

PLAP 227
Public Opinion and Political Behavior
Spring 2007

Mon & Wed 10:00–10:50am
Ruffner G004A

Course web page:
https://toolkit.itc.virginia.edu/2007_Spring_PLAP227-3

Professor Nicholas Winter
nwinter@virginia.edu
<http://faculty.virginia.edu/nwinter>
100 Cabell Hall
office hours: Wednesday 3:00-4:30pm

Teaching Assistants

Cindy Boyles
crb7d@virginia.edu
office hours:
M 11-12 @ AFC cafe
& by appt.

Nathan Jones
njones@virginia.edu
office hours:
Wed 11-12 @ Alderman Cafe
& by appt.

This course will examine public opinion and assess its place in the American political system. The course will emphasize both how citizens' thinking about politics is shaped and the role of public opinion in political campaigns, elections, and government. While the course will focus on research on the current state of public opinion, throughout the course we will also discuss historical developments in opinion and its place in politics, including changes that arose with the development of polling and with the advent of television and other electronic media. We will also consider normative questions, including the role opinion *should* play in American democracy.

Course Requirements

Requirements for this course include attendance and participation in *section*, an in-class *midterm examination*, two *papers*, and a comprehensive *final examination*, during the allotted final exam time slot for this class. Your TA may assign additional short writing assignments, quizzes, and the like, as part of your section participation grade.

The first paper will be a short critique of a media poll; the second will be a longer paper applying course material to the political movies in the course.

Grades will be based on the following breakdown:

Item	Points	Date
Section participation	15 percent	
First Paper	15 percent	February 19, at the beginning of lecture
Midterm exam	15 percent	March 19, in class
Second Paper	30 percent	April 30, at the beginning of lecture
Final exam	25 percent	Saturday, May 5, 9am–noon, Ruffner G004A

Readings

There are five required books for this course, which are available at the UVa Bookstore. They are also all available from the usual online retailers.

Asher, Herbert. 2004. *Polling and the Public* (6th ed.). Washington: CQ Press.

[*Note:* the fifth edition of this book (2001) is also fine and is plentiful on the internet.]

Iyengar, Shanto and Donald R. Kinder. 1987. *News that Matters: Television and American Opinion*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lippmann, Walter. 1922/1997. *Public Opinion*. New York: Free Press.

Luker, Kristin. 1984. *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Patterson, Thomas E. 1994. *Out of Order*. New York: Random House.

All other readings for the course are available through the Toolkit page for the course.

Sections

The section meetings will provide an opportunity for you to clarify material from the course, discuss the lectures, readings, and current events. Your TA may also assign periodic brief written work in or out of section.

Attendance at your weekly section meeting is required. This requirement is reflected, in part, in the 15% of your grade that comes from attendance and active participation in section. *In addition, note that consistent section attendance is a requirement of this course, without which you will not receive a passing grade.*

Section meeting times:

1	W	1200-1250	CAB B029
2	W	1300-1350	CAB 234
3	R	1600-1650	CAB 139
4	R	1800-1850	CAB 119
5	R	1900-1950	CAB 216
6	W	1400-1450	CAB 134

Other Policies

We respect and uphold University policies and regulations pertaining to the observation of religious holidays; assistance available to the physically handicapped, visually, and/or hearing impaired students; plagiarism; racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, or religious discrimination; and all forms of harassment.

If you have (or suspect you have) a learning or other disability that requires academic accommodations, you must contact the Learning Needs and Evaluation Center (<http://www.virginia.edu/studenthealth/lneec.html>) as soon as possible, at least two to three weeks before any assignments are due. We take learning disabilities very seriously and we will make whatever accommodations you need to be successful in this class but they must be properly documented by the LNEC.

Plagiarism, or academic theft, is passing off someone else's words or ideas as your own without giving proper credit to the source. You are responsible for not plagiarizing and are expected to abide by the University of Virginia Honor Code (see <http://www.virginia.edu/honor/proc/fraud.html>).

Participation in this class implies permission from students to submit their written work to services that check for plagiarism; you may be required to submit both hard and digital copies of your papers.

Papers turned in late without prior arrangement with your TA will not be considered for a grade.

Course Schedule and Outline

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

January 17: Welcome

January 22: Why study public opinion?

V.O. Key. 1961. *Public Opinion and American Democracy*, chapter 1 (3-17).

II. MEANING AND MEASUREMENT

January 24: What is “Public”; what is “opinion”?

Bryce, James. 1916. “The Nature of Public Opinion.” Reprinted in Berelson & Janowitz, *Reader in Public Opinion and Communication* (2d ed), 13-19

Lowell, A. Lawrence. 1900. “Public Opinion.” Reprinted in Berelson & Janowitz, *Reader in Public Opinion and Communication* (2d ed), 20-26.

Lippmann, Walter. 1922/1997. *Public Opinion*, chapter 1 (3-20).

Converse, Philip E. 1987. “Changing Conceptions of Public Opinion in the Political Process.” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 51(Supplement): 12-24.

January 29 & 31: Measurement and analysis

Herbst, Susan. 1993. *Numbered Voices*, chapter 3 (43-68).

Hochschild, Jennifer. 1981. *What’s Fair*, 17-26.

Asher, Herbert. 2001. *Polling and the Public* (6th ed.), chapters 4-5 (69-103) [5th edition: 62-94]
For more on the mechanics of polling, you may want to skim other chapters that interest you.

Mueller, John E. 1994. *Policy and Opinion in the Gulf War*, chapter 1 (1-11).

III. DEMOCRATIC COMPETENCE

February 5: The public’s political information and sophistication

Lippmann, Walter (1922/1997). *Public Opinion*, chapters 3-5 (30-49).

