

# POLI711: AMERICAN POLITICAL BEHAVIOR

Revised: April 21, 2021

Poli711, Spring 2021

Classroom: The Cloud

Meeting time: Mondays, 3:35 to 6:25pm

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Office: Hamilton 307 (but really Zoom)

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 1:30-4:30 pm, or by appointment. See Sakai for a link to reserve a timeslot during the default period, or email me for an appointment outside that period.

Course website: Sakai

Political behavior is the study of how citizens act in political contexts, with attention to ramifications for the political system as a whole. It is a multifarious specialization—one that overlaps with at least three others in political science: public opinion, political psychology, and political communication. UNC offers graduate-level courses on all of these (not to mention others on Macropolitics and Framing). The most distinctive attribute of Poli711 is the extent to which it emphasizes *current* methods, topics, and debates. With one exception, the oldest reading on this syllabus is from 2016. Working papers were not only permissible as assigned readings, they were in fact *prioritized* in the hopes that you will leave this course with an understanding of the most recent tools and conversations.

This is an advanced, graduate-level seminar designed to train early-career scholars. The learning objective is to develop facility in conducting research: recognizing strengths and weaknesses in the current state of knowledge; contemplating validity of methods and inferences; and identifying ways to do better. The course also attempts to provide as much professional socialization (for a career in social science research) as possible. (Conference-style presentations are a course assignment, for instance.)

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

**Participation (45%).** Students are expected to do the assigned reading, complete the class participation form, and take part in a high-level conversation each week. The class participation form is a short online survey that should be completed before each class. You will use it to report how carefully you read and to provide some direction for our conversations. I will show you more about how it works during our first meeting. It must be completed by **noon** on each class day (our first meeting excepted).

For one of our meetings (currently slated for March 29), each student will prepare a short briefing on an assigned reading, in lieu of the usual conversation prep.

If you need to miss class for some reason, such as a personal emergency, please email me as soon as it is practicable to do so. I grant excused absences in reasonable circumstances, but will ask you to fill out the participation form on a reasonable timeline.

**Chalk talk (10%).** There will also be an allocation of class time for students to give a “chalk talk” about their intended final projects. We will discuss expectations for the chalk talk in class.

**Course project (45% total).** Students must complete a substantial research project. The default is to write a registered report-format article. A document on Sakai lays out expectations for this project, and readings for our first day of class give some more background on the registered report format.

If you want to do something different for your final project, please feel free to talk to me about it. I think graduate-level coursework should subsidize your research agenda, so alternative final projects that would do this better might be acceptable, provided they are comparably effortful and that I can give you good guidance.

The course project is due in two parts (see an accompanying document for details on each component):

- An 800-word proposal and annotated bibliography to include 5-10 outside sources you intend to consult. This is due 48-hours before your chalk talk, and is worth 5% of your final grade. Its main purpose is to get you thinking about the final project early-on, and to give your classmates and me an opportunity to help steer you in the right direction.
- The paper itself (40%, due May 7, noon).

Course assessments are graded on the following scale:

L: Lower than expectations

M: Meets expectations

E: Exceeds expectations

These grades are roughly congruent with the Low-pass, Pass, High-pass system used in the class as a whole. Because this class includes students with different levels of political science socialization, “expectations” are relative to your career stage.

## CLASS POLICIES

*Technology.* The class is taught on Zoom, so obviously you can use your computers. That said, please understand how important it is to me that you eliminate distractions and be mentally “present.” It makes such a difference for the quality of discussion, enjoyability of the class, and how much we all learn. Barring some personal emergency, I promise to close my email program and mute all notifications during class, and I expect you to do the same.

*Disabilities.* I am happy to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate disabilities, but you need to let me know in the first two weeks of the semester. I will treat any information you provide as confidential.

*Academic integrity.* Unless you have received explicit permission for a collaborative effort beforehand, all work you turn in should, of course, be your own.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Here is the game plan. Of course, it can be adjusted in response to water main breaks, global pandemics, inclement weather, or other unforeseen events. Also, I can modify the readings a little bit, such as if something interesting and topical comes up that it would be fun for us to read together.

