

PLAP 227: Public Opinion and Political Behavior Spring 2009

Mon & Wed 10:00–10:50am
Gilmer 190

Course web page:
<https://collab.itc.virginia.edu/>

Professor Nicholas Winter
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<http://faculty.virginia.edu/nwinter>
100 Cabell Hall
office hours:
Wednesday 2:30-4:00pm & by appointment

Teaching Assistants

Kathleen Doherty
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office hours:
Wednesday 11:00-12:00
in Alderman Cafe

Drew Kurlowski
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office hours:
Monday 11:00-12:30
at The Virginian
(appt. required)

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*, submission of weekly *identification items*, 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 Collab and announced in lecture.

Grades will be based on the following breakdown:

Item	Points	Date
Section participation	15 percent	—
Weekly IDs	5 percent	—
First Paper	15 percent	February 25, at the beginning of lecture
Midterm exam	15 percent	March 16, in class
Second Paper	25 percent	April 27, at the beginning of lecture
Final exam	25 percent	Thursday, May 7, 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. 2007. *Polling and the Public* (7th ed.). Washington: CQ Press. (*The sixth edition is also fine.*)

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

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

All other readings for the course are available through the Collab 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.

Each week you will be required to submit an identification item (a term or concept) from the week's reading or lectures, along with a short paragraph defining the item. The midterm and final exams will include a section of identification items, drawn from among those you have submitted during the term. You will turn in your IDs via Collab; your TAs will discuss the details of expectations, weekly due dates, and submission procedures. (You will be allowed to miss one week with no penalty.)

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:

W	1200-1250	CAB 236
W	1300-1350	CAB 236
R	1600-1650	CAB 323
R	1800-1850	CAB 424
R	1900-1950	CAB 132
W	1100-1150	CAB 337

Sections will not meet the first week; they will meet for the first time the week of January 19.

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/lhec.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 13: Introduction to the course

II. MEANING AND MEASUREMENT

January 14: What is “public”? What is “opinion”?

Is “public opinion” the intersection of the two?

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

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 19: No Lecture (MLK Day)

January 21 & 26: Measurement and analysis

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

Asher, Herbert. 2007. *Polling and the Public* (7th ed.), chapters 4-5 (78-118)

For more on the mechanics of polling, you may want to skim other chapters that interest you.

III. DEMOCRATIC COMPETENCE

January 28: The public’s political information and sophistication

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

“Dunce Cap Nation.” *Newsweek*. September 4, 2007. <http://www.newsweek.com/id/39529>

February 2: 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 4: 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.

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).

IV. INDIVIDUAL OPINION

February 9: 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.

Bartels, Larry M. 2004. “Unenlightened Self-Interest: The Strange Appeal of the Estate Tax Repeal.” *The American Prospect* 15(6):A17-A19.

February 11: Groups I—gender

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.

Fahey, Anna C. 2007. "French and Feminine: Hegemonic Masculinity and the Emasculation of John Kerry in the 2004 Presidential Race." *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 24(2):132-50.

February 16: Groups II—race

Kinder, Donald R., and Lynn M. Sanders. 1996. *Divided by Color: Racial Politics and Democratic Ideals*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, chapter 2 (12-34).

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

Junn, Jane, and Natalie Masuoka. 2008. "Asian American Identity: Shared Racial Status and Political Context." *Perspectives on Politics* 6(4):729-40.

February 18: Core values

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

February 23: 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.

February 25: 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 25.

March 2 & 4: No class (spring break)**V. OPINION IN POLITICAL CONTEXT****March 9 & 11: 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 16: Midterm examination in class**March 18: The media**

Iyengar, Shanto, Mark D. Peters, and Donald R. Kinder. 2004. "Experimental Demonstrations of the 'Not-So-Minimal' Consequences of Television News Programs." In *Political Psychology: Key Readings*, ed. John T. Jost, and Jim Sidanius. New York: Psychology Press, 139-49.

Mayer, Jane. 2007 (February 19). "Whatever It Takes: The Politics of the Man Behind '24.'" *The New Yorker* 83(1). http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2007/02/19/070219fa_fact_mayer

March 23: Framing

- 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 25: Implicit and Explicit Attitudes

- Nisbett, Richard E., and Timothy D. Wilson. 1977. "Telling More Than We Can Know: Verbal Reports on Mental Processes." *Psychological Review* 84(3):231-59.
- Gladwell, Malcolm. 2005. "The Warren Harding Error: Why We Fall For Tall, Dark, and Handsome Men." In *Blink: the Power of Thinking Without Thinking*. New York: Little, Brown, Chapter 3 (72-98).

March 30 & April 1: Political campaigns

- 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).
- Zaller, John R. 2001. "Monica Lewinsky and the Mainsprings of American Politics." In *Mediated Politics: Communication in the Future of Democracy*, ed. W. L. Bennett, and Robert M. Entman. New York: Cambridge University Press, 252-78.

April 6: Guest Speaker

Reading TBA.

April 8 & 13: In-Class Movie: Campaigns in practice

"Journeys with George"

April 15: 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. 2008. "The Irrational Electorate." *Wilson Quarterly* 32(4):44-50.

April 20: 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 22: 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.

VII. CONCLUSIONS**April 27: 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 27

Thursday, May 7: Final Examination (9:00am–noon)