 22(3): 541-570.

10/20 Us versus Them

Brady, Henry E., and Paul M. Sniderman. 1985. "Attitude Attribution: A Group Basis for Political Reasoning." *American Political Science Review*, 79: 1061-78.

Peffley, Mark, and Jon Hurwitz. 2007. "Persuasion and Resistance: Race and the Death Penalty in America." *American Journal of Political Science* 51(4): 996-1012.

Gelman, Andrew, Boris Shor, Joseph Bafumi, and David Park. 2007. "Rich State, Poor State, Red State, Blue State: What's the Matter with Connecticut?" *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 2(4): 345-367.

Sniderman, Paul M., Thomas Piazza, Philip E. Tetlock, and Ann Kendrick. 1991. "The New Racism." *American Journal of Political Science*, 35 (2): 423-447.

Oliver, J. Eric, and Tali Mendelberg. "[Reconsidering the Environmental Determinants of White Racial Attitudes](#)" *AJPS*.

Tesler, Michael. "The Spillover of Racialization into Health Care: How President Obama Polarized Public Opinion by Racial Attitudes and Race." *American Journal of Political Science*, 56(3): 690-704.

Huber, Greg and John Lipinski. 2006. "The 'Race Card' Revisited: Assessing Racial Priming in Policy Contests." *American Journal of Political Science*, 50(2): 421-40.

10/27 (in)Tolerance

Kinder, pp. 789-793

Sullivan, John L., George E. Marcus, Stanley Feldman, and James E. Piereson. 1981. The sources of political tolerance: A multivariate analysis. *APSR* 75: 92-106.

Kuklinski, James, et al. 1991. The cognitive and affective bases of political tolerance judgments. *AJPS* 35:1-27.

Gibson, James L. 1992. The political consequences of intolerance: Cultural conformity and political freedom. *APSR* 86:338-356.

Gibson, James L. 2006. Enigmas of intolerance: Fifty years after Stouffer's *Communism, Conformity, and Civil Liberties*. *Perspectives on Politics* 4: 21-34.

Gibson, James L. 2008. Intolerance and political repression in the United States: A half-century after McCarthyism. *AJPS* 52: 96-108.

Nelson, Thomas E., Rosalee A. Clawson, and Zoe M. Oxley. 1997. Media framing of a civil liberties conflict and its effect on tolerance. *APSR* 91: 567-583.

Green, Donald P., Peter M. Aronow, Daniel E. Bergan, Pamela Greene, Celia Paris, Beth I. Weinberger. "Does Knowledge of Constitutional Principles Increase Support for Civil Liberties? Results from a Randomized Field Experiment." *Journal of Politics* 73(2): 463-476.

11/3 Motivated Reasoning and Misperception

Kunda, Ziva. 1990. "The Case for Motivated Reasoning." *Psychological Bulletin* 108:480-98.

Kuklinski, James H., Paul J. Quirk, Jennifer Jerit, David Schwieder, and Robert F. Rich. 2000. "Misinformation and the Currency of Democratic Citizenship." *Journal of Politics*, 62 (3): 790-816.

Nyhan, Brendan, and Jason Reifler. 2010. "When Corrections Fail: The Persistence of Political Misperceptions." *Political Behavior*, 32 (2): 303-30.

Gains, Brian, James H. Kuklinski, Paul J. Quirk, Buddy Peyton, and Jay Verkuilen. 2007. "Same Facts, Different Interpretations: Partisan Motivation and Opinion on Iraq." *Journal of Politics* 69 (4): 957-74.

Jerit, Jennifer, and Jason Barabas. 2012. "Partisan Perceptual Bias and the Information Environment." *Journal of Politics* 74(03): 672-684.

Egan, Patrick J, and Megan Mullin. 2012. "Turning Personal Experience into Political Attitudes: The Effect of Local Weather on Americans' Perceptions about Global Warming." *Journal of Politics* 74 (3): 796-809.

Lord, C. G., Ross, L., and Lepper, M. R. 1979. "Biased Assimilation and Attitude Polarization: The Effects of Prior Theories on Subsequently Considered Evidence." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 27:2098-109.

Abelson, Robert P. 1986. "Beliefs Are Like Possessions." *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior* 16 (3): 223-50.

11/10 Media Effects

Kinder, p.817-821

Krosnick, Jon A. and Donald R. Kinder. 1990. "Altering the Foundations of Support for the President Through Priming." *American Political Science Review*, 84 (2): 497-512.

Iyengar, Shanto, Mark D. Peters, and Donald R. Kinder. 1982. Experimental demonstrations of the “not-so-minimal” consequences of television news programs. *APSR* 76: 848-858.

Miller, Joanne and Jon Krosnick. 2000. “News Media Impact on the Ingredients of Presidential Evaluations.” *American Journal of Political Science*. 44(2) 301-15.

Gerber, Alan S, James G Gimple, Donald P. Green, and Daron R Shaw. 2011. “How Large and Long-lasting Are the Persuasive Effects of Televised Campaign Ads? Results from a Randomized Field Experiment.” *American Political Science Review* 105(1): 135–150.

Lenz, Gabriel S. 2009. “Learning and Opinion Change, Not Priming: Reconsidering the Priming Hypothesis.” *American Journal of Political Science* 53(4): 821–837.

Prior, Markus. 2005. “News vs. Entertainment: How Increasing Media Choice Widens Gaps in Political Knowledge and Turnout.” *American Journal of Political Science* 49:577–92.

Lenz, Gabriel. 2009. Learning and opinion change, not priming: Reconsidering the evidence for the priming hypothesis. *AJPS* 53: 821-837.

Hart, Austin, and Joel A. Middleton. 2014. Priming under fire: Reverse causality and the classic media-priming hypothesis. *JOP* 76: 581-592.

Stroud, Natalie Jomini. 2010. “Polarization and Partisan Selective Exposure.” *Journal of Communication* 60(3): 556–576.

Arceneaux, Kevin, Martin Johnson, and Chad Murphy. 2012. “Polarized Political Communication, Oppositional Media Hostility, and Selective Exposure.” *Journal of Politics*, 74 (1): 174-86.

11/17 Democratic Accountability and Responsiveness

Gilens, Martin and Benjamin I. Page. 2014. Testing theories of American politics: Elites, interest groups, and average citizens. *Perspectives on Politics* 12: 564-581.

Stimson, James A., Michael B. Mackuen, and Robert S. Erikson. 1995. “Dynamic Representation.” *American Political Science Review*, 89 (3): 543-65.

