

**17.266: Public Opinion  
(Gov 2359: Political Persuasion)**

Spring 2007  
Wednesday 3:00-5:00  
E51-390

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This course provides an introduction to the vast literature devoted to public opinion. In the next 14 weeks, we will survey the major theoretical approaches and empirical research about public opinion and political persuasion, bringing together works from political behavior, political communication, and political psychology (though we will only tangentially discuss political participation and voting). For the most part we will focus on American public opinion, though some of the work we will read is comparative in nature.

Each seminar will center on a critical analysis of the assigned readings for the week. Although much of our class time will be spent in group discussion, we will typically open with a brief overview and commentary on the week's readings. At the end of each seminar we will introduce the next week's readings – describing them briefly and suggesting issues for you to think about.

Students will be required to write a short essay responding to each week's readings, no longer than one single-spaced page. These essays should try to engage a number of the week's readings, by, for example, doing one or more of the following: juxtaposing and commenting on alternative explanations or approaches to a substantive topic; criticizing the methodologies used and proposing other strategies of research; criticizing the conceptualization and/or measurement of a particular construct; analyzing the implications of a set of findings; suggesting new questions or hypotheses for research; developing similarities and contrasts with arguments or research found in the readings from previous weeks. More generally, these papers should contain an argument, not a summary or description of the readings. These papers should be turned in to me no later than noon on the Tuesday before the scheduled Wednesday meeting. These essays will serve as the starting point for our discussion.

Your grade will depend on your performance on these papers (25%), your participation in class discussions (quality of participation weighted by volume of participation, another 25%), and a term paper due at the end of the term (50%). We will provide more details about this paper later in the term.

We have not ordered books for the course. We will provide links to several recommended books on the course website and Adam's homepage, but these are not required for purchase.

## **Week 1: Introduction and Overview of the Course (January 31).**

### **Preliminaries**

## **Week 2: The Meaning and Measurement of Public Opinion (February 7).**

Herbst, Susan. 1993. *Numbered Voices: How Opinion Polling Has Shaped American Politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Introduction, Chapter 3.

Key, V.O. 1961. *Public Opinion and American Democracy*. New York: Knopf. pp. 3-18.

Blumer, Herbert. 1948. "Public Opinion and Public Opinion Polling." *American Sociological Review* 13:542-554.

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

Sanders, Lynn M. 1999. "Democratic Politics and Survey Research." *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 29:248-80. (Available at <http://faculty.virginia.edu/lsanders/P29s2s5.pdf>)

Weisberg, Herb. 2005. "The 2004 Pre-Election and Exit Polls: A Total Survey Error Analysis," paper presented at the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, April 2005.

### Recommended

Tilly, Charles. 1983. "Speaking Your Mind Without Elections, Surveys, or Social Movements." *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 47:461-478.

Bryce, James. 1916. "The Nature of Public Opinion." Reprinted in *Public Opinion and Propaganda*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1954. Katz, D., Dorwin Cartwright, Samuel Eldersveld, and Alfred McClung Lee (eds.). p. 3-11.

Fishkin, James S. 1995. *The Voice of the People*. New Haven, CT.: Yale University Press.

Brehm, John. 1993. *The Phantom Respondents*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

### **Questions of Competence**

## **Week 3: Political Ignorance: Causes and Effects (February 14)**

Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper and Row. Chapters 11-13

Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 2, 3, 6.

Delli Carpini, Michael X. and Scott Keeter. 1996. *What Americans Know About Politics and Why It Matters*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Introduction and Chapter 4.

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

Lodge, Milton, Marco R. Steenbergen, and Shawn Brau. 1995. "The Responsive Voter: Campaign Information and the Dynamics of Candidate Evaluation." *American Political Science Review* 89:309-26

Hutchings, Vincent. 2001. "Political Context, Issue Salience, and Selective Attentiveness: Constituent Knowledge of the Clarence Thomas Confirmation Vote." *The Journal of Politics* 63(3):846-868.

### Recommended

James H. Kuklinski, Paul J. Quirk, Jennifer Jerit, and Robert F. Rich, 2001. "Political Environment and Citizen Competence," *American Journal of Political Science*, 45 (April 2001):410-424.

