

POLITICAL SCIENCE 4030

POLITICAL ATTITUDES & PUBLIC OPINION

Required Reading Materials

There is a substantial amount of reading for this class – around 60-90 pages per week. Most of the reading is in the form of articles and book chapters.

I am a resource for you, along with your classmates. If you have questions about reading material, lecture content, quizzes, quizzes, or exams, I encourage you to talk with other students, come to office hours, and/or make an appointment with me. This class will challenge you, but I will help you meet it.

For class-related communication, I will use your email address listed in Moodle to contact you, including any important announcements, so be sure your email account in Moodle is up-to-date.

Resources on Public Opinion and Polling

Blogs about recent polls & public opinion:

Roper iPoll

<https://ropercenter.cornell.edu/ipoll-database/>

Pollster

<http://www.pollster.com/>

Polls & Votes

<http://pollsandvotes.com/PaV/>

Polling Report

<http://www.pollingreport.com/>

Pew

<http://people-press.org/>

Gallup

<http://www.gallup.com/home.aspx>

Washington Post

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/politics/polls/)

[dyn/content/politics/polls/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/politics/polls/)

<http://blog.washingtonpost.com/behind-the-numbers/>

The Monkey Cage (public opinion + other topics)

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/>

In the Classroom

No computers & silence phones, please. Research shows use of a laptop in lecture courses will, on average, reduce understanding of course material and reduce grades for you – those who sit around someone using a laptop, as well as the user. Therefore, you may not use your laptop for note taking in routine lecture or discussion activities. Please come prepared with paper and writing instrument for taking notes.

Beverages are OK if they have tops to prevent spilling. No food or gum. Thanks! If I am unable to make it to class, I will let you know in advance. If I have not appeared after 10r la

Code of Student Conduct and Commitment to Community, found online at www.lsu.edu/saa. It is your responsibility as a student at LSU to know & understand the academic standards for our community. Students who are suspected of violating the Code of Conduct will be referred to the office of Student Advocacy & Accountability. A first academic violation could result in a zero grade on the assignment or failing the class and disciplinary probation until graduation. For a second academic violation, the result could be suspension from LSU. Ignorance of these guidelines is no excuse for failure to comply.

A Personal Note

As you continue to learn and explore in college and life, please take care of yourself and your friends, and always be

1/18 Wednesday

Polling & Public, Ch. 1 (Intro, 39 pgs)

Measuring Public Opinion

Questions: How do methods affect interpretation? What influences survey response? What are experiments?

1/20 Friday Sampling & Precision

Polling & Public, Ch. 4 (Sampling, 29 pgs)

Jackson, Natalie. May 26, 2016. It's time to change the way we think about political polling. *Polster.com*. (2 pgs)

1/23 Monday Answering Questions

Polling & Public, Ch. 3 (Wording & Context, 30 pgs)

Polling & Public, Ch. 5 – Interviewer Effects section only, rest optional (Interviewing, ~4 pgs)

1/25 Wednesday Survey Interpretation

Polling & Public, Ch. 8 (Interpreting, 40 pgs)

Nate Silver. Nov 9, 2016. What a difference 2 percentage points makes. *FiveThirtyEight*. (3 pgs)

1/27 Friday (~24 pages) Experiments

James Druckman, Donald Green, James Kuklinski, & Arthur Lupia. 2006. The Growth and Development of Experimental Research in Political Science. *American Political Science Review*, 100(4): 627-635.

Jerit, J. & Barabas, J. 2010. Are Survey Experiments Externally Valid? *American Political Science Review*, 104(2): 226-242

Political Knowledge & Non-attitudes

Questions: How much do people know? Where do they learn? What do they need to know?

1/30 Monday Non-attitudes & Aggregation

Polling & Public, Ch. 2 (Non-Attitudes, ~20 pgs)

2/1 Wednesday (~27 pages) Knowledge

Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. 2007. What American's Know, 1989-2007. (~14 pages)

Arthur Lupia. 1994. Shortcuts versus Encyclopedias: Information and Voting Behavior in California Insurance Reform Elections. *American Political Science Review* 88(1): 63-76.

John Sides. Nov 16, 2014. Americans think the unemployment rate is 32%? Not so fast. *Washington Post*. (2 pgs)

2/3 Friday (~32 pages) Learning

Markus Prior. 2005. News vs. Entertainment: How Increasing Media Choice Widens Gaps in Political Knowledge and Turnout. *American Journal of Political Science* 49(3): 577-592.

