

PSC 8220
POLITICAL BEHAVIOR

Spring 2014
Thursday, 3:30-6:00pm
Monroe 115

Professor Danny Hayes
dwh@gwu.edu
Monroe 471
202-994-4344

Office hours: T & Th, 12:30-2pm and by appointment

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course surveys major theoretical approaches and empirical research in the field of political behavior. (This class is variously called Public Opinion and Political Socialization or Public Opinion and Political Psychology in the course catalog, but Political Behavior better reflects its broader scope.) It focuses on psychological approaches to understanding individual citizens' attitudes and actions, and on the implications of individual choices for both collective outcomes and for the quality of representative democracy. We will also encounter other theories, including personality, rational choice, information-processing, social influence, and group identity and conflict. Among the many substantive topics we will investigate are political socialization, ideology, the media, and voting behavior. The majority of empirical research that we will discuss centers on American politics, although we will also read and discuss research that is cross-national or comparative in scope.

This course has four learning objectives:

- You will become familiar with a wide range of literatures that are routinely part of Ph.D. field examinations, particularly in American politics.
- You will understand contemporary debates in the study of political behavior.
- You will be able to think both appreciatively and critically about social scientific research.
- You will develop a research question and make progress on a paper intended to result in a dissertation topic and/or publication.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This course is a seminar, which means it will be driven by class discussion. You are expected to come to class prepared to engage in a thoughtful, critical, and lively conversation about the questions, issues, and debates raised in the week's required reading. The more you participate, the more you will benefit from the course.

Each week, one student will be designated to lead the seminar. On your week, you will be responsible for organizing and stimulating a discussion of the week's readings. This should not take the form of a lecture or lengthy summary of the material. Instead, you should

highlight the most important questions arising from the collection of readings and use those to generate discussion among the rest of us. To facilitate this, you should circulate (by e-mail) a list of 8-10 questions for discussion by 5pm the Wednesday before the class.

Every other week, you will submit a short paper (no more than 2-3 pages, double-spaced) responding to the week's readings. (I will divide up the weeks alphabetically, so that half of the class will be writing a paper each week. All told, you will write six papers.) These should be e-mailed to me by 12pm the Wednesday before the class meets, and I will return them to you in class. The papers should critically discuss a portion of the week's readings. You do not need to shoehorn in every article or chapter, but you should address several works. There is no single template for a good paper, but you should minimize the summary of the readings; I am more interested in your discussion of their strengths and weaknesses. Here is an incomplete list of questions that might animate your weekly papers:

- Are there competing explanations of, or approaches to understanding, a single substantive phenomenon?
- Is there a fundamental argument between or among authors?
- Do different authors employ different methods? Do those differences lead them to draw different conclusions? Would another methodological approach be better?
- Are there major shortcomings in a set of readings on a topic? How could they be addressed?
- What questions for future research emerge from the readings, and how might those questions be answered?
- Does the empirical evidence support an author's (or authors') claims?

At the end of the semester, you will be required to submit a research paper of 15-20 (double-spaced) pages. The paper may take one of two forms. First, you may write a paper based on original empirical research, similar to much of the work we'll be reading this semester. Second, you may write a paper that addresses a debate in the literature and proposes a research project, including a research design, to engage the topic. At some point during the semester (with the date to be determined), I will ask you to submit a paragraph describing your proposed final project. The due date for the paper will be announced later in the semester. Finally, you will be expected to present a preliminary version of your paper at a mini-conference during our last class session, on April 24. It will be fun.

Your course grade will be determined by an overall evaluation of your participation in class, your weekly papers, and your final research paper.

READINGS

There are six required books. The list is below. The bulk of the course reading, however, consists of journal articles, chapters from edited volumes, or excerpts from books. Most of the readings are available through JSTOR and/or the GW library's electronic journal collection.

Some readings, however, are not available online. Those are marked with (*) below, and I have placed them under "Files" on our course Blackboard page.

Books

- Arceneaux, Kevin and Martin Johnson. 2013. *Changing Minds or Changing Channels? Partisan News in an Age of Choice*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Gilens, Martin. 2012. *Affluence & Influence: Economic Inequality and Political Power in America*. Princeton and New York: Princeton University Press and Russell Sage Foundation.
- Huddy, Leonie, David O. Sears, and Jack S. Levy. 2013. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology, 2nd Edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lewis-Beck, Michael S., William G. Jacoby, Helmut Norpoth, and Herbert F. Weisberg. 2008. *The American Voter Revisited*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Mutz, Diana C. 2006. *Hearing the Other Side: Deliberative versus Participatory Democracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
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COURSE SCHEDULE (Readings marked with [*] are posted on Blackboard.)

Week 1 (January 16): Introduction

Huddy et al., Chapter 1

*Bartels, Larry M. "The Study of Electoral Behavior." In Jan E. Leighley (ed.), *Oxford Handbook of American Elections and Political Behavior*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp. 239-261.

Week 2 (January 23): Personality, Biology, and Politics

Huddy et al., Chapters 2, 8

Gerber, Alan S., Gregory A. Huber, David Doherty, Conor M. Dowling, and Shang E. Ha. 2010. "Personality and Political Attitudes: Relationships across Issue Domains and Political Contexts." *American Political Science Review* 104(1): 111-133.

Mondak, Jeffery J., Matthew V. Hibbing, Damarys Canache, Mitchell A. Seligson, and Mary R. Anderson. 2010. "Personality and Civic Engagement: An Integrative Framework for the Study of Trait Effects on Political Behavior." *American Political Science Review* 104(1): 85-110.

Alford, John R., Carolyn L. Funk, and John R. Hibbing. 2005. "Are Political Orientations Genetically Transmitted?" *American Political Science Review* 99(2): 153-167.

Fowler, James H., and Christopher T. Dawes. 2008. "Two Genes Predict Voter Turnout." *Journal of Politics* 70(3): 579-594.

Charney, Evan, and William English. 2012. "Candidate Genes and Political Behavior." *American Political Science Review* 106(1): 1-34.

Week 3 (January 30): Political Socialization

Huddy et al., Chapter 3

Jennings, M. Kent, and Richard G. Niemi. 1968. "The Transmission of Political Values from Parent to Child." *American Political Science Review* 62(1): 169-184.

Erikson, Robert S., and Laura Stoker. 2013. "Caught in the Draft: The Effects of Vietnam Draft Lottery Status on Political Attitudes." *American Political Science Review* 105(2): 221-237.

Jennings, M. Kent, Laura Stoker, and Jake Bowers. 2009. "Politics across Generations: Family Transmission Reexamined." *Journal of Politics* 71(3): 782-799.

Sears, David O., and Nicholas A. Valentino. 1997. "Politics Matters: Political Events as Catalysts for Preadult Socialization." *American Political Science Review* 91(1): 45-65.

William Mishler and Richard Rose. 2007. "Generation, Age, and Time: The Dynamics of Political Learning during Russia's Transformation." *American Journal of Political Science* 51(4): 822-834.

Barker, David C., and James D. Tinnick III. 2006. "Competing Visions of Parental Roles and Ideological Constraint." *American Political Science Review* 100(2): 249-263.

Week 4 (February 6): Political Knowledge and Democratic Competence

*Delli Carpini, Michael X., and Scott Keeter. 1996. *What Americans Know about Politics and Why It Matters*. New Haven: Yale University Press. pp. 1-61 (Introduction, Chapter 1).

*Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper. pp. 207-259 (Chapters 11-13).

*Converse, Philip E. 1964. "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics." In David E. Apter (ed.) *Ideology and Discontent*. New York: Free Press. pp. 206-261.

Lewis-Beck et al., Chapter 10

- *Luskin, Robert C. 2002. "From Denial to Extenuation (and Finally Beyond): Political Sophistication and Citizen Performance." In James H. