

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO

POLS 9534B

Public Opinion

Winter Term 2021-22

INSTRUCTOR: Cameron D. Anderson

E-MAIL ADDRESS: cander54@uwo.ca

PHONE: 519-661-2111 ext.81163

OFFICE LOCATION: SSC 4217

OFFICE HOURS: Thursday 10:00am-11:00am (or by appointment) on Zoom (meeting id will be posted on OWL course site)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will explore the topic of public opinion. Through the analytical lens of a political behaviour approach, we will address definitional questions of public opinion and the relationship of public opinion and democracy. We then consider various sources of public opinion including the effects of biological and non-conscious factors, age and various group identities (such as gender, race, religion, class, partisanship and ideology). We next consider the relationship of traditional media and social media with public opinion. We close the course by exploring the topics of macro public opinion and the relationship of public opinion and public policy.

COURSE READINGS:

Selection of articles and book chapters available on OWL or online through the UWO Library system.

GRADE DISTRIBUTION:

25% Participation

30% Weekly Reading Summaries (8)

45% Analytic Papers (3 x 15%) or a research paper

DISCUSSION OF COURSEWORK:

a) Class Participation - As this is a graduate seminar course, there will be no lectures and students are expected to actively participate each week. The participation grade will be based on the quality of comment, evidence of preparation, willingness to challenge accepted ideas and concern for the views expressed by others. If unable to attend, please inform the instructor in advance. Students will be given a preliminary grade for participation in the seventh week of the course. The final participation grade may change based on whether performance improves, declines or stays the same.

b) Reading Summaries - All students will be required to complete **eight** reading summaries from weeks two through twelve. These summaries should be used as a means of preparing for each week's class and are intended to provide you with an opportunity, in advance of class, to read, interact with and comment on the readings. The summary should be composed of three parts. The first part should state, in your view, the most important two or three themes arising from that week's readings. The second part should outline two or three insights gained from these readings. This is to say, what did you learn that you didn't previously know or understand? The final part of the summary should articulate questions that were generated from the readings. The summaries should not be longer than two double-spaced pages and will be due at the beginning of each class. **Please submit summaries through the OWL course page.** Each week two to three students will provide a very brief oral report of their reading summary at the beginning of each class. Late summaries will not be accepted. Summaries will be graded on a 'check system'. Acceptable summaries will receive a '√'. Unacceptable or late summaries will receive a '√-'. On occasion, an unusually perceptive summary may receive a '√+'. For the term, an average of '√' will be equivalent to an 'A-' grade of 82%.

c) Analytic Papers (or a research paper)— You are required to write 3 analytic papers: one from each of Weeks 2 and 3, Weeks 4 to 8 and Weeks 9 to 12. These papers should keep summary of the readings to a minimum and instead focus on articulating a coherent response to issues, arguments and ideas raised in the readings. You may choose to highlight how common themes are addressed throughout the readings; you might take issue with the central argument of certain authors; you might pose questions that deal with core issues of the readings or you might criticize one author based on the arguments of another and/or your own analysis. These papers will be graded on how well you interact with and develop your response to the readings. The papers should be 7-8 (double-spaced) pages long. These papers are due **February 2** (Weeks 2 and 3), **March 16** (Weeks 4 to 8) and **April 20** (Weeks 9 to 12). This paper *cannot be* written on the same week's material that you present your summary. Alternatively, in lieu of the 3 analytic papers, you may choose to write a substantive research paper of 20-25 pages on a topic related to the course content and agreed upon in consultation with the professor. The research paper will be due on the date of the third analytic paper. **All papers should be submitted through the OWL course page.**

IMPORTANT COURSE POLICIES

Conduct of Classes:

All classes will be conducted virtually through the Zoom platform. The link for the zoom meetings is located in the Zoom tab on the OWL page for this course. Please ensure that you have a good internet connection and are prepared to participate in the class discussion each week. Please review this document

(https://www.schulich.uwo.ca/medicine/undergraduate/docs/policies_statements/statements/VC-Etiquette-in-UME---Aug-2020.pdf) for series of expectations and guidelines regarding proper etiquette and best practice for participation in this class through Zoom.

Submission of Assignments:

Assignments (both reading summaries and analytic papers) are due at the beginning of class and will be submitted through the OWL course page. The third analytic paper and research paper will be due at **12pm on April 20**.

Academic Offences:

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf. All papers must be submitted through the turnitin program portal on the OWL course page.

Late penalty:

Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 5% per day. Assignments that are more than 1 week late will **not be accepted** for grading.

Extensions:

Extensions are not given. However, when there are genuine and unavoidable family or medical circumstances an extension may be granted at the discretion of the professor.

Part I Introductory Topics

Week 1. January 12 – Course Introduction, Political Behaviour and studying politics

Sanders, D. 2010. "Behavioural Analysis." In Marsh and Stoker (eds.) *Theory and Methods in Political Science*. 3rd edition Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Herbst, S. 2012. "The History and Meaning of Public Opinion." In A. Berinsky (ed.) *New Directions in Public Opinion*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge.

Hilygus, S. 2012. "The Practice of Survey Research: Changes and Challenges." In A. Berinsky (ed.) *New Directions in Public Opinion*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge.

Suggested Readings:

Chapters on Survey Research, Survey Questionnaires, Field Experiments in Leighley (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of American Elections and Political Behavior*. Oxford: OUP.

Available online:

<http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199235476.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199235476>

Week 2. January 19 – Public Opinion and Democracy

Achen, C. and L. Bartels. 2017. *Democracy for Realists*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapters 1 and 11.

Althaus, S.L., 1998. Information effects in collective preferences. *American Political Science Review*, 92(3), pp.545-558.

Bélanger, É. and Petry, F., 2005. The Rational Public? A Canadian Test of the Page and Shapiro Argument. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 17(2), pp.190-212.

Gilens, M. 2012. "Two-thirds Full? Citizen Competence and Democratic Governance." In A. Berinsky (ed.) *New Directions in Public Opinion*. New York: Routledge.

Part II Sources of Public Opinion

Week 3. January 26 – Biology, Non-Conscious Factors and Public Opinion

Alford, J. R., C. L. Funk, and J. R. Hibbing. 2005. "Are Political Orientations Genetically Transmitted?" *American Political Science Review* 99: 153-168.

Friesen, A., Gruszczynski, M., Smith, K.B. and Alford, J.R., 2020. Political attitudes vary with detection of androstenone. *Politics and the Life Sciences*, 39(1), pp.26-37.

Gerber, A.S., Huber, G.A., Doherty, D., Dowling, C.M. and Ha, S.E., 2010. Personality and political attitudes: Relationships across issue domains and political contexts. *American Political Science Review*, 104(1), pp.111-133.

Huddy, L., S. Feldman and E. Cassese. 2008. "On the Distinct Political Effects of Anxiety and Anger." In G. Marcus et al. (eds.). *The Affect Effect*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mondak, J. and M. Hibbing. 2012. "Personality and Public Opinion." In Berinsky (ed) *New Trends in American Public Opinion*. New York: Routledge.

Week 4. February 2 – Age and Public Opinion

Gorodzeisky, Anastasia, and Moshe Semyonov. 2018. "Competitive threat and temporal change in anti-immigrant sentiment: Insights from a hierarchical age-period-cohort model." *Social Science Research* 73: 31-44.

Gray, S.G., Raimi, K.T., Wilson, R. and Árvai, J., 2019. Will Millennials save the world? The effect of age and generational differences on environmental concern. *Journal of environmental management*, 242, pp.394-402.

Kinder, Donald R. 2006. "Politics and the life cycle." *Science* 312 (5782): 1905-1908.

McLaren, Lauren, and Ian Paterson. "Generational change and attitudes to immigration." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 46, no. 3 (2020): 665-682.

