

University of California, Los Angeles
Department of Political Science

Political Science 141B
Electoral Politics: Public Opinion and Voting Behavior
Summer Session C 2016

Instructor: Fabrício M. Fialho, C.Phil
email: fabriciofialho@ucla.edu
Office: Bunche 4258

Class times: Tues/Thurs, 10:45am-12:50pm
Location: Bunche 2209A
Office hours: Thursday, 2:30pm-4:30pm

Course description

This course examines the foundations of public opinion and its impacts on politics. We will discuss the definition and measurement of public opinion, the forces shaping attitudes and opinions, the ways those views are expressed, and how they influence political outcomes as policies and the functioning of democratic political systems. It focuses on the opinion of citizens rather than public officials or political elites; in other words, this course is an introduction to what is usually labeled as “mass public opinion.” The course covers four major aspects of public opinion studies: (1) What is public opinion and how it is measured; (2) The structure and micro-foundations of public opinion; (3) How it influences voting behavior, and (4) Its connections and implications for public policy and democracy.

Grading

Your grade will be determined by three components: a midterm, a final exam, and participation in class.

- Midterm: 47% (August 18)
- Final: 47% (September 8)
- Participation: 6% (Attendance plus constructive participation)

Some of the material on the exams will be discussed in the class but not in the readings, and some of it will be discussed in the readings but not covered in depth in class. It is important that students do all of the reading and attend all of the lectures. Everything covered in the class and readings are fair game for the exams. Midterm will cover content from Lecture 1 to Lecture 5 (inclusive); final exam will cover material from Lecture 7 to Lecture 11 (inclusive). The midterm and the final exams will be the same format and length. It includes multiple choice questions, identification questions, and short answer questions. All the test material will be provided – you do not need blue books. You only need to bring blue and/or black pens.

Note that the midterm exam for the course is scheduled for August 18 and the final is to be taken on September 8. All exams will be taken in class time. Dates are firm and all students must take

the exam at this date/time. A make-up examination will be given only when circumstances beyond a student's control make it impossible to take it at the schedule time. Final determination of whether or not a circumstance warrants a make-up rests solely with the instructor.

Extra credit will be given to those filling out the course evaluation: 1 (one) point will be added up to your final grade if you submit it by the deadline.

Below is a description of how letter grades are determined:

A 93-100	A- 90-92	B+ 87-89	B 83-86	B- 80-82	C+ 77-79
C 73-76	C- 70-72	D+ 67-69	D 63-66	D- 60-62	F <60

Required Readings

There are two required texts for the course:

- Berinsky, Adam (ed.), *New Directions in Public Opinion*, 2nd edition. New York, NY: Routledge, 2016. (Hard copy or ebook.)
- Tesler, Michael and David O. Sears. *Obama's Race: The 2008 Election and the Dream of a Post-Racial America*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2010. (Hard copy or ebook.)

They are available at the UCLA Bookstore. All additional readings are posted on the course web page (UCLA log in required) and are available for your own use. Required readings are marked using a '*'. You are responsible for reading the assigned material before class.

Right to Privacy

Under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), students have a right to view their own records, and it is a violation to share those records with anyone else, including a student's parents or spouse. Because email is not legally protected private communication, I will not discuss any aspects of an individual student's record, including anything to do with his or her grade in my course via email. Any student who wishes to discuss a grade in this course must do so in person, during regularly scheduled office hours, or by appointment.

Learning Disabilities

Students with University documented learning disabilities should inform me of their needs within the first week of the class. This is especially important if you require more time or separate rooms for exams. If you suspect you have a learning disability and have not been tested for one, contact the UCLA Center for Accessible Education (www.cae.ucla.edu): (310) 825-1501. You cannot tell us you have a learning disability on the day before the exam. We won't be able to accommodate you on short notice.

Class Etiquette

Students are expected to arrive for lectures on time having read the required readings for that lesson. Unless receiving special permission from the instructor, cell phones should be shut down during lecture times. The use of any recording devices (or recording apps) is also forbidden during lectures without a special permission from the instructor. Laptops are permitted for taking notes and referencing class readings, as are tablets used with an external keyboard etc. Nevertheless, the use of pen and paper for taking notes is strongly encouraged; there is abundant scientific evidence suggesting that write out notes by hand boosts memory and the ability to retain and understand concepts. If you choose nevertheless to use a laptop or a tablet for note taking, your class time should not be utilized for surfing the web, social media, Email/Instant Messaging, or any other non-lecture related use. Students who are found doing any of the above during class hours and/or speaking/texting on their cell phones will not be seen as properly participating in the class.

Title IX

Under University policy, all instructors and TAs are mandated Title IX reporters. If I am informed of or witness sexual violence or harassment, I am required to report this to UCLA's Title IX coordinator. The coordinator is committed to maintaining anonymity of victims and I am as well.

Resources

If you have any concerns about or difficulty with academic writing, you can visit the writing center. More information is available at: <http://wp.ucla.edu/wc/>.

If you are an enrolled UCLA student, you can contact the college academic counseling office for help with any academic concerns you have via <http://www.ugeducation.ucla.edu/counseling/>.

If you are a non-UCLA student (only enrolled for the summer term), you can contact the Summer Session staff via <http://www.summer.ucla.edu/contactus>.

