PS 306 Public Opinion

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This class is a graduate seminar introduction to the study of public opinion. The scope of the readings in this class should bring you current with academic research in public opinion. We will examine such topics as the meaning of public opinion, forces affecting the formation of public opinion, the distribution of opinion on major issues, and the consequences of public opinion in modern politics.

The grading for this class will be based on two short papers (5–10 pages, 20% each), a longer paper (15–20 pages, 40%), and class participation (20%). The short papers should synthesize an argument from a single week's readings. The short papers should *not* be literature reviews, but criticisms of central themes in the readings. Appropriate short paper topics might examine the implications of the research approaches for the conclusions drawn by the different readings, point out central problems that the readings fail to address, extend the implications of one reading into the conclusions of another, and so forth. Brehm will be glad to assist with selection of these topics.

The final assignment is a research design proposal for their longer essay. This research design should identify an unstudied problem in public opinion, explain why this problem deserves attention, and argue for a research program to explore this problem. The scope of the research problem should be something that one might complete as a dissertation.

The following books are on order in the Duke University Textbook Store:

Erikson, Luttbeg and Tedin, *American Public Opinion*
McClosky and Zaller, *The American Ethos*
Schuman, Steeh and Bobo, *Racial Attitudes in America*
Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock, *Reasoning and Choice*
Zaller, *Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*

The bulk of the readings for this class are articles. The articles will be in folders (by weeks) in my office, and in the grad lounge.

11 Jan — What this course is about

19 Jan — Definitions (Week 1a)
- VO Key, *Public Opinion and American Democracy,* Chapter 1, pp. 3-18
- Walter Lippman, *Public Opinion,* Ch 1, pp 3-20
- Kurt Back, "Metaphors for Public Opinion," *Public Opinion Quarterly,* 52:278-288, 1988,
- Murray Edelman, *Symbolic Uses of Politics*, Ch. 1.
- Zaller, Ch. 2

18 Jan — Survey Response (Week 1b)
- Zaller, Ch. 3, (4)
- Brehm, *The Phantom Respondents,* Ch. 3
- Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock (SBT), Ch. 1–2, 6
- Erikson, Luttbeg, and Tedin (ELT), Ch. 2

23 – 25 Jan — Ideology (Week 2)
- Converse, "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics," in David Apter (ed.), *Ideology and Discontent,* pp 206-261
- Kinder, "Diversity and complexity in American public opinion," In Ada Finifter (ed.) *Political Science: The State of the Discipline,* pp. 391–401, 1983
- Achen, "Mass Political Attitudes and the Survey Response," *American Political Science Review,* 1975, 1218–1231
- SBT, Ch. 8–10
- Zaller, Ch. 7
- Conover and Feldman, "Origins and Meaning of Liberal/Conservative Self-Identifications," *American Journal of Political Science,* 1981, 617-645.
- Luttbeg and Gant, "The Failure of Liberal/Conservative Ideology as a Cognitive Structure," *Public Opinion Quarterly,* 1985, 80–93.
- E, L & T, Ch 4.

30 Jan – 1 Feb — Influences on Public Opinion: Rationality and Self-Interest (Week 3)
- Downs, Ch 11-12, *An Economic Theory of Democracy,* 1957, pp 207-259, .
- Kramer, "Short-Term Fluctuations in U.S. Voting Behavior, 1896–1964," 1971, .
- Kinder and Kiewiet, "Sociotropic Politics: The American Case," 1981, .
- Kramer, "The Ecological Fallacy Revisited: Aggregate- versus Individual-Level Findings on Economics and Elections, and Sociotropic Voting," 1983.
- Markus. "The Impact of Personal and National Economic Conditions on the Presidential Vote," *American Journal of Political Science,* 1988, 137–154.

6 – 8 Feb — Influences on Public Opinion: Information (Week 4)
- Zaller, Ch. 8, 9
- Rahn, et al., "A Social Cognitive Model of Candidate Appraisal"
- Lodge and Steenbergen, "The Responsive Voter," *APSR,* 1995, 89:309–326.

13 – 15 Feb — Influences on Public Opinion: Cognition (Week 5)
- Markus and Zajonc, "The cognitive perspective in social psychology," in *Handbook of Social Psychology.*
- Conover and Feldman, "Candidate Perception in an Ambiguous World," *American Journal of Political Science,* 1989, 912-940.
- Iyengar, "How Citizens Think About National Issues," *American Journal of Political Science,* 1989, 878–900.
- Kelley, 1973, "The processes of causal attribution," *American Psychologist,* 28:107-128.
- Iyengar, S. "Television news and citizens' explanations of national affairs," *APSR*, 81:815-831.

20 – 22 Feb — Influences on Public Opinion: Private experience (Week 6)

- Niemi and Jennings, "Issues and Inheritance in the Formation of Party Identification," *American Journal of Political Science,* 1991, 970-987.
- Krosnick, "The Stability of Political Preferences," *American Journal of Political Science,* 1991, 547–576.
- Luskin, McIver, Carmines, "Issues and the Transmission of Partisanship," *American Journal of Political Science,* 1989, 440–458.
- E,L & T, Ch. 6

27 – 29 Feb — Influences on Public Opinion: Media (Week 7)

- Iyengar, Peters and Kinder, "Experimental demonstration of the not-so-minimal consequences of television news," *American Political Science Review,* 1982 .
- Erbring, Goldenberg and Miller, "Front-page news and real-world cues: a new look at agenda setting," *American Journal of Political Science,* 24:16-49 .
- MacKuen, 1984, "Exposure to information, belief integration, and individual responsiveness to agenda change," *APSR,* 78:372-391.
- Bartels, "Messages Received: The Political Impact of Media Exposure," *American Political Science Review,* 1993, 87:267–285
- E,L&T, Ch. 8

SHORT PAPER #1 DUE 29 FEB

5 – 7 11 Mar — Expressions of Public Opinion: Race (Week 8)

- Kinder & Sears, "Prejudice and politics: Symbolic racism versus racial threats to the good life," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,* 40: 414-431, 1981
- Schuman, Steeh & Bobo, Ch 1, 3, 5
- SBT, Ch. 12-13
- McConahay, "Modern racism, ambivalence, and the modern racism scale," in *Prejudice, Discrimination, and Racism,*
- Gaertner and Dovidio, "The aversive form of racism," in *Prejudice, Discrimination, and Racism,* .
- Kinder and Sanders, "Mimicking political debate with survey questions."
- Alvarez and Brehm, "Are Americans Ambivalent About Race?"

SPRING BREAK

19 – 21 Mar — Expressions of Public Opinion: Democratic Values (Week 9)

- McCloskey & Zaller, Ch 2, 3, 8
- SBT, Ch. 7
- Putnam, *Making Democracy Work,* Ch. 6
- Putnam, "Bowling Alone."
- Brehm and Rahn, "Individual Level Evidence for the Causes and Consequences of Social Capital"
- Inglehart, "The Silent Revolution in Europe: Intergenerational Change in Post-Industrial Societies," *APSR,* 1971, .

26 – 28 Mar — Expressions of Public Opinion: Economics and Welfare (Week 10)

- Smith, "That which we call welfare by any other name would smell sweeter,..." *Public Opinion Quarterly,* 51:75-83,
- Hochschild, "What's Fair?" Ch. 1
- Feldman, "Structure and consistency in public opinion: The role of core beliefs and values," *AJPS,* 32:416–440
- McClosky and Zaller, *The American Ethos,* Ch. 4–6.

2 Apr	Expressions of Public Opinion: Abortion (Week 11a) • Gilligan, *In a Different Voice,* Ch. 3 • Ginsburg, *Contested Lives,* Ch. 2 • Luker, *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood,* Ch. 8. • Alvarez and Brehm, "American Ambivalence Toward Abortion Policy"
4 Apr	Expressions of Public Opinion: Attitudes toward War (Week 11b) • Mueller, "Popular Support for the Wars in Vietnam and Korea." • Hartley and Russett, "Public Opinion and the Common Defense." • Krosnick and Brannon, "The Impact of the Gulf War on the Ingredients of Presidential Evaluations." **SHORT PAPER #2 DUE, 4 APRIL**
9 – 11 Apr	Consequences of Public Opinion: Political Participation (Week 12) • Zaller, Ch. 10 • Brady, Verba, and Schlozman, "Beyond SES," *American Political Science Review,* 1995, 89:271–294. • Ginsberg, "Polling and the Transformation of Public Opinion" • E, L & T, Ch 9, "Elections as Instruments of Popular Control," pp 242-279
16 – 18 Apr	Consequences of Public Opinion: Representation and Responsiveness (Week 13) • Page and Shapiro, "Effects of public opionion on policy," *American Political Science Review,* 1983:175–90 • Miller and Stokes, "Constituency Influence in Congress," *American Political Science Review,* 1963, 57:45–56 • Stimson, MacKuen, and Erikson, "Dynamic Representation," *American Political Science Review,* 1995, 543–565 • Brehm, *The Phantom Respondents,* Ch. 1 • ELT, Ch. 10, 11
25 Apr	**LONG(er) PAPER DUE**