Luskin, Robert C. 1987. "Measuring Political Sophistication." *American Journal of Political Science* 31: 856-899.

Mondak, Jeffrey. 2001. "Developing Valid Knowledge Scales". *American Journal of Political Science*. 45: 224-238.

### **Week 4: The Search for Overarching Principles: Ideology and Political Reasoning (February 21)**

Campbell, Angus, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes. 1960. *The American Voter*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 10 **(SKIM!)**

Converse, Philip E. 1964. "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics," in David Apter (ed.) *Ideology and Discontent*. New York: Free Press.

Lane, Robert E. 1962. *Political Ideology: Why the Common Man Believes What He Does*. New York: Free Press. Chapters, 4, 22

Achen, Christopher H. 1975. "Mass Political Attitudes and the Survey Response." *American Political Science Review*. 69:1218-1231

Kinder, Donald R. 1983. "Diversity and Complexity in American Public Opinion." in *Political Science: The State of the Discipline*, ed. Ada Finifter. Washington, DC: APSA Press.

Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 4, 5.

Converse, Philip. 2000. "Assessing the Capacity of Mass Electorates." *Annual Review of Political Science*. 3: 331-353

### Recommended

Nie, Norman H. and Kristi Anderson. 1974. "Mass Belief Systems Revisited: Political Change and Attitude Structure." *Journal of Politics* 36: 540-91.

Nie, Norman H., Sidney Verba, and John R. Petrocik. 1979. *The Changing American Voter*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press Chapters 1-3, 6-9.

Sullivan, John L., James E. Piereson, and George E. Marcus. 1978. "Ideological Constraint in the Mass Public: A Methodological Critique and Some New Findings." *American Journal of Political Science* 22: 227-249.

## **Building From the Ground Up: Opinion Ingredients and The Micro-Foundations of Public Preferences**

### **Week 5: Material Interests (Or Symbolic Politics?) (February 28)**

Sears, David O., Richard R. Lau, Tom Tyler and A.M. Allen Jr. 1980. "Self-Interest versus Symbolic Politics in Policy Attitudes and Presidential Voting." *American Political Science Review* 74: 670-684.

Green, Donald Philip and Jonathan A. Cowden. 1992. "Who Protests: Self-Interest and White Opposition to Busing." *The Journal of Politics* 54:471-496.

Kinder, Donald and Roderick Kiewiet. 1981. "Sociotropic Politics: The American Case," *British Journal of Political Science*. 11:129-41

Kramer, Gerald. 1983. "The Ecological Fallacy Revisited: Aggregate- Versus Individual-Level Findings on Economics and Elections, and Sociotropic Voting." *American Political Science Review* 77:92-111

Green, Donald, Bradley Palmquist, and Eric Schickler. 2002. *Partisan Hearts and Minds: Political Parties and the Social Identities of Voters*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. Chapters 1, 2, 6

Franklin, Charles H. and John E. Jackson. 1983. "The Dynamics of Party Identification." *American Political Science Review*, 77(4):957-973

### Recommended

Green, Donald Philip. 1992. "The Price Elasticity of Mass Preferences." *American Political Science Review* 86: 128-148.

Markus, Gregory B. 1988. "The Impact of Personal and National Economic Conditions on the Presidential Vote: A Pooled Cross-Sectional Analysis." *American Journal of Political Science* 32: 137-54.

Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper and Row. Chapters 1-3.

Fiorina, Morris. 1981. *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

### **Week 6: Principles and Values (March 7)**

Feldman, Stanley. 1988. "Structure and Consistency in Public Opinion: The Role of Core Beliefs and Values." *American Journal of Political Science* 32: 416-440.

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

Chong, Dennis. 1993. "How People Think, Reason, and Feel about Rights and Liberties," *American Journal of Political Science*, 37:867-99.

Alvarez, R. Michael and John Brehm. 1997. "Are Americans Ambivalent Toward Racial Policies?" *American Journal of Political Science*, 41:345-75.

Layman, Geoffrey C. and Edward G. Carmines. 1997. "Cultural Conflict in American Politics: Religious Traditionalism, Postmaterialism, and U.S. Political Behavior." *The Journal of Politics* 59: 751-777.

Conover, Pamela Johnston and Stanley Feldman. 1981. "Origins and Meaning of Liberal/Conservative Self-Identifications," *American Journal of Political Science*, 617-645.

Alford, John R., Carolyn L. Funk, and John R. Hibbing. 2005. "Are Political Orientations Genetically Transmitted?" *American Political Science Review* 99:153-167.

### Recommended

McClosky, Herbert and John Zaller. 1984. *The American Ethos: Public Attitudes Toward Capitalism and Democracy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Rokeach, Milton. 1973. *The Nature of Human Values*. New York: Free Press. Ch. 1 & 6.

Feldman, Stanley. 2003. "Values, Ideology and the Structure of Political Attitudes." In David O. Sears, Leonie Huddy, and Robert Jervis (eds.) *Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*. Oxford University Press.

Inglehart, Ronald and Paul Abramson. 1994. "Economic Security and Value Change." *American Political Science Review* 88:336-354.

Jacoby, William G. 2000. "Issue Framing and Public Opinion on Government Spending." *American Journal of Political Science* 44(4):750-67.

Chong, Dennis. 1993. "How People Think, Reason, and Feel about Rights and Liberties," *American Journal of Political Science* 37:867-99.

Alvarez, R. Michael and John Brehm. 2002. *Hard Choices, Easy Answers: Values, Information, and American Public Opinion*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

McCann, James A. 1997. Electoral Choices and Core Value Change: The 1992 Presidential Campaign. *American Journal of Political Science* 41: 564-583.

Goren, Paul. 2005. Party Identification and Core Political Values. *American Journal of Political Science*. 49: 882-897.

### **Week 7: Groups in American Politics: Us and Them (March 14)**

Conover, Pamela J. 1984. "The Influence of Group Identifications on Political Perception and Evaluation." *The Journal of Politics* 46:760-784.

Converse, Philip E. 1964. "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics." In D.E. Apter (ed.), *Ideology and Discontent*. New York: The Free Press. Re-read pp. 234-238

Kinder, Donald R. 2003 "Belief Systems after Converse." in Michael MacKuen and George Rabinowitz, ed, *Electoral Democracy*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Mendelberg, Tali. 2001. *The Race Card*, Chapters 1, 6, 7.

Berinsky, Adam J. 2007. "Group Attachments and Public Support for War."

## Recommended

- Conover, Pamela J. 1988. "The Role of Social Groups in Political Thinking." *British Journal of Political Science* 18: 51-76.
- Berinsky, Adam and Tali Mendelberg. 2005. "The Indirect Effects of Discredited Stereotypes: Social and Political Traits in Judgments of Jewish Leaders," *American Journal of Political Science* 49:4 845-864.
- Sears, David O. et al. 2000. *Racialized Politics: The Debate About Racism in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Sniderman, Paul M. and Thomas Piazza. 1993. *The Scar of Race*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Kinder, Donald R. and Lynn M. Sanders. 1996. *Divided by Color: Racial Politics and Democratic Ideals*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Kinder, Donald R. and Nicholas Winter. (2001) "Exploring the Racial Divide: Blacks, Whites, and Opinion on National Policy." *American Journal of Political Science* 45:439-456.
- Greenwald, Anthony G., and Mahzarin R. Banaji. 1995. Implicit Social Cognition: Attitudes, Self-Esteem, and Stereotypes. *Psychological Review* 102: 4-27.
- Devine, Patricia G. 1989. "Stereotypes and Prejudice: Their Automatic and Controlled Components." *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology* 56: 5-18.
- Valentino, Nicholas A., Vincent L. Hutchings, and Ismail K. White. 2002. Cues that Matter: How Political Ads Prime Racial Attitudes During Campaigns. *American Political Science Review* 96: 75-90.
- Huber, Gregory A. and John S. Lapinski. 2006. The 'Race Card' Revisited: Assessing Racial Priming in Policy Contests. *American Journal of Political Science* 50: 421-440