Peterson, Johnathan C., Kevin B. Smith, and John R. Hibbing. 2020. "Do people really become more conservative as they age?." *The Journal of Politics* 82 (2): 600-611.

Week 5. February 9 – Gender and Public Opinion

Bittner, A., and Goodyear-Grant, E. (2017) "Sex isn't gender: Reforming concepts and measurements in the study of public opinion" *Political Behavior* 39(4): 1019–1041.

Dassonneville, R. (2021) "Change and continuity in the ideological gender gap a longitudinal analysis of left-right self-placement in OECD countries", *European Journal of Political Research* 60: 225–238.

Immerzeel, T., Coffé, H. and Lippe, T. (2015) Explaining the gender gap in radical right voting: A cross-national investigation in 12 Western European countries, *Comparative European Politics* Vol. 13, 2, 263–286

Kamas, L. and A. Preston (2018) "Can empathy explain gender differences in economic policy views in the United States?", *Feminist Economics* 25(1): 58–89.

Shorrocks, R. (2020) "The Attitudinal Gender Gap across Generations: Support for Redistribution and Government Spending in Contexts of High and Low Welfare Provision" *European Political Science Review* 12(3): 289-306.

Week 6. February 16 – Race, Ethnicity and Public Opinion

Benegal, S.D., 2018. The spillover of race and racial attitudes into public opinion about climate change. *Environmental Politics*, 27(4), pp.733-756.

Davenport, L., 2020. The fluidity of racial classifications. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 23, pp.221-240.

Druckman, J.N., Ognyanova, K., Baum, M.A., Lazer, D., Perlis, R.H., Volpe, J.D., Santillana, M., Chwe, H., Quintana, A. and Simonson, M., 2021. The role of race, religion, and partisanship in misperceptions about COVID-19. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 24(4), pp.638-657.

Junn, J., T. Mendelberg, and E. Czaja. 2012. Race and the Group Bases of Public Opinion. In A. Berinsky (ed.) *New Directions in Public Opinion*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge.

Mangum, M., 2019. Revisiting economic threat and cultural concerns: public opinion toward immigration and non-citizens by race. *Social science research*, 83, p.102309.

***** February 23 - No Class - Reading Week *****

Week 7. March 2 – Religion/Class and Public Opinion

Religion

Ben-Nun Bloom, Pazit, Gizem Arikan, and Marie Courtemanche. 2015. "Religious social identity, religious belief, and anti-immigration sentiment." *American Political Science Review* 109(2): 203–221.

McDaniel, Eric L., Irfan Nooruddin, and Allyson F. Shortle. 2011. "Divine boundaries: How religion shapes citizens' attitudes toward immigrants." *American Politics Research* 39(1): 205–233.

Perry, S.L., Whitehead, A.L. and Davis, J.T., 2019. God's country in black and blue: How Christian nationalism shapes Americans' views about police (mis) treatment of blacks. *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, 5(1), pp.130-146.

Class

Brooks, C. and Svallfors, S. 2010. Why does class matter? Policy attitudes, mechanisms, and the case of the Nordic countries. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, 28(2), 199-213.

Macdonald, D., 2020. Class Attitudes, Political Knowledge, and Support for Redistribution in an Era of Inequality. *Social Science Quarterly*, 101(2), pp. 960- 977.

Manstead, A.S., 2018. The psychology of social class: How socioeconomic status impacts thought, feelings, and behaviour. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 57(2), pp. 267-291.

Week 8. March 9 – Ideology and Partisanship and Public Opinion

Parties and Partisanship

Bartels, L. M. (2018). Partisanship in the Trump era. *The Journal of Politics*, 80(4), 1483-1494.

Huddy, L., Bankert, A., & Davies, C. (2018). Expressive versus instrumental partisanship in multiparty european systems. *Political Psychology*, 39, 173-199.

West, E. A., & Iyengar, S. (2020). Partisanship as a social identity: Implications for polarization. *Political Behavior*, 1-32.

