

POLI712: PUBLIC OPINION

Revised: August 15, 2018

Poli 712: Fall 2018

Professor Timothy Ryan, tjr@email.unc.edu

Office: 307 Hamilton Hall

Classroom: Hamilton 351

Meeting time: Wednesdays 12:20 – 3:30pm

Office Hours: Mondays, 1-4 (and by appointment)

Course website: Sakai

*“... those opinions held by private persons which the government finds it prudent to heed.” ~V.O. Key, *Public Opinion and American Democracy**

Public Opinion is one of the core specializations within political science. In some respects, it is an old area of inquiry: its intellectual origins extend back to philosophers of antiquity. In other respects, it is new: innovations in measurement in the mid 20th century drastically expanded public interest in public opinion, as well as our ability scientifically to study it. This course provides a graduate-level overview of major topics, approaches, and findings in the Public Opinion subfield. This course emphasizes landmark, canonical readings that have had a lasting influence and are an expected part of the repertoire for developing experts. There are recent readings too, but see Poli711, *Political Behavior*, for a course that prioritizes cutting-edge work to a greater extent.

This is a graduate-level seminar designed to train early-career scholars. As such, the learning objective is the develop facility in conducting research: learning the contours of long-running topics of inquiry; recognizing strengths and weaknesses in the current state of knowledge; contemplating validity of methods and inferences; 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 (30%). Students are expected to do the assigned reading, submit a discussion question to our class blog, attend class, and take part in a lively conversation.

Participation is self-graded. (As a default, I reserve the ability to correct mistakes.) At each meeting, you will give yourself 0 to 3 points, depending on how prepared you are for class and how actively you intend to be in our discussion. (0 = absent from class; 1 = attended class but did not do reading; 2 = attended class but reading was partial or rushed; 3 = attended class and completed reading with reasonable care.) You will also give yourself an additional point if you submitted a discussion question on time (by 9:30am on the day of class), for a possible total of 4.

A written discussion question is an opportunity to formulate a polished and carefully thought-out reaction to the reading—perhaps one that connects a specific selection to others in the same week or beyond. It should go without saying, however, that in a graduate seminar, you should have thought about what you want to discuss about *all* the readings—not just the one for which you submitted a formal question. I find that reliable way to organize your thinking about discussion is to jot down three strengths, and three limitations, about each selection you read.

Press secretary presentation(s) (10%). Students will give one or two short form (about 15-minute) presentations on one of the week’s assigned readings, in what I call “press secretary” style. (We’ll talk more about this.) Presentations are graded from 0 to 5. If you choose to give one presentation, it is weighted at 10%. If you give two, each are weighted at 5%.

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 (50% total). Students must complete a substantial research project. The default, which should be accessible to students at all levels, is to write a research design. This should include 1) a theoretical discussion of a political behavior topic that interests you (one that goes well beyond the readings assigned for class); 2) interesting hypotheses that stem from the theoretical discussion; and 3) a valid and potentially feasible way to test the hypotheses. (We’ll talk more about all of this in class.) Students in their third year and beyond are strongly encouraged to go further, acquiring data, running analyses, and interpreting them.

Alternative course projects that are comparably effortful and would serve your professional development might also be acceptable. Some potential examples include designing a piece of software, writing a grant, constructing and validating instrumentation for a complex experiment, or replicating and extending someone else’s findings. Let me know if you have an idea. Also, projects that focus on aspects of political behavior we do not have time to cover, or on political behavior outside of the United States, are totally acceptable. As a general matter, I am keen for you to integrate work for this class into your broader research goals.

As a default, the course project is due in two parts:

Proposal (10%). A concise (1,000 words max) document that describes the proposed project, including why it is theoretically interesting or substantively important, a provisional set of hypotheses, and data to be examined (if applicable). You should also include an annotated bibliography with at least 10 sources (not assigned) you expect to consult. The bibliography does not count against the word limit. Please upload to Sakai. Due Monday, Oct. 1 at 5pm.

Final paper (40%). The paper should be no longer than 9,000 words (if you analyze data) or 6,000 words (if not). It should be uploaded to Sakai by Dec. 12 at noon.

Optionally, you can submit an in-progress draft of your final paper by Nov. 16. This draft can have major placeholders for things still to come, but it should represent a substantial advance compared to your initial proposal. I will provide comments to help you improve the final paper. If you wish to submit a draft, please volunteer for the earlier Chalk Talk slot, so you have time to incorporate the feedback you’ll receive.

