

PLAP 3270: Public Opinion and Political Behavior
Fall 2019

Monday & Wednesday

10:00–10:50am

Nau Hall 101

Professor Nicholas Winter

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

S385 Gibson Hall

office hours:

Wednesday 12pm–1:30pm

& by appointment

Teaching Assistants

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

This course examines public opinion and assesses its place in the American political system. It emphasizes 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 new media. We will also consider normative questions, including the role opinion *should* play in American democracy.

Latest syllabus is always available on Collab.

Changelog:

v. 19.0.0	8/27/2019	initial release
v. 19.0.1	9/2/2019	added dates for September 4-18 readings
v. 19.1.0	9/30/2019	adjusted for 9/30 lecture on research instruments
v. 19.2.0	10/16/2019	updated schedule
v. 19.3.0	10/30/2019	added back November 6 lecture that was accidentally omitted
v. 19.4.0	11/25/2019	removed nonexistent 12/9 lecture

Course Requirements

Requirements for this course include:

- attendance and participation in *section*,
- a *midterm* exam,
- a comprehensive *final* exam, and
- a public opinion *research project* that includes
 - a written proposal,
 - a research instrument,
 - a summary of preliminary findings, and
 - a final research paper.

Grades will be based on the following breakdown:

Item	Percentage
Section participation	15 percent
Midterm exam	15 percent
Comprehensive final exam	20 percent
Research project	50 percent
Proposal	5 percent
Research instrument	10 percent
Summary of preliminary findings	10 percent
Final research paper	25 percent

You must turn in each component of the research proposal in order to pass the course. Assignments turned in late *without prior arrangement with your TA* will be given a zero, though you will receive feedback that you can use as you complete the following components. If you have an extraordinary situation, contact your TA to discuss it as far in advance as possible.

Readings

There are two required books for this course:

Berinsky, Adam J. (editor). 2016. *New Directions in Public Opinion*. Second Edition. New York: Routledge. ISBN-13: 978-1138774667 (This book is referred to as “Reader” in the syllabus.)

Cramer, Katherine J. 2016. *The Politics of Resentment: Rural Consciousness in Wisconsin and the Rise of Scott Walker*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. ISBN-13: 978-0226349114

The books should be available from the UVa bookstore and the usual online sources. All other readings for the course are available through Collab and/or links on the syllabus. Each TA may assign additional required readings over the course of the term.

Sections

The section meetings will provide an opportunity for you to clarify material from the course, discuss the lectures, readings, and current events, and work on your research project. Your TA will 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, and the additional 50% from the research project. If you are deathly ill, we and your fellow students prefer that you *not* attend; otherwise you are expected to be there. If you do miss a section, you are responsible for all the material covered and the research project work that you missed.

Sections *will* meet the first week.

Exams

The midterm and final will both be multiple choice exams designed to test your attention to lecture and readings. They are closed-book and timed. They will be administered via Collab during a window as noted below. The final will be comprehensive. Last year's midterm will be posted to Collab so you have some sense of what to expect.

Other Policies

We respect and uphold University policies and regulations pertaining to the observation of religious holidays; assistance available to students with physical, visual, hearing, and other disabilities or impairments; 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 Student Disability Access Center (<https://www.studenthealth.virginia.edu/sdac>) as soon as possible, and at least two to three weeks before any assignments are due. We take learning differences very seriously and we will make whatever accommodations you need to be successful in this class. However, they must be properly documented by the SDAC and we must have enough notice to make appropriate arrangements.

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 <https://honor.virginia.edu/academic-fraud>). Note that we employ plagiarism detection software to help ensure the integrity of the course.

In addition, I have posted some information on nonacademic support for UVA students here: <http://faculty.virginia.edu/nwinter/syllabusAddendum.pdf>.