Ideology

Lachat, R. (2018). Which way from left to right? On the relation between voters' issue preferences and left–right orientation in West European democracies. *International Political Science Review*, 39(4), 419–435.

Piurko, Y., Schwartz, S. H., & Davidov, E. (2011). Basic personal values and the meaning of left-right political orientations in 20 countries. *Political Psychology*, 32(4), 537–561.

III Other topics in the Study of Public Opinion

Week 9. March 16 – Media and Public Opinion

Arceneaux, K., Johnson, M. and Murphy, C., 2012. Polarized political communication, oppositional media hostility, and selective exposure. *The Journal of Politics*, 74(1), pp.174-186.

Bastien, F. 2022. "The News Media Organizations and Public Opinion on Political Issues." In Anderson and Turgeon (eds.) *Comparative Public Opinion*. New York: Routledge.

Druckman, J.N., Levendusky, M.S. and McLain, A., 2018. No need to watch: How the effects of partisan media can spread via interpersonal discussions. *American Journal of Political Science*, 62(1), pp.99-112.

Iyengar, Shanto. 2017. "A Typology of Media Effects," in Kate Kenski and Kathleen Hall Jamieson (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Communication*. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 59–68.

Week 10. March 23 – Social Media and Public Opinion

Baum, M.A. and Potter, P.B., 2019. Media, public opinion, and foreign policy in the age of social media. *The Journal of Politics*, 81(2), pp.747-756.

Christenson, D.P., Kreps, S.E. and Kriner, D.L., 2021. Contemporary Presidency: Going Public in an Era of Social Media: Tweets, Corrections, and Public Opinion. *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 51(1), pp.151-165.

Leong, A.D. and Ho, S.S., 2021. Perceiving online public opinion: The impact of Facebook opinion cues, opinion climate congruency, and source credibility on speaking out. *New Media & Society*, 23(9), pp.2495-2515.

Rossini, P., Hemsley, J., Tanupabrungrsun, S., Zhang, F. and Stromer-Galley, J., 2018. Social media, opinion polls, and the use of persuasive messages during the 2016 US election primaries. *Social Media+ Society*, 4(3), p.2056305118784774.

Weeks, B.E., Ardèvol-Abreu, A. and Gil de Zúñiga, H., 2017. Online influence? Social media use, opinion leadership, and political persuasion. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 29(2), pp.214-239.

Week 11. March 30 - Macro Public Opinion

Donovan, K., P. Kellstedt. E. Key and M. Lebo. 2019. Motivated Reasoning, Public Opinion and Presidential Approval. *Political Behavior*, 42 1201-1221.

Enns, P.K. and Kellstedt, P.M., 2008. Policy mood and political sophistication: Why everybody moves mood. *British Journal of Political Science*, pp.433-454.

Enns, P. K. and G. E. McAvoy. 2012. The role of partisanship in aggregate opinion. *Political Behavior*, 34, 1-25.

Stimson, J. 2004. *Tides of Consent: How Public Opinion Shapes American Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1-3

Week 12. April 6 – Public Opinion and Public Policy

Esaiasson, P. and Wlezien, C., 2017. Advances in the study of democratic responsiveness: an introduction. *Comparative Political Studies*, 50(6), pp.699-710.

Petry, F. and M. Mendelsohn. 2004. "Public Opinion and Policy Making in Canada 1994-2001." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 37, 3, 505-29.

Rosset, J., Giger, N. and Bernauer, J., 2017. I the people? Self-interest and demand for government responsiveness. *Comparative Political Studies*, 50(6), pp.794-821.

Soroka, S. and C. Wlezien. 2011. "Federalism and Public Responsiveness to Policy." *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* 41, 1, 31-52.

Wlezien, C., 2017. Policy (mis) representation and the cost of ruling: US presidential elections in comparative perspective. *Comparative Political Studies*, 50(6), pp.711-738.