Class Policies

Technology. You can use computers to consult readings or take notes, but Wi-Fi must be turned off. Don’t be on email, Facebook, ESPN, and so on during class. Really, don’t! Doing this is to waste my time and yours.

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 permission for a collaborative effort beforehand, all work you turn in should, of course, be your own.

Books

We are reading enough of the following books that you should consider purchasing them. (Strictly speaking, I don’t care if you have purchased a book or not, as long as you’ve done the assigned

reading and can discuss it in class. But note that all of these merit a place on the shelf of a professional scholar of public opinion.)

1. Angus Campbell, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes, *The American Voter* (Unabridged edition)
2. Donald P. Green, Bradley Palmquist, and Eric Schickler, *Partisan Hearts and Minds*
3. Donald Kinder and Lynn Sanders, *Divided By Color: Racial Politics and Democratic Ideals*
4. John Zaller, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*
5. Avidit Acharya, Matthew Blackwell, and Maya Sen. 2018. *Deep Roots: How Slavery Still Shapes Southern Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Course Schedule¹

August 22 – Introductions

I like to start the semester with something kind of light and current. The following is part (the end) of a recent debate between some long-established scholars (Achen and Bartels) and young up-and-comers (the others). I will not inflict the full debate on you. Here is the background: Chris Achen spent years arguing that he had evidence that nearby shark attacks decrease vote share for incumbents, which was presented as a quirky example of voters being irrational and ill-suited to participate in democratic governance. Fowler and Hall published an article saying that that's all wrong. The readings start with A&B's response to this critique. Please read these in order:

Achen, Christopher H, and Larry M Bartels. 2018. "Statistics as if Politics Mattered: a Reply to Fowler and Hall." *The Journal of Politics*.

Fowler, Anthony and Andrew B. Hall, "Politics as if Evidence Mattered: A Reply to Achen and Bartels." Unpublished.

Lenz, Gabriel. 2018. "Time for a Change." *Critical Review*.

August 29 – The Meaning and Measurement of Public Opinion

Blumer, Herbert. 1948. "Public Opinion and Public Opinion Polling," *American Sociological Review*. 13:542-549.

Key, V.O.. 1961. *Public Opinion and American Democracy*. (ch. 1) pp. 3-18

Converse, Philip. 1987. "Changing Conceptions of Public Opinion in the Political Process." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 51[Supplement]:12-24.

Herbst, Susan. 1993. *Numbered Voices: How Opinion Polling Has Shaped American Politics*. (chs. 3) pp. 43-68.

Tufekci, Zeynep. 2018. "Social Movements and Governments in the Digital Age: Evaluating a Complex Landscape." *Journal of International Affairs* 68(1): 1–19.

¹ The course schedule draws substantially from Ted Brader's version of the same course, and I am thankful to him. Of course, Brader in turn adapted Don Kinder's still older syllabus, so the structure has a long history. "Recommended" readings are ones that we probably won't have time to discuss in class, but which are very much worth your time as developing public opinion scholars.

- * Bullock, John G., Alan S. Gerber, Seth J Hill, and Gregory A. Huber. 2015. "Partisan Bias in Factual Beliefs About Politics." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*: 519–78.

Recommended:

Lippmann, Walter. 1922. *Public Opinion*. (ch. 1) pp. 3-20.

September 5 – Attitudes, Sophistication, and Competence

Lane, Robert. 1962. *Political Ideology*. (ch. 1, 4, 22) pp. 1-11, 57-81, 346-63.

Converse, Phillip. 1964. "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics." In *Ideology and Discontent*, edited by David Apter. pp. 206-61.

Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion* (ch. 4-5) pp. 53-96.

- * Lodge, Milton, Marco Steenbergen, and Shawn Brau. 1995. "The Responsive Voter: Campaign Information and the Dynamics of Candidate Evaluation." *American Political Science Review* 89:309-326.

- * Ryan, Timothy J. 2017. "How Do Indifferent Voters Decide? The Political Importance of Implicit Attitudes." *American Journal of Political Science*: 1–16.

