

# PLAP 227: Public Opinion and Political Behavior Spring 2008

Mon & Wed 10:00–10:50am  
Gilmer 190

Course web page:

[https://toolkit.its.virginia.edu/cgi-local/tk/UVa\\_CLAS\\_2008\\_Spring\\_PLAP227-1](https://toolkit.its.virginia.edu/cgi-local/tk/UVa_CLAS_2008_Spring_PLAP227-1)

## Professor Nicholas Winter

[nwinter@virginia.edu](mailto:nwinter@virginia.edu)

<http://faculty.virginia.edu/nwinter>

100 Cabell Hall

office hours:

Wednesday 2:45-4:15pm & by appointment

## Teaching Assistants

Emily Charnock

[ejcharnock@virginia.edu](mailto:ejcharnock@virginia.edu)

office hours:

Monday 11-12

at Starbucks on Corner

& by appt.

Drew Kurlowski

[drewk@virginia.edu](mailto:drewk@virginia.edu)

office hours:

Wednesday 11-12

at Starbucks on Corner

& 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 assignments for the papers will be posted to Toolkit and announced in lecture.

Grades will be based on the following breakdown:

Item	Points	Date
Section participation	15 percent	—
First Paper	15 percent	February 20, at the beginning of lecture
Midterm exam	15 percent	March 19, in class
Second Paper	30 percent	April 28, at the beginning of lecture
Final exam	25 percent	Friday, May 2, 9am-noon

## 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.

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 215
2	W	1300-1350	CAB 323
3	R	1600-1650	CAB 319
4	R	1800-1850	CAB 222
5	R	1900-1950	CAB B029
6	W	1500-1550	CAB 224

Sections will not meet the first week; they will meet for the first time the week of January 21.

## 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/lne.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 16: Introduction: Why study public opinion?

1/15:MH

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

#### January 21: No Lecture (MLK Day)

1/19:NV|SCr

1/26:SCd

### II. MEANING AND MEASUREMENT

#### January 23: What is “public”? What is “opinion”?

##### Is “public opinion” the intersection of the two?

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 28 & 30: Measurement and analysis

1/29:FLr|FLd

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

2/1:MEr

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.*

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

Press, Andrea L., and Elizabeth R. Cole. 1999. *Speaking of Abortion: Television and Authority in the Lives of Women*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 147-156.

### III. DEMOCRATIC COMPETENCE

#### February 4: 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).

2/5:Super-Duper-

Tuesday

#### February 6: 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

2/9:KSr|LA|WA|NBd|VId

2/10:MEd

#### February 11: 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.

Press, Andrea L., and Elizabeth R. Cole. 1999. *Speaking of Abortion: Television and Authority in the Lives of Women*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, chapter 1 (1-24).

**February 12: Virginia Primary (plus Maryland and DC)****IV. INDIVIDUAL OPINION****February 13: 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.

2/16:GUr

**February 18: 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.

Ladd, Everett C. 1997. "Media Framing of the Gender Gap." In *Women, Media, and Politics*, ed. Pippa Norris. New York: Oxford University Press, 113-28.

2/19:HIId | WI

**February 20: In-Class Movie**

*Magic Town* (abridged)  
(You will finish the movie in section.)

*The first paper is due at the beginning of lecture on February 20.*

**February 25: 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).

**February 27: 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).

3/1:ASr

**March 3 & 5: No class (spring break)**

3/4:OH | RI | TX | VT

3/8:WYd

**March 10: Emotion**

3/10:ASd

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.

## V. OPINION IN POLITICAL CONTEXT

### March 12 & 17: A theory of opinion formation

3/11:MS

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 19: Midterm examination in class

### March 24: The media

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).

### March 26: Framing

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.

Druckman, James N. 2001. "The Implications of Framing Effects for Citizen Competence." *Political Behavior* 23(3):225-56

### March 31 & April 2: Political campaigns

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

Freedman, Paul, Michael Franz, and Kenneth Goldstein. 2004. "Campaign Advertising and Democratic Citizenship." *American Journal of Political Science* 48(4):723-41.

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

4/5:VIr

### April 7 & 9: In-Class Movie: Campaigns in practices

"Journeys with George"

### April 14: Collective opinion

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 16: What happened to political discourse?

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

Price, Vincent, Lilach Nir, and Joseph N. Cappella. 2005. "Framing Public Discussion of Gay Civil Unions." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 69(2):179-212.

**April 21: Representation: Does opinion affect policy?**

Page, Benjamin I., and Robert Y. Shapiro. 1983. "Effects of Public Opinion on Policy." *The American Political Science Review* 77(1):175-90.

Zaller, John. 2003. "Coming to Grips With V.O. Key's Concept of Latent Opinion." In *Electoral Democracy*, ed. Michael MacKuen and George Rabinowitz. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 311-36.

**April 23: Does policy affect opinion?**

4/22:PA

Soss, Joe, and Sanford F. Schramm. 2007. "A Public Transformed? Welfare Reform As Policy Feedback." *American Political Science Review* 101(1):111-27.

**VII. CONCLUSIONS****April 28: 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 28*

**Friday, May 2: Final Examination (9:00am–noon)**

5/3:GUd  
 5/6:IN|NC  
 5/13:NBr|WVd  
 5/17:HIr  
 5/20:KY|OR  
 5/27:IDr  
 6/3:NMr|MTd|SD  
 6/7:PRd