Delli Carpini, Michael X. and Scott Keeter. 1996. *What Americans Know About Politics and Why It Matters*, chapter 4 (135-177).

February 7: Political Tolerance

Mueller, John. 1988. “Trends in Political Tolerance.” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 52(1):1-25.

Chong, Dennis. 1993. “How People Think, Reason, and Feel about Rights and Liberties”
American Journal of Political Science 37(3):867-899

February 12: Ideology and the organization of opinion

Kinder, Donald R. 1983. “Diversity and Complexity in American Public Opinion.” In Finifter, Ada W. (ed.) *Political Science: State of the Discipline*, 391-401.

Lane, Robert E. 1962. *Political Ideology*, chapter 22 (346-363).

Hochschild, Jennifer L. 1993. “Disjunction and Ambivalence in Citizens’ Political Outlooks.” In *Reconsidering the Democratic Public*, ed. George E. Marcus and Russell L. Hanson, 187-210.

IV. INDIVIDUAL OPINION

February 14: Self interest

Citrin, Jack and Donald P. Green. 1990. "The Self-Interest Motive in American Public Opinion." In *Research in Micropolitics: A Research Annual*, ed. Samuel Long. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1-28.

Sears, David O., Richard R. Lau, Tom R. Tyler, & Harris M. Allen, Jr. 1980. "Self-Interest vs. Symbolic Politics in Policy Attitudes and Presidential Voting" *The American Political Science Review* 74(3): 670-684.

February 19 & 21: In-Class Movie

Magic Town (abridged)

The first paper is due at the beginning of lecture on February 19.

February 26: Groups I—Theory and gender

Conover, Pamela Johnston. 1984. "The Influence of Group Identifications on Political Perception and Evaluation." *The Journal of Politics* 46(3): 760-785.

February 28: Groups II—Race

Kinder, Donald R. and Lynn Sanders. 1996. *Divided by Color: Racial Politics and Democratic Ideals*, chapter 5 (92-127).

Dawson, Michael. 1994. *Behind the Mule: Race and Class in African American Politics*, chapter 3 (45-63).

March 5 & 7: No class (spring break)
March 12: Core values

Feldman, Stanley and John Zaller. 1992. "The Political Culture of Ambivalence: Ideological Responses to the Welfare State." *American Journal of Political Science* 36(1): 268-307.

Luker, Kristin. 1984. *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood*, chapters 7-8 (158-215).

March 14: Emotion

Brader, Ted. 2005. "Striking a Responsive Chord: How Political Ads Motivate and Persuade Voters by Appealing to Emotions." *American Journal of Political Science* 49(2):388-405.

Huddy, Leonie, Stanley Feldman, Charles Taber, and Gallya Lahav. 2005. "Threat, Anxiety, and Support of Antiterrorism Policies." *American Journal of Political Science* 49(3):593-608.

March 19: Midterm examination in class

V. PROCESSES OF OPINION FORMATION

March 21 & 26: A theory of opinion formation

Zaller, John. 1994. "Elite Leadership of Mass Opinion: New Evidence from the Gulf War," In *Taken by Storm: The Media, Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy in the Gulf War*, ed. Lance Bennett and David Paletz, chapter 9 (186-209).

March 28 & April 2: Discourse and social context

Gamson, William A. 1992. *Talking Politics*, chapter 7 (117-134).

Krysan, Maria. 1998. "Privacy and the Expression of White Racial Attitudes: a Comparison Across Three Contexts." *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 62(4):506-44.

Todorov, Alexander and Anesu N. Mandisodza. 2004. "Public Opinion on Foreign Policy: The Multilateral Public That Perceives Itself As Unilateral." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 68(3):323-48.

April 4 & 9: The media and framing

Iyengar, Shanto and Donald R. Kinder. 1987. *News that Matters: Television and American Opinion*, chapters 1-3, 7 & 11 (1-33, 63-72 & 98-111).

Nelson, Thomas E., and Donald R. Kinder. 1996. "Issue Frames and Group-Centrism in American Public Opinion." *The Journal of Politics* 58(4):1055-78.

Philip H. Pollock III. 1994. "Issues, Values, and Critical Moments: Did 'Magic' Johnson Transform Public Opinion on AIDS?" *American Journal of Political Science* 38(2):426-446.

VI. PUBLIC OPINION AND POLITICS**April 11: Political campaigns I: In-Class movie**

"Journeys with George"

(You will finish the movie in section.)

Patterson, Thomas. 1994. *Out of Order*, chapters 2-3 (53-133).

April 16: Political campaigns II

Mendelberg, Tali. 2001. *The Race Card: Campaign Strategy, Implicit Messages, and the Norm of Equality*. Chapter 3 (67-107).

April 18 & 23: Collective opinion and representation

Page, Benjamin I. and Robert Y. Shapiro. 1993. "The Rational Public and Democracy." In *Reconsidering the Democratic Public*, ed. George E. Marcus and Russell L. Hanson, 35-64.

Bartels, Larry M. 1996. "Uninformed Votes: Information Effects in Presidential Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 40(1):194-230.

April 25: Governing—Opinion and foreign policy

Mueller, John E. 1971. "Trends in Popular Support for the Wars in Korea and Vietnam." *The American Political Science Review* 65(2):358-75.

VII. CONCLUSIONS**April 30: Public opinion and American democracy**

Ginsberg, Benjamin. 1986. *The Captive Public*, chapter 3 (59-85).

Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*, epilogue (310-332).

The second paper is due at the beginning of lecture on April 30

May 5: Final Examination (9:00am–noon) in Ruffner G004A