

Political Science 4030: Political Attitudes & Public Opinion (Fall 2019)

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 9:30–11:30,
Thursdays 9:30–11:30,
or by appointment.

Time: TTH 12:00–1:20

Place: 253 Himes Hall

Introduction and Objectives:

The purpose of this course is to provide you with an introduction to the literature on American public opinion, which shows the place of public opinion in American democracy. Factors included in this are the ingredients of electoral choice, policy opinions, and political evaluations. The primary goal of this course is to understand why people form particular opinions, why they sometimes change their views, why opinions even matter (if they do), and how to interpret public opinion polling. Some major questions we will approach this semester is what it means to say that the public supports X, what level of competence citizens carry into their political participation, whether citizens can hold leaders accountable, and how well the government represents public views.

This course focuses on the United States since World War II, taking a particular emphasis on the role of political communication. While the primary focus of this course is not to learn the latest poll results or debate issues therein, you will see these contours of opinion and we will have plenty of healthy discussion. This course will help you become more critical in your consumption of information about American public opinion, inform you about how publics function in democracies, and develop your critical thinking, research, and analytic writing skills.

As a general education elective in the social sciences, this course is designed to prepare students to meet the following competency requirements: *“LSU graduates will demonstrate an understanding of the informing factors of global independence, including economic forces, political dynamics, and cultural and linguistic differences.”*

Course Requirements:

Students should read the selected text for the class **prior** to the class meeting so that they can participate and engage with the course material. These readings are provided on the reading schedule at the end of this syllabus.

The lectures I give during our class meetings are intended to prepare you for the exams, and material may be presented in the lecture that is **not** in the textbook and will be on the exam. Students should come to class prepared and be attentive and responsive during the lecture. Students are **expected to attend class regularly, punctually, and for the duration of class meeting**. I reserve the right to penalize students who engage in disruptive behavior, such as using electronic devices, or those who arrive late or leave class early without clearing it with me beforehand. (More information on disruptive behavior and recourse can be located in the Academic Honesty section of this syllabus)

Required Reading Materials:

- Herb Asher. *Polling & the Public: What Every Citizen Should Know*. (9th Edition) [ISBN: 978-1-5063-5242-8].
- John Sides & Lynn Vavreck. 2013. *The Gamble: Choice & Chance in the 2012 Presidential Election*. Princeton University Press.
- Most of the course readings are academic articles and short news/blog articles on current events, available on Moodle.

Grading Policy:

Attendance .....	.....5%
.....	Reading response .....5%
.....	Quizzes .....20%
5%	6-Page Paper .....20%
Participation	Midterm Exam .....20%
.....	Final Exam .....25%

Attendance (5%)

Attendance in this course is **required**. I will be conducting 8 random attendance checks throughout the semester and if you are present, you will receive full credit but if you are not... you do not. Excused absences will be granted, but you must provide documentation to me. If you know you will miss class with an excused absence, please let me know well in advance. Religious holidays are also considered excused **with prior notification**.

That said, you may take **ONE unexcused absence** without penalty, but this DOES NOT include exam days.

Participation (5%)

Your participation grade requires respectful engagement in class discussion. I expect you to read all required readings and to come to class ready to discuss the material for the day. Class sessions will typically involve a mixture of lecture and discussion. **Contributing productively 2-3 times per week** will max out your participation at 100%.

Learning to express yourself in class is an important professional skill to practice, especially if you are a reluctant public speaker (as so many of us are). However, I will be open to alternative means of engagement if necessary (office hours discussion, etc). If you wish to pursue this option, please speak with me.

Please ask questions. I encourage you to challenge the assumptions in the readings and *politely* disagree with your classmates or with me. Remember to listen and reflect on everyone's contribution. I'm interesting in hearing how your life experiences and knowledge intersect with topics we cover in class. Please share your perspectives! You are reading this syllabus very carefully and I appreciate that. Please email me a picture of your favorite cartoon character in exchange for a few bonus points so I know of your diligence.

Reading Response (5%)

You will done **one 3-minute summary** of an academic article in front of the class, which you will sign up for soon. In this summary, you should simply describe the main points and broader significance of the reading. What questions are they trying to answer? What basic methods do they use (survey, experiment, content analysis, other)? What do they find? Then pose one discussion question for the class to consider, a brief conversation you'll lead. What questions does the reading raise about political attitudes and its implications for democracy?