Laptops in Lecture

A growing body of research is demonstrating that multitasking decreases comprehension and performance, that being able to see multitasking degrades *other* students' performance, and that taking notes by hand increases comprehension and performance. Therefore, the use of laptops and other electronic devices is *strongly discouraged* during lecture.

However, I am aware that some students have a learning or other disability that precludes you from taking notes effectively by hand, and others simply prefer to use an electronic device. Therefore, I will designate a "laptop-optional" section of the lecture hall. Laptops and other electronic devices will be allowed *only* in this section of the lecture hall. It is expected that electronic devices will be used only for taking notes during lecture—please don't distract yourself or those behind you by multi-taking.

Section rules on the use of laptops and other electronic devices is at the discretion of your TA.

Lecture Schedule and Outline

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

August 28: Welcome and introduction to the course

Berinsky, Adam. "Introduction." *Reader*

Strauss, Valerie. 2014 "Why a leading professor of new media just banned technology use in class." *The Washington Post*. September 25. [Available online](#).

Optional, for your information:

Sana, Faria, Tina Weston, and Nicholas J. Cepeda. 2013. "Laptop Multitasking Hinders Classroom Learning for Both Users and Nearby Peers." *Computers & Education* 62:24-31.
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0360131512002254>

Mueller, Pam A., and Daniel M. Oppenheimer. 2014. "The Pen Is Mightier Than the Keyboard." *Psychological Science* 25 (6):1159-68.
<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0956797614524581>

II. MEANING AND MEASUREMENT OF OPINION

September 2: What is public opinion?

Herbst, Susan. "The History and Meaning of Public Opinion." *Reader*, chapter 1.

Cramer, Katherine J. *The Politics of Resentment*, chapter 1 ("Making Sense of Politics through Resentment.")

September 4 – 18: Conceptualization, measurement, and analysis of public opinion

September 4: Survey Research:

Hillygus, D. Sunshine. "The Practice of Survey Research: Changes and Challenges." *Reader*, chapter 2.

Asher, *Polling and the Public*, chapters 3 and 8 ("Wording and Context of Questions" and "Analyzing and Interpreting Polls").

September 9: In-depth Interviewing:

Cramer, Katherine J. *The Politics of Resentment*, chapter 2 ("A Method of Listening"), Appendix B ("Descriptions of Groups") and Appendix C ("Questions Used").

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

Lane, Robert Edwards. 1962. *Political Ideology: Why the American Common Man Believes What He Does*. New York: Free Press. Introduction and Appendix A (1-11 & 481-493)

Chong, Dennis. 1993. "How People Think, Reason, and Feel about Rights and Liberties" *American Journal of Political Science* 37(3):867-899. (Skim this now, focusing on the method; we will see it again in the tolerance unit.)

September 11: Focus Groups:

- Gamson, William A. 1992. *Talking Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, chapter 2 & Appendix A.
- Delli Carpini, Michael X, and Bruce Williams. 1994. "The Method Is the Message: Focus Groups as a Method of Social, Psychological, and Political Inquiry." *Research in micropolitics* 4:57-85.
- Kitzinger, Jenny. 1994. "The Methodology of Focus Groups: The Importance of Interaction between Research Participants." *Sociology of Health & Illness* 16 (1):103-21.
- 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) & Appendix A. (Focus on the method (focus groups); we will see it again in the ideology unit.)

September 16: Experiments:

- Gross, Kimberly, and Julie Wronski. 2019. "Helping the Homeless: The Role of Empathy, Race and Deservingness in Motivating Policy Support and Charitable Giving." *Political Behavior* (forthcoming). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-019-09562-9>. (Skim this, focusing on the method.)
- Nownes, Anthony J. 2019. "Can Celebrities Set the Agenda?" *Political Research Quarterly* (forthcoming). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912919869530>. (Skim this, focusing on the method.)