### January 25: Introduction

*Reading for our first day stands somewhat apart from the rest of the semester. My intention in assigning these readings is to plant some seeds that might bear fruit in the weeks to come. The DeScioli & Pinker piece does a nice job elucidating how academics tend to complicate their prose, making their ideas harder to understand. The Cottrell et al. piece is an example of a registered report—a new research article format that you will be using for your final projects. (See the assigned JEPS documents.) And the Platt piece is a well-regarded classic. I would love to see a Platt-like mindset reflected in your final papers. I recommend reading DeScioli first, then Platt, then the JEPS guidelines, then Cottrell.*

Cottrell, David, et al. "Election Administrators are People, Too! Can humanizing elections improve our confidence in them?" (Working paper)

DeScioli, Peter and Steven Pinker, "Piled Modifiers, Buried Verbs, and Other Turgid Prose in the *American Political Science Review*." (Working paper)

*Journal of Experimental Political Science* Guidelines for Registered Reports (two documents).

Platt, John R. 1964. "Strong Inference." *Science* 146(3642): 347–53.

## **February 1 – Motivated Reasoning**

Groenendyk, Eric, and Yanna Krupnikov. 2020. "What Motivates Reasoning? A Theory of Goal-Dependent Political Evaluation." *American Journal of Political Science*.

Guay, Brian and Christopher Johnston. "Ideological Asymmetries and the Determinants of Politically Motivated Reasoning." *American Journal of Political Science*

Pennycook, Gordon, and David G. Rand. 2019. "Lazy, Not Biased: Susceptibility to Partisan Fake News Is Better Explained by Lack of Reasoning than by Motivated Reasoning." *Cognition* 188: 39–50.

Ryan, Timothy, and Amanda Aziz. 2020. "Is the Political Right More Credulous?: Experimental Evidence Against Asymmetric Motivations to Believe False Political Information." *Journal of Politics*.

Tappin, Ben. "Rethinking the link between cognitive sophistication and politically motivated reasoning." Forthcoming, *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*.

## **February 8 – Racial Attitudes**

*These are listed alphabetically. I recommend reading Agadjanian et al. last.*

Agadjanian, Alexander, et al. "Disfavor or Favor? Assessing the Meaning of White Americans' Racial Attitudes." Working paper.

Chudy, Jennifer. "Racial Sympathy and Its Political Consequences." *Journal of Politics*.

Frymer, Paul, and Jacob M Grumbach. 2020. "Labor Unions and White Racial Politics." *American Journal of Political Science*.

Jardina, Ashley et al. "Disavowing White Identity." *British Journal of Political Science*.

Sirin, Cigdem V, José D Villalobos, and Nicholas A Valentino. 2016. "Group Empathy Theory: The Effect of Group Empathy on US Intergroup Attitudes and Behavior in the Context of Immigration Threats." *The Journal of Politics* 78(3): 893–908.

## **February 15 – No class (University Wellness Day)**

## **February 22 – Media and Communication**

Ahler, Douglas and David Broockman. “The Delegate Paradox: Why Polarized Politicians Can Represent Citizens Best.” *Journal of Politics* 80(4): 1117-1133.

Bøggild, Troels, Lene Aarøe, and Michael Bang Petersen. 2020. “Citizens as Complicits: Distrust in Politicians and Biased Social Dissemination of Political Information.” *American Political Science Review*: 1–17.

Groenendyk, Erik. “Of Two Minds But One Heart.” *American Journal of Political Science*.

Levy, Ro’ee. “Social Media, News Consumption, and Polarization: Evidence from a Field Experiment.” (Working paper).

Ryan, Timothy J. and Yanna Krupnikov. “Split Feelings: Understanding Routes to Implicit and Explicit Attitude Change.” (Working paper at R&R stage.)