Quizzes (20%)

In order to prepare you for the content and style of exams and to keep you accountable for assigned readings, we will have **8 short quizzes** throughout the semester. Each will cover reading and lecture material since the previous quiz up through the readings assigned for that day. Quizzes will take place at the start of class and will consist of multiple choice and/or short-answer format. **Additional pop quizzes** may be added at my discretion if it is clear that the class hasn't done the readings.

If a quiz is given when you are excused (or if it's your one free absence) it is not counted against you and will not be made up. **The Lowest quiz score is dropped.** So stop asking. Your overall quiz score averages all of your counted quizzes, including any unscheduled pop quizzes. **Missed quizzes** that are neither excused nor your one unexcused absence will be score zero.

6-Page Paper (20%)

You will write an 1,800 word paper on public opinion, choosing one of a few prompts. Instructions will be posted on the course Moodle. Since you will have a great deal of time to write this, later papers will be penalized 20% per day. I am also basing 10% of the overall paper grade on your organization and writing skills, so please take this seriously. Feel free to reach out to me at any time for help and/or clarification.

Exams (20%,25%)

Two exams will be given. Both will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and short essays. Please bring both a scantron, as well as a blue book to your exams. These exams are both closed-book. The final is not cumulative. As a motivational tool, if you do at least 5% better on your final than on your midterm, I will add 5% to your midterm grade.

The dates of both exams are provided in the course schedule. I will make it abundantly clear that short of a real conflict (familial or personal harm), there are absolutely **no makeups for exams**. If you do end up having an emergency and miss an exam, you will be required to provide a doctors note, funeral notice, or some form of documentation pertaining to a family, or other, emergency.

Grading Scale:

A+	.....	96.50 and above
A	.....	93.50-96.49
A-	.....	90.00-93.49
B+	.....	86.50-89.99
B	.....	83.50-86.49
B-	.....	80.00-83.49
C+	.....	76.50-79.99
C	.....	73.50-76.49
C-	.....	70.00-73.49
D+	.....	66.50-69.99
D	.....	63.50-66.49
D-	.....	60.00-63.49
F	.....	59.99 and below

In the Classroom:

No computers and silence phones, please. Research shows use of a laptop in lecture courses will, on average, reduce understanding of course material and reduce grades for you. Therefore, you may not use your laptop for note taking in routine lecture or discussion activities. Please come prepared with paper and writing instrument for taking notes.

Partisan perspectives are welcome and appropriate for many discussions, but must be expressed in an appropriate and civil manner that is respectful of classmates, candidates, other individuals, and that takes into account the academic study of the topic. Rhetoric is an integral part of political communication, but there is no place in this class for the vitriol or distortions sometimes seen in campaigns. In this class, you are a professional not an activist or a pundit.

Most of what I present in class is from a social science perspective, and therefore traditionally non-partisan. If partisan topics arise, I may present a variety of perspectives, especially if a common viewpoint is not being addressed in our conversations. I usually will not take sides on controversial issues, and I will try to challenge your views wherever you stand.

Accessibility Resources:

Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students who have a physical, cognitive, systemic, learning or psychiatric disability registered with LSU's Office of Disabilities Services. Please contact me by e-mail, during office hours, or after class during the first two weeks of school to discuss accommodations (or at least 2 days in advance of when you would like them to begin). For more information, please check out the LSU's Disability Services website and office: <http://students.lsu.edu/disability>.

Writing Center:

Check out LSU's writing center and one-on-one writing tutoring for improving your written work in classes. <https://sites01.lsu.edu/wp/cxc/studios/studio151/writing/>

Counseling Services:

LSU's Counseling Services assist students on personal, social, career, and study problems that may interfere with academic progress and success. All services are free and can include individual and group counseling, crisis consultations, and wellness groups. The website: <http://www.shc.lsu.edu/counseling.html>. In an emergency, please immediately call 911 and campus security.

Academic Honesty:

Academic misconduct is defined by the Code of Student Conduct. You are encouraged to familiarize yourself with the LSU policy on academic misconduct, particularly regarding plagiarism. The LSU Code of Student Conduct can be found on the web site for the LSU Dean of Students: <http://www.lsu.edu/students/deanofstudents/files/lsu-code-of-conduct.pdf>

Academic misconduct is a serious violation of university policy. This can come in the form of plagiarism, cheating, collusion, classroom disruptions, or phone use. Academic misconduct will in no way be tolerated in this course and charges of such will be turned over to the Dean of Students for appropriate disciplinary action. This class has a zero tolerance policy about plagiarism, i.e. no "second chances." In order to avoid this, please make sure to cite accurately and appropriately your sources. If a student is unsure of the proper ways to do this, they should contact me rather than taking the risk.