September 18: Content Analysis:

- Prasad, B. Devi. 2008. "Content Analysis: A Method for Social Science Research." In *Research Methods for Social Work*, ed. D. K. Lal Das and V. Bhaskaran. New Delhi: Rawat, 173-93.
- Gilens, Martin. 1996. "Race and Poverty in America: Public Misperceptions and the American News Media." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 60 (4):515-41. (Focus on the method (content analysis); we will see it again in the media unit.)

The following are optional, but very useful if you are considering a content analysis for your project:

- Lee, Jayeon, and Young-shin Lim. 2016. "Gendered Campaign Tweets: The Cases of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump." *Public Relations Review* 42 (5):849-55.
- Tankard, James W., Jr. 2001. "The Empirical Approach to the Study of Media Framing." In *Framing Public Life: Perspectives on Media and Our Understanding of the Social World*, ed. Stephen D. Reese, Oscar H. Gandy and August E. Grant. Mahwah, N.J. : Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 95-105.
- Gamson, William A., and Andre Modigliani. 1989. "Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power: A Constructionist Approach." *American Journal Of Sociology* 95 (1):1-37.

III. DEMOCRATIC COMPETENCE

September 23 & 25: Information, misinformation, and the public's sophistication

- Gilens, Martin. "Two-Thirds Full? Citizen Competence and Democratic Governance." *Reader*, chapter 3.
- Guess, Andrew, Brendan Nyhan, and Jason Reifler. 2017. "You're Fake News!" Findings from The Poynter Media Trust Survey." St. Petersburg, FL: The Poynter Institute for Media Studies.
- Pasek, Josh, Gaurav Sood, and Jon A. Krosnick. 2015. "Misinformed About the Affordable Care Act? Leveraging Certainty to Assess the Prevalence of Misperceptions." *Journal of Communication* 65 (4):660-73. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/jcom.12165>

September 30: Everything you ever wanted to know about research instruments

October 2: Acceptance of democratic norms: the case of political tolerance

- Chong, Dennis. 1993. "How People Think, Reason, and Feel about Rights and Liberties" *American Journal of Political Science* 37(3):867-899. (We read this before...take another look, this time focusing on his findings about political tolerance.)
- Wright, Robert. 2011. "Opinionator: First Comes Fear." <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/01/11/before-hatred-comes-fear/>

October 7: Fall Break (no class)

October 9: Ideology and the organization of opinion

- Federico, Christopher M. "Ideology and Public Opinion." *Reader*, chapter 4.
- Cramer, Katherine J. *The Politics of Resentment*, chapter 3 ("The Contours of Rural Consciousness"). (You should focus on several things in this chapter: (1) Cramer's method; (2) her understanding of rural consciousness; and (3) the ways rural consciousness might serve as a political "ideology," or a lens for understanding politics more generally.)
- 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). (We read this before...take another look, this time focusing on their findings about political reasoning.)

IV. ROOTS OF INDIVIDUAL OPINIONS

October 16: The political unconscious: implicit and explicit attitudes

- Wilson, Timothy D. 2002. *Strangers to Ourselves: Discovering the Adaptive Unconscious*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Chapter 6 (117-135).
- Mo, Cecilia Hyunjung. 2015. "The Consequences of Explicit and Implicit Gender Attitudes and Candidate Quality in the Calculations of Voters." *Political Behavior* 37(2): 357-95.
- . 2018. "Correction to: The Consequences of Explicit and Implicit Gender Attitudes and Candidate Quality in the Calculations of Voters." *Political Behavior* 40(4): 1073-74.
- Berinsky, Adam J, Vincent L Hutchings, Tali Mendelberg, Lee Shaker, and Nicholas A Valentino. 2011. "Sex and Race: Are Black Candidates More Likely to Be Disadvantaged by Sex Scandals?" *Political Behavior* 33 (2):179-202.

October 21: What is in it for me? Self-interest and (versus?) values

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

Cramer, Katherine J. *The Politics of Resentment*, chapter 4 ("The Context of Rural Consciousness").