## **March 1 – Polarization (and Chalk Talks)**

Broockman, David et al., “Does Affective Polarization Undermine Democratic Norms or Accountability? Maybe Not.” Working paper.

Engelhardt, Andrew M, and Stephen M Utych. 2018. “Grand Old (Tailgate) Party? Partisan Discrimination in Apolitical Settings.” *Political Behavior*: 1–21.

Graham, Matthew H, and Milan W Svobik. 2020. “Democracy in America? Partisanship, Polarization, and the Robustness of Support for Democracy in the United States.” *American Political Science Review* 114(2): 392–409.

Simas, Elizabeth N, Scott Clifford, and Justin H Kirkland. 2020. “How Empathic Concern Fuels Political Polarization.” *American Political Science Review* 114(1): 258–69.

Chalk talk memos (up to 4 of them).

Recommended but not required: Finkel, Eli J et al. 2020. “Political Sectarianism in America.” *Science* 370(6516): 533–536.

## **March 8 – Political Socialization (and Chalk Talks)**

Prior, Markus. 2019. *Hooked: How Politics Captures People’s Interest*. Ch. 1, 2, skim 3, 6, skim 9, 10.

Chalk talk memos (up to 4 of them).

## **March 15 – Race and the Political System, and Chalk Talks**

Banks, Antoine J, Ismail K White, and Brian D McKenzie. 2019. “Black Politics: How Anger Influences the Political Actions Blacks Pursue to Reduce Racial Inequality.” *Political behavior* 41(4): 917–43.

Yadon, Nicole, and Mara C Ostfeld. 2020. “Shades of Privilege: The Relationship Between Skin Color and Political Attitudes Among White Americans.” *Political Behavior* 42(4): 1369–1392.

Chalk Talk memos (up to 6 of them).

### **March 22 – Prejudice Reduction, and Chalk Talks**

Itzchakov, Guy, Netta Weinstein, Nicole Legate, and Moty Amar. 2020. “Can High Quality Listening Predict Lower Speakers’ Prejudiced Attitudes?” *Journal of experimental social psychology* 91: 104022.

Kalla and Broockman, “Which narrative strategies durably reduce prejudice?” Working paper.

Chalk Talk memos (up to 6 of them).

### **March 29 – How to Do Good Surveys and Survey Experiments**

*We will discuss a strategy to make this reading load more manageable.*

Aronow, Peter M, Jonathon Baron, and Lauren Pinson. 2019. “A Note on Dropping Experimental Subjects Who Fail a Manipulation Check.” *Political Analysis* 27(4): 572–589.

Clifford et al. “Increasing Precision in Survey Experiments Without Introducing Bias.” *American Political Science Review*.

Coppock, Alexander. “Ten Things to Know About Multiple Comparisons.”

Dafoe, Allan, Baobao Zhang, and Devin Caughey. 2018. “Information Equivalence in Survey Experiments.” *Political Analysis* 26(4): 399–416.

Flake, Jessica Kay, and Eiko I Fried. 2019. “Measurement Schmeasurement: Questionable Measurement Practices and How to Avoid Them.” *Advances in Methods and Practices in Psychological Science*.

Flake, Jessica K, Jolynn Pek, and Eric Hehman. 2017. “Construct Validation in Social and Personality Research: Current Practice and Recommendations.” *Social Psychological and Personality Science* 8(4): 370–378.

Franco, Annie, Neil Malhotra, Gabor Simonovits, and LJ Zigerell. 2017. “Developing Standards for Post-Hoc Weighting in Population-Based Survey Experiments.” *Journal of Experimental Political Science* 4(2): 161–72.

Lopez, Jesse and D. Sunshine Hillygus. “Why So Serious?: Survey Trolls and Misinformation.” Working paper.

Montgomery, Jacob M, Brendan Nyhan, and Michelle Torres. 2018. “How Conditioning on Posttreatment Variables Can Ruin Your Experiment and What to Do about It.” *American Journal of Political Science* 62(3): 760–75.