Syllabus Revisions:

This syllabus is subject to revision by the instructor with written or verbal notice given to the class.

Course Outline:

Fundamentals

1. Meanings & Measures of Public Opinion
2. Political Knowledge & Non-Attitudes
3. Partisanship & Polarization
4. Deep Roots of Public Opinion

Voting, Campaigns, & Elections

5. Voting & Elections: Nomination Phase
6. Voting & Elections: General Election Phase

Political Communication Effects

7. Campaign Strategy & Advertising
8. News Media Influence

Why Americans Differ

9. Social Identities & Ethnocentrism
10. Race & Racial Prejudice
11. Ideological Identity
12. Class & Self-Interest

Democratic Responsiveness & Accountability

13. Views of Democracy
14. Does Public Opinion Influence Government?

Course Schedule:

Section I: Fundamentals

8/27 Tuesday Introduction

The Meaning of Public Opinion

8/29 Thursday Definitions, etc.

- John Sides. Nov 9, 2016. Five key lessons from Donald Trump's surprising victory. *Washington Post*.
- Philip Converse. 1987. Changing Conceptions of Public Opinion in the Political Process. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 51: 12-24.
- Sidney Verba. 1996. The Citizen as Respondent: Sample Surveys and American Democracy. *American Political Science Review*, 90(1): 1-17.
- Polling & Public, Ch. 1.

Measuring Public Opinion

9/3 Tuesday Sampling & Precision, Answering Questions

- Polling & Public, Ch. 3
- Polling & Public, Ch. 4
- Jackson, Natalie. May 26, 2016. Its time to change the way we think about political polling.

9/5 Thursday Survey Interpretation & Experiments

- Polling & Public, Ch. 8
- Nate Silver. Nov 9, 2016. What a difference 2 percentage points makes. *FiveThirtyEight*.
- James Druckman, Donald Green, James Kuklinski, & Arthur Lupia. 2006. The Growth and Development of Experimental Research in Political Science. *American Political Science Review*, 100(4): 627-635.
- Jerit, J. & Barabas, J. 2010. Are Survey Experiments Externally Valid? *American Political Science Review*, 104(2): 226-242

Political Knowledge & Non-Attitudes

9/10 Tuesday Non-Attitudes & Knowledge

- Polling & Public, Ch. 2
- Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. 2007. What Americans Know, 1989-2007.
- Arthur Lupia. 1994. Shortcuts versus Encyclopedias: Information and Voting Behavior in California Insurance Reform Elections. *American Political Science Review* 88(1): 63-76.
- John Sides. Nov 16, 2014. Americans think the unemployment rate is 32%? Not so fast. *Washington Post*.

9/12 Thursday Learning

- Markus Prior. 2005. News vs. Entertainment: How Increasing Media Choice Widens Gaps in Political Knowledge and Turnout. *American Journal of Political Science* 49(3): 577-592.
- Diana Mutz & Paul Martin. 2001. Facilitating Communication across Lines of Political Difference: The Role of the Mass Media. *American Political Science Review* 95(1): 97-114.

How Information Shapes Political Choice

9/17 Tuesday Information Functions & Bad Info

- Martin Gilens. 2001. Political Ignorance and Collective Policy Preferences. *American Political Science Review* 95: 379-396.
- Kam, Cindy D. 2005. Who toes the party line?: Cues, values, and individual differences. *Political Behavior* 27(2): 163-82.
- Brendan Nyhan & Jason Reifler. 2010. When Corrections Fail: The Persistence of Political Misperceptions. *Political Behavior* 32(2): 303-330.
- Miller, Joanne, Saunders, Kyle. & Farhart, Christina. 2015. Conspiracy Endorsement as Motivated Reasoning: The Moderating Roles of Political Knowledge and Trust. *American Journal of Political Science*. 60(4): 824-844.

Party Identification & Polarization

9/19 Thursday Partisan Identity & Animosity

- Huddy, Leonie, Mason, Liliana., & Aarøe, Lena. 2015. Expressive partisanship: Campaign involvement, political emotion, and partisan identity. *American Political Science Review*, 109(01), 1-17.
- Pew Research. June 22, 2016. Partisanship & political animosity in 2016.