October 23: No lecture—midterm exam on Collab

The midterm is a timed, closed-book, multiple-choice exam. You will have 50 minutes to complete the exam in one sitting on Collab. **You may take the exam at the time of your choosing between Monday, October 21 at 11am and Wednesday, October 23 at 4pm.** We will not hold lecture on October 23.

The exam will cover all reading and lectures through October 16 (Political unconscious).

If you are entitled to extended time on assessments you will have access to a version of the exam that allows 1.5x or 2x time, as appropriate.

Sections will not meet this week (on October 23, 24, and 25).

October 28: Political parties, partisanship, & polarization

Hetherington, Marc. "Partisanship and Polarization in Contemporary Politics." *Reader*, chapter 7.

Cramer, Katherine J. *The Politics of Resentment*, chapter 5 ("Attitudes toward Public Institutions and Public Employees").

October 30 & November 4: Groups: Race, gender, "American"

Czaja, Erica, Jane Junn, and Tali Mendelberg. "Race, Ethnicity, and the Group Bases of Public Opinion." *Reader*, chapter 5.

Burns, Nancy, Ashley E. Jardina, Donald Kinder, and Molly E. Reynolds. "The Politics of Gender." *Reader*, chapter 6.

Barreto, Matt A. and Christopher S. Parker. "Public Opinion and Reactionary Movements: From the Klan to the Tea Party." *Reader*, chapter 14.

November 6: Principles and values

Brewer, Paul R. 2003. "The Shifting Foundations of Public Opinion About Gay Rights." *Journal of Politics* 65(4):1208-20.

November 11: Emotion

Brader, Ted. "The Emotional Foundations of Democratic Citizenship." *Reader*, chapter 10.

Albertson, Bethany, and Shana Kushner Gadarian. 2016. "Anxiety over Terrorism Advantages Hillary Clinton." *Political Communication* 33 (4):681-5.

Cramer, Katherine J. *The Politics of Resentment*, chapter 6 ("Support for Small Government").

V. OPINION IN POLITICAL CONTEXT

November 13 & 18: John Zaller's theory of opinion formation and expression

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).

November 20 & 25: The media & content analysis

Baum, Matthew. "Media, Public Opinion, and Presidential Leadership." *Reader*, chapter 15.

Gilens, Martin. 1996. "Race and Poverty in America: Public Misperceptions and the American News Media." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 60 (4):515-41.

Hayes, Danny, and Jennifer L. Lawless. 2017. "The Decline of Local News and Its Effects: New Evidence from Longitudinal Data." *The Journal of Politics* 80 (1):332-6.

Cramer, Katherine J. *The Politics of Resentment*, chapter 7 ("Reactions to the Ruckus").

November 27: No lecture—Happy Thanksgiving

December 2: Framing & the formation of opinion

Winter, Nicholas J. G. 2005. "Framing Gender: Political Rhetoric, Gender Schemas, and Public Opinion on U.S. Health Care Reform." *Politics and Gender* 1(3): 453–80.

VI. CONCLUSIONS: PUBLIC OPINION IN POLITICS

December 4: The conversation between citizens and government: representation

Campbell, Andrea Louise. "Public Opinion and Public Policy." *Reader*, chapter 16.

Gilens, Martin. 2009. "Preference Gaps and Inequality in Representation." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 42(2):335-41.

Cramer, Katherine J. *The Politics of Resentment*, chapter 8 ("We Teach These Things to Each Other").

Final exam window**Friday December 13 (noon) through Monday, December 16 (5pm)**

The final, like the midterm, is a timed, closed-book, multiple-choice exam.

You will have 3 hours to complete the exam in one sitting on Collab. You may take the exam at the time of your choosing **during the 77-hour window listed above. (Note that this window includes the course's official exam slot on Monday.)**

If you are entitled to extended time on assessments you will have access to a version of the exam that allows 1.5x or 2x time, as appropriate.

The final exam is comprehensive, covering the entire semester.