Recommended:

Lavine, Howard G, Christopher D Johnston, and Marco R Steenbergen. 2012. *The Ambivalent Partisan: How Critical Loyalty Promotes Democracy*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Popkin, Samuel L. 1991. *The Reasoning Voter*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

September 12 – Information, Rationality, and Representation

Fiorina, Morris. 1990. "Information and Rationality in Elections." In *Information and Democratic Processes*, edited by Ferejohn and Kuklinski. pp. 329-42.

Page, Benjamin and Robert Shapiro. 1992. *The Rational Public*. (ch. 1-2) pp. 1-66.

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

Gilens, Martin. 2001. "Political Ignorance and Collective Policy Preferences." *American Political Science Review* 95(2): 379-96.

- * 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.

Recommended:

Delli Carpini, Martin X. and Scott Keeter. 1996. *What Americans Know about Politics and Why It Matters*. (ch. 1-2) pp. 22-104.

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

Althaus, Scott. 2003. *Collective Preferences in Democratic Politics: Opinion Surveys and the Will of the People*. New York: Cambridge University Press. [Critique of Page & Shapiro.]

September 19 – The Foundations and Structure of Political Choice

Campbell, Angus, Philip Converse, Warren Miller, and Donald Stokes. 1960. *The American Voter* (ch. 2, 8, & 19) pp. 18-37, 168-87, 523-38.

Fiorina, Morris. 1981. *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections*. (ch. 1) pp. 3-19.

Rahn, Wendy, John Aldrich, John Sullivan, and Eugene Borgida. 1990. "A Social-Cognitive Model of Candidate Appraisal." *Information and Democratic Processes*, ed. Ferejohn & Kuklinski. 136-59.

Hibbing, John, Kevin B. Smith and John R. Alford. *Predisposed: Liberals, Conservatives, and the Biology of Political Differences*. New York: Routledge. ch. 5 (pp. 117-145). [Full text electronically available through UNC Library.]

* Albertson, Bethany and Shana Kushner Gadarian. *Anxious Politics*, ch. 1-4. [Full text electronically available through UNC Library.]

Recommended:

Sniderman, Paul, James Glaser, and Robert Griffin. 1990. "Information and Electoral Choice." *Information and Democratic Processes*, ed. Ferejohn & Kuklinski. pp. 117-35.

MacKuen, Michael Jennifer Wolak, Luke Keele, and George E. Marcus. 2010. "Civic Engagements: Resolute Partisanship or Reflective Deliberation." *American Journal of Political Science* 54(2): 440–58.

Soroka, Stuart. 2014. *Negativity in Democratic Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Fowler, James H., Laura A. Baker, and Christopher T. Dawes. 2008. "Genetic Variation in Political Participation." *American Political Science Review* 102(02): 233–48.

Dawes, Christopher T., and James H. Fowler. 2009. "Partisanship, Voting, and the Dopamine D2 Receptor Gene." *The Journal of Politics* 71(03): 1157.

Hatemi, Peter K., and Rose McDermott, eds. 2011. *Man Is by Nature a Political Animal: Evolution, Biology, and Politics*. University of Chicago Press.

September 26 – Party Identification

Campbell, Angus, Philip Converse, Warren Miller, and Donald Stokes. 1960. *The American Voter*. (ch. 6-7) pp. 120-67.

Fiorina, Morris. 1981. *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections*. (ch. 5) pp. 84-105.

Green, Donald, Bradley Palmquist, and Eric Schickler. 2002. *Partisan Hearts and Minds: Political Parties and Social Identities of Voters*. (ch. 1-4) pp. 1-108, 164-203.

* Klar, Samara and Yanna Krupnikov. *Independent Politics*, ch. 1-4.

* Ahler, Douglas J, and Gaurav Sood. 2018. “The Parties in Our Heads: Misperceptions About Party Composition and Their Consequences.” *The Journal of Politics* 80(3): 964–81.

Recommended:

Franklin, Charles and John Jackson. 1983. “The Dynamics of Party Identification.” *American Political Science Review* 77(4): 957-73.

Bartels, Larry M. 2002. “Beyond the Running Tally: Partisan Bias in Political Perceptions.” *Political Behavior* 24(2): 117–50.

MacKuen, Michael, Robert Erikson, and James Stimson. 1989. “Macropartisanship.” *American Political Science Review* 83(4): 1125–42.

Bullock, John G. 2011. “Elite Influence on Public Opinion in an Informed Electorate.” *American Political Science Review* 105(3): 496–515.

Bullock, John G. 2009. “Partisan Bias and the Bayesian Ideal in the Study of Public Opinion.” *American Journal of Political Science* 71(3): 1109–24.

October 1, 5pm: Project proposals due

October 3 – Economics, Interests, and Symbolic Politics

Sears, David, Richard Lau, Tom Tyler, and Harris Allen. 1980. “Self-Interest versus Symbolic Politics in Policy Attitudes and Presidential Voting.” *American Political Science Review* 74:670-84.

Kinder, Donald & D. Roderick Kiewiet. 1981. “Sociotropic Politics: The American Case.” *BJPS* 11:129-161.

MacKuen, Michael, Robert Erikson, and James Stimson. 1992. “Peasants or Bankers? The American Electorate and the US Economy.” *American Political Science Review* 86:597-610.

* Tesler, Michael. “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.

Recommended:

Gerber, Alan S., Gregory A. Huber, Daniel R. Biggers, and David J. Hendry. "Self Interest, Beliefs, and Policy Opinions: Understanding the Economic Source of Immigration Policy Preferences." Forthcoming, *Political Research Quarterly*.

Hainmueller, Jens and Michael J. Hiscox. 2010. "Attitudes Toward Highly Skilled and Low-Skilled Immigration: Evidence From a Survey Experiment." *American Political Science Review* 104(1): 61–84.

October 10 – Race and Public Opinion

Bobo, Lawrence and Vincent Hutchings. 1996. "Perceptions of Racial Group Competition: Extending Blumer's Theory of Group Position to a Multiracial Social Context." *American Sociological Review* 61:951-72.

Kinder, Donald and Lynn Sanders. 1996. *Divided by Color: Racial Politics and Democratic Ideals*. (ch. 1-7) pp. 1-195.

* Acharya, Avidit, Matthew Blackwell, and Maya Sen. 2018. *Deep Roots: How Slavery Still Shapes Southern Politics*. ch. 1-4.

Recommended:

Sniderman, Paul and Edward Carmines. 1997. *Reaching beyond Race*. (ch. 1-4) pp. 1-139.

Tesler, Michael. 2012. "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.

October 17 – Ideology, Values, and Political Tolerance

Conover, Pamela Johnston and Stanley Feldman. 1981. "The Origins and Meanings of Liberal/Conservative Self-Identifications." *AJPS* 25:617-45.

Feldman, Stanley and John Zaller. 1992. "The Political Culture of Ambivalence." *AJPS* 36:268-307.

Sullivan, John, James Piereson, and George E. Marcus. 1979. "An Alternative Conceptualization of Political Tolerance: Illusory Increases 1950s-1970s." *American Political Science Review* 73(3): 781–94.

Kinder, Donald R. and Nathan Kalmoe. 2017. *Neither Liberal Nor Conservative: Ideological Innocence in the American Public*. ch. 1-3.

* Graham, Jesse and Jonathan Haidt, and Brian A. Nosek. 2009. "Liberals and Conservatives Rely on Different Sets of Moral Foundations." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 96(5): 1029–46.

October 24 – Social Influence and Contextual Effects

Jennings, M. Kent and Richard Niemi. 1968. "The Transmission of Political Values from Parent to

Child.” *American Political Science Review* 62:169-184.

Huckfeldt, Robert, Paul Beck, Russell Dalton, and Jeffrey Levine. 1995. “Political Environments, Cohesive Social Groups, and the Communication of Public Opinion,” *AJPS* 39:1025-54.

* Mutz, Diana. 2002. “Cross-cutting Social Networks: Testing Democratic Theory in Practice.” *American Political Science Review* 96(1): 111-26.

*Sinclair, Becky. 2012. *The Social Citizen: Peer Networks and Political Behavior*. Selection TBD.

Recommended:

Gay, Claudine. 2006. “Seeing Difference: The Effect of Economic Disparity on Black Attitudes toward Latinos.” *AJPS* 50(4): 982-97.

October 31 – No class (Professional trip)

(The end-of semester reading club is a makeup for this class period.)

November 7 – Student Chalk Talks

No reading this week, but watch out for next week!

November 14 – Elite Sources, Information Flow, and the Dynamics of Public Opinion. (And potentially more chalk talks)

Lazarsfeld, Paul and Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet. 1944. *The People’s Choice: How the Voter Makes Up His Mind in a Presidential Campaign*. (ch. 1, 7-11, 16) pp. 1-9, 65-104, 150-8.

Carmines, Edward and James Stimson. 1986. “On the Structure and Sequence of Issue Evolution.” *American Political Science Review* 80(3): 901-20.

Iyengar, Shanto and Donald Kinder. 1987. *News That Matters*. (chs. 1-3, 7) pp. 1-33, 63-72.

Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion* (ch. 2-3, 6, 8-10) pp. 6-52, 97-117, 151-258.

* Lenz, Gabriel S. 2012. *Follow the Leader?: How Voters Respond to Politicians’ Policies and Performance*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press., ch. 1-3.

Recommended:

Hillygus, D. Sunshine, and Todd G Shields. 2008. *The Persuadable Voter: Wedge Issues in Presidential Campaigns*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Adams, Greg. 1997. “Abortion: Evidence of an Issue Evolution.” *American Journal of Political Science* 41(3): 718–37.

Broockman, David E. 2016. “Approaches to Studying Policy Representation.” *Legislative Studies*

Quarterly 41(1): 181–215.

November 16: Optional final paper partial draft due.

November 21 – No class (Thanksgiving break)

November 28 – How Does Public Opinion Affect Policy-Making?

Miller, Warren and Donald Stokes. 1963. “Constituency Influence in Congress.” *American Political Science Review* 57: 45-56.

Jacobs, Lawrence and Robert Shapiro. 1994. “Issues, Candidate Image, and Priming: The Use of Private Polls in Kennedy’s 1960 Presidential Campaign.” *American Political Science Review* 88(3): 527-40.

Stimson, James, Michael MacKuen & Robert Erikson. 1995. “Dynamic Representation.” *American Political Science Review* 89:543-65.

* Gilens, Martin, and Benjamin I Page. 2014. “Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens.” *Perspectives on Politics* 12(3): 564–81.²

* Ahler, Douglas J, and David E Broockman. 2018. “The Delegate Paradox: Why Polarized Politicians Can Represent Citizens Best.” *Journal of Politics* 80(4): 000–000.

Recommended:

Broockman, David E, and Christopher Skovron. 2018. “Bias in Perceptions of Public Opinion Among Political Elites.” *American Political Science Review* 112(3): 542–63.

December 5 – Comparative Public Opinion: The Importance of Context

Converse, Philip. 1969. “Of Time and Partisan Stability.” *Comp. Pol. Studies* 2: 139-71.

Huber, John, Georgia Kernell, and Eduardo Leoni. 2005. “Institutional Context, Cognitive Resources, and Party Attachments across Democracies.” *Political Analysis* 13: 365-86.

Powell, G. Bingham and Guy Whitten. 1993. “A Cross-National Analysis of Economic Voting: Taking Account of the Political Context.” *AJPS* 37(2): 391-414.

* Kedar, Orit. 2005. “When Moderate Voters Prefer Extreme Parties: Policy Balancing in Parliamentary Elections.” *American Political Science Review* 99(2): 185-99.

² I also recommend the ensuing debate. For some leads, see Dylan Matthews. 2016. “Remember That Study Saying America is an Oligarchy? 3 Rebuttals Say It’s Wrong.” Available on Vox.com.

* Jensen, Carsten, and Michael Bang Petersen. 2016. "The Deservingness Heuristic and the Politics of Health Care." *American Journal of Political Science*. Forthcoming.

December 11, 6pm (tentative): End of Semester Reading Club

Location: Prof. Ryan's house; dinner to be served.

Reading TBD (Nominations welcome)

Supplemental Topic: Polarization

Fiorina, Morris. 2005. *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*. 3rd edition. (focus on chs. 1-4, 8-10).

Iyengar, Shanto, Gaurav Sood, and Yphtach Lelkes. 2012. "Affect, Not Ideology: a Social Identity Perspective on Polarization." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 76(3): 405–31.

Mason, Lilliana. 2014. "I Disrespectfully Agree': the Differential Effects of Partisan Sorting on Social and Issue Polarization." *American Journal of Political Science* 59(1): 128–45.

Abramowitz, Alan I. 2011. *The Disappearing Center: Engaged Citizens, Polarization, and American Democracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Ryan, Timothy J. 2017. "No Compromise: Political Consequences of Moralized Attitudes." *American Journal of Political Science* 61(2): 409–23.