Pietryka, “ANES Scales Often Don’t Measure What You Think They Measure”

### **April 5 – University-designated Wellness Day. (No class.)**

### **April 12 – Social Networks**

Carlson, Taylor N. 2019. "Through the Grapevine: Informational Consequences of Interpersonal Political Communication." *American Political Science Review* 113(2): 325–39.

Mosleh, Mohsen. "Shared Partisanship Dramatically Increases Social Tie Formation in a Twitter Field Experiment"

Rossiter, Erin. "The Consequences of Interparty Conversation on Outparty Affect and Stereotypes." Working paper.

Strother, Logan et al. 2020. "College Roommates Have a Modest but Significant Influence on Each Other's Political Ideology." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

### **April 19 – Morality**

Bor et al., "Moralizing Physical Distancing during the COVID-19 Pandemic – Personal Motivations Predict Moral Condemnation"

Delton, Andrew W, Peter DeScioli, and Timothy J Ryan. 2020. "Moral Obstinance in Political Negotiations." *Political Psychology* 41(1): 3–20.

Earp, Brian D. et al., "How Social Relationships Shape Moral Judgment." Working paper.

Everett, Jim A.C. et al., "Effectiveness of Moral Messages." Working paper.

Jung, Jae-Hee. 2020. "The Mobilizing Effect of Parties' Moral Rhetoric." *American Journal of Political Science* 64(2): 341–355.

### **April 26 – The Politician / Citizen connection**

Bussell, Jennifer. 2020. "Shadowing as a Tool for Studying Political Elites." *Political Analysis* 28(4): 469–486.

Costa, Mia. 2020. "Ideology, Not Affect: What Americans Want from Political Representation." *American Journal of Political Science*.

Kertzer, Joshua D. "Rethinking Elite-Public Gap." *American Journal of Political Science*.

Lee, Nathan. "Do Policymakers Listen to Experts? Evidence from a National Survey of Local and State Policymakers." Working paper.

Sheffer, Lior et al. 2018. "Nonrepresentative Representatives: An Experimental Study of the Decision Making of Elected Politicians." *American Political Science Review* 112(2): 302–21.

### **May 3 – The Politics of Policing and Racial Protests**

Bonilla, Tabitha, and Alvin B Tillery. 2020. "Which Identity Frames Boost Support for and Mobilization in The #BlackLivesMatter Movement? An Experimental Test." *American Political Science Review* 114(4): 947–962.

Christiani, Leah. "When Are Explicit Racial Appeals Accepted?" Forthcoming, *Political Behavior*.

Gillion, Daniel Q. *Loud Minority*, Introduction; skim ch. 1 and 5 (paying particular attention to the data-focused parts of Ch. 5.)

Jefferson, Hakeem, et al. "Seeing Blue in Black and White: Race and Perceptions of Officer-Involved Shootings." Forthcoming, *Perspectives on Politics*.

Wasow, Omar. 2020. "Agenda Seeding: How 1960s Black Protests Moved Elites, Public Opinion and Voting." *American Political Science Review*: 1–22.

### **Bonus topic (cut once I realized I had too many days!) – How Citizens Think About Issues and Ideology**

Brandt et al. "Registered Report: Testing Ideological Asymmetries in Measurement Invariance."

Goren, Paul, Matthew Motta, and Brianna Smith. 2020. "The Ideational Foundations of Symbolic Ideology." *Political Psychology* 41(S1): 75–94.

Hanretty, Chris, Benjamin E Lauderdale, and Nick Vivyan. 2020. "A Choice-Based Measure of Issue Importance in the Electorate." *American Journal of Political Science*.

Rice, Douglas, Brian F Schaffner, and David J Barney. 2020. "Political Ideology and Issue Importance." *Political Research Quarterly*: 1065912920967744.

Ryan, Timothy and J. Ehlinger. "Issue Publics: Fresh Relevance for an Old Concept." Working paper.