## **Week 8: Elements of Persuasion (A Primer) (March 21)**

- Mutz, Diana, Richard A. Brody, and Paul M. Sniderman *Political Persuasion and Attitude Change*, Publisher: University of Michigan Press, 1996, Chapter 1.
- Kuklinski, James M. and Norman L. Hurley. 1996. "It's a Matter of Interpretation." In D.C. Mutz, P.M. Sniderman, and R.A. Brody, eds. *Political Persuasion and Attitude Change*, pp.125-44
- Perloff, Richard. 2002. *The Dynamics of Persuasion*. Mahwah, NJ: Laurence Erlbaum Associates. Chapter 5 (Processing Persuasive Communications), Chapter 6 (Source Factors) and Chapter 7 (Message Factors)
- Cobb and Kuklinski. 1997. "Changing Minds: Political Arguments and Political Persuasion." *American Journal of Political Science*, 41(1): 88-121.
- Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 7.
- Petrocik, John R. 1996. "Issue Ownership in Presidential Elections, with a 1980 Case Study." *American Journal of Political Science* 40 (3): 825-50.

## The World Out There: Society and Politics

### Week 9: Social Influence (April 4)

Mutz, Diana C. 1998. *Impersonal Influence: How Perceptions of Mass Collectives Affect Political Attitudes*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1, 4, 8, 9.

Berinsky, Adam J. 2004. *Silent Voices: Public Opinion and Political Representation in America*, Chapters 2 and 3.

Mutz, Diana C. 2006. *Hearing the Other Side: Deliberative Versus Participatory Democracy*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1, 5.

Beck, Paul Allen, Russell J. Dalton, Steven Greene, and Robert Huckfeldt. 2002. "The Social Calculus of Voting: Interpersonal, Media, and Organizational Influences on Presidential Choices." *American Political Science Review* 96:57-73.

#### Recommended

Noelle-Neumann, Elisabeth. 1993. *The Spiral of Silence: Public Opinion – Our Social Skin (Second Edition)*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Oliver, Eric and Tali Mendelberg. 2000. "Reconsidering the Environmental Determinants of Racial Attitudes" *American Journal of Political Science* 44: 574-589.

Huckfeldt, Robert and John Sprague. 1987. "Networks in Context: The Social Flow of Political Information." *American Political Science Review* 81: 1197-1216.

### Week 10: Framing, Priming and Media Effects (April 11)

Iyengar, Shanto and Donald Kinder. 1987. *News that Matters*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 1-3, 6-12

Miller, Joanne and Jon Krosnick. 2000. "News Media Impact on the Ingredients of Presidential Evaluations." *American Journal of Political Science* 44(2) 301-15.

Nelson, Thomas E., Rosalee A. Clausen and Zoe M. Oxley. 1997. "Media Framing of a Civil Liberties Conflict and Its Effect on Tolerance." *The American Political Science Review* 91:567-83.

Druckman, Jamie. 2001. "The Implications of Framing Effects for Citizen Competence," *Political Behavior* 23: 225-256.

Sniderman, Paul and Sean Theriault. 2004. "The Dynamics of Political Argument and The Logic of Issue Framing" in Willem E. Saris and Paul M. Sniderman (eds.). *Studies in Public Opinion: Gauging Attitudes, Nonattitudes, Measurement Error and Change*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Berinsky, Adam J. and Donald R. Kinder. 2006. Making Sense of Issues through Media Frames: Understanding the Kosovo Crisis. *Journal of Politics* 640-656.

#### Recommended

Nelson, Thomas E., Zoe M. Oxley, and Rosalee A. Clawson. 1997. "Toward a Psychology of Framing Effects." *Political Behavior* 19: 221-246.

Bartels, Larry M. 1993. "Messages Received: The Political Impact of Media Exposure." *American Political Science Review* 87: 267-285.

Zaller, John. 1996. "The Myth of Massive Media Impact Revived: New Support for a Discredited Idea." In Diana C. Mutz, Paul M. Sniderman, Richard A. Brody (Editors), *Political Persuasion and Attitude Change*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Druckman, James N. and Kjersten R. Nelson. 2003. "Framing and Deliberation: How Citizens' Conversations Limit Elite Influence." *American Journal of Political Science* 47: 729-745.

Druckman, James N. 2004. "Political Preference Formation: Competition, Deliberation, and the (Ir)relevance of Framing Effects." *American Political Science Review* 98:671-86.

Gilens, Martin. 1999. *Why Americans Hate Welfare*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 5, 6.

### **Week 11: Political Campaigns (April 18)**

Gelman, Andrew and Gary King. 1993. "Why Are American Presidential Election Campaign Polls So Variable When Votes are So Predictable?" *British Journal of Political Science*, 23(4): 409-451.

Finkel, Steven. 1993. "Reexamining the 'Minimal Effects' Model in Recent Presidential Elections," *The Journal of Politics* 55:1-21.

Shaw, Daron R. 1999. "The Effect of TV Ads and Candidate Appearances on Statewide Presidential Votes, 1988-1996." *American Political Science Review* 93: 345-361.

Hillygus, Sunshine and Todd Shields. "The Persuadable Voter" Typescript.

Bartels, Larry M. 1987. "Candidate Choice and the Dynamics of the Presidential Nominating Process." *American Journal of Political Science* 31:1 1-30.

### **Week 12: The Miracle of Aggregation and Enlightened Preferences (April 25)**

Page, Benjamin I. and Robert Y. Shapiro. 1992. *The Rational Public: Fifty Years of Trends in American Policy Preferences*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 1, 2, 8, 9.

Converse, Philip E. 1990. "Popular Representation and the Distribution of Information." in John Ferejohn and James Kuklinski (eds.) *Information and Democratic Processes*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois.

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

Stimson James A., Michael B. MacKuen, and Robert S. Erikson. 1995. "Dynamic Representation." *American Political Science Review* 89:543-565.

#### **Recommended**

Stimson, James A. 1999. *Public Opinion in America. Moods, Cycles, and Swings* (2nd edition). Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

Gilens, Marty. 2001. "Political Ignorance and Collective Policy Preferences." *American Political Science Review* 95:379-396.

### **Week 13: Public Opinion and Public Policy (May 2)**

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

Hansen, Mark. 1998. "Individuals, Institutions, and Public Preferences over Public Finance." *American Political Science Review* 92:513-531.

Bartels, Larry M. 2005. "Homer Gets A Tax Cut: Inequality and Public Policy in the Public Mind." *Perspectives on Politics* 3:0101, 15-31

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

Berinsky, Adam J. "Public Opinion and World War II," Typescript.

Jacobs, Lawrence R., and Robert Y. Shapiro. 2000. *Politicians Don't Pander: Political Manipulation and the Loss of Democratic Responsiveness*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 1, 2.

#### Recommended

Page, Benjamin I. and Robert Y. Shapiro. 1983. "Effects of Public Opinion on Policy." *American Political Science Review* 77: 175-190.

Wlezien, Christopher. 1995. "The Public as Thermostat: Dynamics of Preferences for Spending." *American Journal of Political Science* 39: 981-1000.

Wlezien, Christopher. 2004. "Patterns of Representation: Dynamics of Public Preferences and Policy." *Journal of Politics* 66: 1-24.

Monroe, Alan D. 1998. "Public Opinion and Public Policy, 1980-1993." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 62: 6-28.

Bartels, Larry M. 1991. "Constituency Opinion and Congressional Policy Making: The Reagan Defense Buildup." *American Political Science Review* 85: 457-474.

### **Reflections**

#### **Week 14: Final thoughts: The Place of Public Opinion in Democratic Politics (May 9)**

Berelson, Bernard. 1950. "Democratic Theory and Public Opinion." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 16: 313-330.

Bartels, Larry. 2003 "Democracy with Attitudes" in Michael MacKuen and George Rabinowitz, ed, *Electoral Democracy*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Key, V.O. 1961. *Public Opinion and American Democracy*. New York: Knopf. Chapter 21.

Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 12

Page, Benjamin I. and Robert Y. Shapiro. 1992. *The Rational Public: Fifty Years of Trends in American Policy Preferences*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 10.

Verba, Sidney. 1996. "The Citizen as Respondent: Sample Surveys and American Democracy." *American Political Science Review* 90:1-7.

Berinsky, Adam J. *Silent Voices: Public Opinion and Political Representation in America*, Conclusion.

### Recommended

Jacobs, Lawrence R. and Robert Y. Shapiro. 2000. *Politicians Don't Pander: Political Manipulation and the Loss of Democratic Responsiveness*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 10.

Ginsberg, Benjamin. 1986. *The Captive Public*. New York: Basic Books. Chapter 3.