Course Description

This course aims to provide the student with an introduction to the basic literature on public opinion, electoral behavior and political participation. The course will be conducted as a seminar.

Requirements

I. Readings: All students are responsible for readings in each section of the syllabus. Nearly all readings may be found on the class toolkit web site, with a few from book sources other than the course texts being available in Clemons Library.

II. Major Paper: The major paper in the course will consist of a combination literature review/research design of approximately 25 pages, dealing with one of the substantive areas on the syllabus or on a special topic which is agreed upon by the instructor. A literature review involves reading and synthesizing a collection of recent articles relevant to the given area and tying them together into coherent themes. The research design is an outline of a piece of research which will extend our knowledge of that sub-field in political behavior, and includes why you think the research is important, how it extends previous research, and how you would go about addressing the problem. A short proposal for the paper is due on March 2.

III. Final Exam: Take home exam due via e-mail on May 4, by 5:00 P.M.

IV. Class Participation: The success of the seminar depends on the participation of all class members in the weekly discussions. To further that end, different students will be responsible each week for presenting the arguments and findings from the articles marked with an (*) on the syllabus to the group. These presentations are designed to stimulate discussion on "cutting edge" research in each substantive area.

Grading:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Paper (due April 27 in class)</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation of Paper</td>
<td>10%</td>
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</tbody>
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Books

Green, Donald P., Bradley Palmquist, and Eric Schickler, *Partisan Hearts and Minds* (Yale University Press 2002)


I. INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

January 19: Organizational Meeting
January 26: Methods of Studying Public Opinion and Political Behavior

Brady and Orren, "Polling Pitfalls: Sources of Error in Public Opinion Surveys," in Mann and
Orren, editors, Media Polls in American Politics (1992)
Erikson and Wlezien, Likely (and Unlikely) Voters and the Assessment of Campaign Dynamics,” POQ
(2004)
Finkel, Guterbock, and Borg, “Race of Interviewer Effects in a Pre-Election Poll: Virginia 1989,” Public
Opinion Quarterly (1991)
Iyengar, Peters and Kinder, “Experimental Demonstrations of the ‘Not-So-Minimal’ Political
Consequences of Television News Programs,” APSR (1982)
Humphries, “Who’s Afraid of the Big Bad Firm? The Impact of Economic Scale on Political
Participation,” AJPS (2001)

II. PUBLIC OPINION

February 2: Ideology, Information and Political Sophistication

(1964).
Niemi and Weisberg, "Does Lack of Political Information Matter?" Controversies, 6.
Lupia, “Shortcuts versus Encyclopedias: Information and Voting Behavior in California
Insurance Reform Elections,” APSR (1994)
*Lau and Redlawsk, “Advantages and Disadvantages of Cognitive Heuristics in Political Decision

February 9: Opinion Formation and Change: The Role of Core Values and Political Elites

Feldman, “Structure and Consistency in Public Opinion: The Role of Core Beliefs and Values,”
AJPS (1988).
APSR (1987)
Gilens, “‘Race Coding’ and White Opposition to Welfare” APSR (1996)
Layman and Carmines, “Cultural Conflict in American Politics: Religious Traditionalism,
*APSR* (2001)
*Druckman, “Framing and Deliberation: How Citizens’ Conversations Limit Elite Influence,”
*AJPS* (2003)

February 16: **The Effects of The Mass Media**


February 23: **Political Partisanship**

Green, Palmquist and Schickler, *Partisan Hearts and Minds*.

III. VOTING BEHAVIOR

March 2: **Voting Behavior in Primary Elections**

March 16:  **Sociological Models of the Vote**


March 23:  **Social-Psychological Models of the Vote**

Marcus and MacKuen, “Anxiety, Enthusiasm and the Vote: The Emotional Underpinnings of Learning and Involvement During Presidential Campaigns,” *APSR* (1993)

March 30: **Economic Models and the Effects of Campaigns**


IV. **POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

April 6: **Voter Turnout**

Niemi and Weisberg, "Why is Voter Turnout Low (and Declining)? *Controversies*, 2.

April 13: **Non-Electoral Political Participation**

Leighley, “Attitudes, Opportunities, and Incentives: A Field Essay on Political Participation,” *Political
Research Quarterly (1995)
Verba, Burns and Schlozman, “Knowing and Caring about Politics: Gender and Political Engagement,” JOP (1997)

April 20: Trust, Social Capital, and Political Participation


**********FINAL EXAM DUE MAY 4 **********