Diana Mutz & Paul Martin. 2001. Facilitating Communication across Lines of Political Difference: The Role of the Mass Media. *American Political Science Review* 95(1): 97-114.

How Information Shapes Political Choice

Questions: How does info affect choice?

2/6 Monday (~32 pages) Info Functions

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

Kam, Cindy D. 2005. Who toes the party line?: Cues, values, and individual differences. *Political Behavior* 27(2): 163-82.

2/8 Wednesday (~40 pages) Bad Information
Brendan Nyhan & Jason Reifler. 2010.

2/24 Friday (~32 pages)

John Sides & Lynn Vavreck. 2013. *The Gamble*. Ch. 4. (p. 64-96).

Achen & Bartels. May 23, 2016. Do Sanders supporters favor his policies? *New York Times*.

Mari Gras Break 2/27, 3/1 (until 12:30 pm)

Voting & Elections, Part 2

3/3 Friday (~75 pages)

John Sides & Lynn Vavreck. 2013. *The Gamble*. Ch. 5. (p. 97-140).

John Sides & Lynn Vavreck. 2013. *The Gamble*. Ch. 6. (p. 141-173).

Optional: *Polling & Public*, Ch. 7 (*Elections*, 43 pgs)

Voting & Elections, Part 3

3/6 Monday (~50 pages)

John Sides & Lynn Vavreck. 2013. *The Gamble*. Ch. 7. (p. 174-225).

Optional: Achen, C., & Bartels, L. M. 2013. *Blind retrospection. Why shark attacks are bad for democracy*. (26 pgs)

3/8 Wednesday (~16 pages) Exam Review

John Sides & Lynn Vavreck. 2013. *The Gamble*. Ch. 8. (p. 226-242).

Seth Masket. Dec 5, 2016. The case for 'normal' elections under a President Donald Trump. *PS Mag*.

3/10 Friday

*** 3/10, Friday: Midterm Exam ***

III. Political Communication

Campaign Advertising

Questions: How does ad content interact with audience traits to produce preferences?

3/13 Monday (~18 pages)

Paul Allen Beck, et al. 2002. The Social Calculus of Voting: Interpersonal, Media, and Organizational Influences on Presidential Vote Choice. *American Political Science Review* 96: 57-73.

3/15 Wednesday (~30 pages)

Ted Brader. 2005. Striking a Responsive Chord: How Political Ads Motivate and Persuade Voters by Appealing to Emotions. *American Journal of Political Science* 49: 388-405.

Nicholas Valentino, Vincent Hutchings, & Ismail White. 2002. Cues That Matter: How Political Ads Prime Racial Attitudes during Campaigns. *American Political Science Review* 96: 75-90.

News Media Influence: Bias, Agendas, Priming, & Framing

Questions: Are news media biased? If so, what are their effects? How does news influence opinion? Are the effects of news strong and unavoidable, or do they get canceled out and minimized in various ways?

3/17 Friday (~48 pages) Media Bias

Dave D'Alessio & Mike Allen. 2000. Media Bias in Presidential Elections. *Journal of Communication* 50: 133-156.

Polling & Public, Ch. 6 (Media, ~26 pgs)

3/20 Monday (~30 pages) Priming & Framing

Joanne Miller & Jon Krosnick. 2000. News Media Impact on the Ingredients of Presidential Evaluations: Politically Knowledgeable Citizens are Guided by a Trusted Source. *American Journal of Political Science* 44: 301-315.

James Druckman. 2004. Political Preference Formation: Competition, Deliberation, and the (Ir)relevance of Framing Effects. *American Political Science Review* 98(4): 671-86.

3/22 Wednesday (~35 pages) Partisan Media Effects

Arceneaux, Johnson, & Cryderman. 2013. Communication, persuasion, and the conditioning value of selective exposure. *Political Communication*. 213-231.

Martin Gilens. 2005. Inequality and Democratic Responsiveness. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 69: 778-796.

4/28 Friday LAST DAY OF CLASS, RECAP & EXAM REVIEW

Polling & Public, Ch. 9 (Democracy, 12 pgs)

*** Final Exam: Sat, May 6, 8:00 Ì 9:30 a.m. ***