If you are having other difficulties and need to speak with a therapist or counselor, you can contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) here: <http://www.counseling.ucla.edu/>

Academic Integrity

All UCLA students are bound by UCLA's Student Conduct Code, which is available at <http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu>. As required by UCLA procedures, any suspected or alleged misconduct - including plagiarism and cheating - will be automatically reported to the Dean of Students.

PART I - Foundations of Public Opinion

Lecture 1. What is public opinion? (August 2)

*Herbst, Susan. 2016. "The History and Meaning of Public Opinion." In Adam Berinsky (ed.), *New Directions in Public Opinion*, 2nd edition. New York, NY: Routledge.

*Key, V.O. 1961. *Public Opinion and American Democracy*. New York, NY: Knopf. (Chapter 1.)

Converse, Philip. E. 1987. "Changing Conceptions of Public Opinion in the Political Process." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 51 (Supplement): S12-S24.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1979 [1972]. "Public Opinion Does Not Exist." In Armand Mattelart and Seth Siegelaub (eds.), *Communication and Class Struggle, Vol. 1*. New York: International General; Bagnolet, France: International Mass Media Research Center.

Lecture 2. Survey Interview and Survey Response (August 4)

*Hillygus, D. Sushine. 2016. "The Practice of Survey Research: Changes and Challenges." In Adam Berinsky (ed.), *New Directions in Public Opinion*, 2nd edition. New York, NY: Routledge.

*Tourangeau, Roger, Lance J. Rips, and Kenneth Rasinski. 2000. *The Psychology of Survey Response*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Chapter 1.)

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

Lecture 3. Ideology and Core Values (August 9)

*Federico, Christopher M. 2016. "The Structure, Foundations, and Expressions of Ideology." In Adam Berinsky (ed.), *New Directions in Public Opinion*, 2nd edition. New York, NY: Routledge.

*Converse, Philip E. 2006 [1964]. "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics." *Critical Review* 18 (1-3): 1-74. (read 1-5.)

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*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Lecture 4. Authoritarianism and Emotions (August 11)

*Hetherington, Marc and Jonathan D. Weiler. 2009. *Authoritarianism and Polarization in American Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press. (Chapter 3.)

*Brader, Ted and Carly Wayne. 2016. "The Emotional Foundations of Democratic Citizenship." In Adam Berinsky (ed.), *New Directions in Public Opinion*, 2nd edition. New York, NY: Routledge.

Feldman, Stanley and Karen Stenner. 1997. "Perceived Threat and Authoritarianism." *Political Psychology* 18 (4): 741-770.

Lecture 5. Group Identification (August 16)

*Czaja, Erica, Jane Junn, and Tali Mendelberg. 2016. "Race, Ethnicity, and the Group Bases of Public Opinion." In Adam Berinsky (ed.), *New Directions in Public Opinion*, 2nd edition. New York, NY: Routledge.

*Converse, Philip E. 2006 [1964]. "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics." *Critical Review* 18 (1-3): 1-74. (read 38-44.)

Conover, Pamela J. 1988. "The Role of Social Groups in Political Thinking." *British Journal of Political Science* 18 (1): 51-76.

Lecture 6. Midterm (August 18)

PART II - Public Opinion, Voting Behavior, and Political Outcomes

Lecture 7. Party identification and Political Knowledge (August 23)

*Lewis-Beck, Michael S., William G. Jacoby, Helmut Norpoth, and Herbert F. Weisberg. 2008. *The American Voter Revisited*. Ann Arbor MI: University of Michigan Press. (Chapters 7 and 6.)

*Delli Carpini, Michael X. and Scott Keeter. 1996. *What Americans Know about Politics and Why It Matters*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. (Chapter 2.)

Lecture 8. Polarization and Campaigns (August 25)

*Hetherington, Marc. 2016. "Partisanship and Polarization in Contemporary Politics." In Adam Berinsky (ed.), *New Directions in Public Opinion*, 2nd edition. New York, NY: Routledge.

*Sides, John and Jake Haselwerdt. 2016. "Campaigns and Elections." In Adam Berinsky (ed.), *New Directions in Public Opinion*, 2nd edition. New York, NY: Routledge.

Lecture 9. Race and Voting (August 30)

*Tesler, Michael and David O. Sears. 2010. *Obama's Race: The 2008 Election and the Dream of a Post-Racial America*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. (Chapters 1, 3, and 4.)

Lecture 10. Public Opinion and Policy (September 1)

*Campbell, Andrea L. And Elizabeth Rigby. 2016. "Public Opinion and Public Policy." In Adam Berinsky (ed.), *New Directions in Public Opinion*, 2nd edition. New York, NY: Routledge.

*Zaller, John. 2003. "Coming to Grips with V.O. Key's Concept of Latent Opinion". In Michael MacKuen and George Rabinowitz (eds.), *Electoral Democracy*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. (pp. 311-315.)

Wlezier, Christopher, and Stuart N. Soroka. 2007. "The Relationship between Public Opinion and Policy". In Russell J. Dalton and Hans-Dieter Klingemann (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Lecture 11. Public opinion, citizen competence, and democracy (September 6)

*Gilens, Martin. 2016. "Two-Thirds Full? Citizen Competence ad Democratic Governance." In Adam Berinsky (ed.), *New Directions in Public Opinion*, 2nd edition. New York, NY: Routledge.

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

Althaus, Scott L. 2006. "False Starts, Dead Ends, and New Opportunities in Public Opinion Research". *Critical Review* 18 (1-3): 75-104.

Lecture 12. Final exam (September 8)