9/24 Tuesday Opinion Leadership, Issue Polarization, & Partisan Change

- Adam Berinsky. 2007. Assuming the Costs of War: Events, Elites, and American Public Support for Military Conflict. *Journal of Politics* 69(4): 975-997.
- Pew. 2014. Political polarization in the American public. [First page only]
- Sarah Frostenson. Is your doctor Republican or Democrat? The answer can impact your health. *Vox*.
- J. Box-Steffensmeier, et al. 2004. The Dynamics of the Partisan Gender Gap. *American Political Science Review*, 98: 515-528.
- Nicholas Valentino & David O. Sears. 2005. Old Times There Are Not Forgotten: Race and Partisan Realignment in the Contemporary South. *American Journal of Political Science* 49: 672-688.

Deep Roots of Public Opinion

9/26 Thursday Origination of Political Views

- M. Kent Jennings, Laura Stoker, & Jake Bowers. 2009. Politics across generations. *Journal of Politics*. 71(3):782-799
- John Alford, Carolyn Funk, & John R. Hibbing. 2005. Are Political Orientations Genetically Transmitted? *American Political Science Review* 99(2): 153-67.

- Oxley et al. 2008. Political Attitudes Vary with Physiological Traits. *Science*. 321(5896):1667-1670.

Section II: Voting, Campaigns, & Elections

Voting & Elections, Part 1

10/1 Tuesday

- John Sides & Lynn Vavreck. 2013. *The Gamble*. Chs. 1-2 (p. 1-31).

10/3 Thursday

- John Sides & Lynn Vavreck. 2013. *The Gamble*. Chs. 3-4 (p. 32-96).
- Nate Silver. Jan 8, 2016. Three theories of Donald Trump's rise. *FiveThirtyEight*.
- Achen & Bartels. May 23, 2016. Do Sanders supporters favor his policies? *New York Times*.

Voting & Elections, Part 2

10/8 Tuesday

- John Sides & Lynn Vavreck. 2013. *The Gamble*. Chs. 5-6 (p. 97-173).

10/10 Thursday Exam Review

- John Sides & Lynn Vavreck. 2013. *The Gamble*. Chs. 7-8 (p. 174-242).
- Seth Masket. Dec 5, 2016. The case for normal elections under a President Donald Trump. *PS Mag*.

10/15 Tuesday MIDTERM EXAM

Section III: Political Communication Effects

10/17 Thursday [NO CLASS - FALLBREAK]

Campaign Advertising

10/22 Tuesday

- Paul Allen Beck, et al. 2002. The Social Calculus of Voting: Interpersonal, Media, and Organizational Influences on Presidential Vote Choice. *American Political Science Review* 96: 57-73.
- Ted Brader. 2005. Striking a Responsive Chord: How Political Ads Motivate and Persuade Voters by Appealing to Emotions. *American Journal of Political Science* 49: 388-405.
- Nicholas Valentino, Vincent Hutchings, & Ismail White. 2002. Cues That Matter: How Political Ads Prime Racial Attitudes during Campaigns. *American Political Science Review* 96: 75-90.

News Media Influence: Bias, Agendas, Priming, & Framing

10/24 Thursday Media Bias, Priming, & Framing

- Polling & Public, Ch. 6
- Dave DAlessio & Mike Allen. 2000. Media Bias in Presidential Elections. *Journal of Communication* 50: 133-156
- Joanne Miller & Jon Krosnick. 2000. News Media Impact on the Ingredients of Presidential Evaluations: Politically Knowledgeable Citizens are Guided by a Trusted Source. *American Journal of Political Science* 44: 301-315.
- James Druckman. 2004. Political Preference Formation: Competition, Deliberation, and the (Ir)relevance of Framing Effects. *American Political Science Review* 98(4):671-686.

10/29 Tuesday Partisan Media Effects

- Kevin Arceneaux, Martin Johnson, & John Cryderman. 2013. Communication, persuasion, and the conditioning value of selective exposure. *Political Communication*. 30(2):213-231.
- Yptach Lelkes, Gaurav Sood, & 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.

Section IV: Explaining Why Americans Differ

Social Identities and Group Prejudices

10/31 Thursday Ethnocentrism & Threat

- Ted Brader, Nicholas Valentino, & Elizabeth Suhay. 2008. What Triggers Public Opposition to Immigration? Anxiety, Group Cues, and Immigration Threat. *American Journal of Political Science*, 52(4): 959-978.
- Kam, Cindy D. and Donald R. Kinder. 2007. Terror and Ethnocentrism: Foundations of American Support for the War on Terrorism. *Journal of Politics* 69(2): 318-336.
- Claudine Gay 2004. Putting Race in Context: Identifying the Environmental Determinants of Black Racial Attitudes. *American Political Science Review* 98: 547-562.
- Katherine Cramer Walsh. 2012. Putting Inequality in Its Place: Rural Consciousness and the Power of Perspective. *American Political Science Review*, 106(3): 517-532.

11/5 Tuesday Racial Attitudes

- Donald Kinder & Nicholas Winter. 2001. Exploring the Racial Divide: Blacks, Whites, and Opinion on National Policy. *American Journal of Political Science* 45: 439-456.
- Antoine Banks & Nicholas Valentino. 2012. Emotional Substrates of White Racial Attitudes. *American Journal of Political Science* 56: 286-297.

11/7 Thursday History & Race

- Edwards Carmines & James Stimson. 1986. On the Structure and Sequence of Issue Evolution. *American Political Science Review* 80: 901-20.
- Avidit Acharya, Matthew Blackwell, Maya Sen. 2015. The Political Legacy of American Slavery. *Journal of Politics* 78 (3), 621-641

11/12 Tuesday Messaging on Race/Class

- Paul Sniderman, Edward Carmines, Geoffrey Layman, & Michael Carter. 1996. Beyond Race: Social Justice as a Race Neutral Ideal. *American Journal of Political Science* 40: 33-55.
- Jon Hurwitz & Mark Peffley. 2005. Playing the Race Card in the Post-Willie Horton Era: The Impact of Racialized Code Words on Support for Punitive Crime Policy. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 69: 99-112.
- Larry Bartels. 2006. Whats the Matter with Whats the Matter with Kansas? *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 1: 201-226.

Ideological Identity/Moral Attitudes

11/14 Thursday

- Timothy Ryan .2016. No compromise: Consequences of moralized attitudes. *American Journal of Political Science*. 61(2) 409-423.
- Donald Kinder & Nathan Kalmoe. 2017. *Neither liberal nor conservative*. Ch. 6. Consequences p. 92-120 [Moodle]

Self-Interest

11/19 Tuesday

- David Sears, Richard Lau, Tom Tyler, & Harris Allen. 1980. Self-Interest versus Symbolic Politics in Policy Attitudes and Presidential Voting. *American Political Science Review* 74: 670–684.
- Donald Green. 1992. The Price Elasticity of Mass Preferences. *American Political Science Review* 86: 128-148.
- Robert Erikson & Laura Stoker. 2011. Caught in the Draft: The Effects of Vietnam Draft Lottery Status on Political Attitudes. *American Political Science Review*, 105(2) 221–237.
- Donald Green & Jonathan A. Cowden. 1992. Who Protests: Self-Interest and White Opposition to Busing. *The Journal of Politics* 54:471–496.

Section V: Democratic Responsiveness & Accountability

Process, Institutions, & Norms

11/21 Thursday Governance

- John R. Hibbing & Elizabeth Theiss-Morse. 2001. Process Preferences and American Politics: What The People Want Government To Be. *American Political Science Review* 95: 145-153.
- Pew Research. 2015. Beyond distrust: How Americans view their government. [First Page only]
- David Broockman. Jan 22, 2014. The real extremists are American voters, not politicians. *Washington Post*.

11/26 Tuesday Tolerance & Liberty

- Hurwitch, Knigge, & Peffley. 2001. A multiple values model of political tolerance. *Political Research Quarterly*. 379-406.
- Pew Research. Oct 27, 2016. Confidence in election, views of U.S. democracy.
- Zakaria. Dec 29, 2016. Americas democracy has become illiberal. *Washington Post*.

***** 11/26 Research Paper Due*****

Does Public Opinion Influence Policy?

11/28 Thursday [NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING/MY BIRTHDAY]

12/3 Tuesday

- Lawrence Jacobs & Benjamin Page. 2005. Who Influences U.S. Foreign Policy? *American Political Science Review* 99: 107-123.
- Martin Gilens. 2005. Inequality and Democratic Responsiveness. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 69: 778-796.

12/5 Thursday LAST DAY OF CLASS, RECAP, EXAMREVIEW

- Polling & Public, Ch. 9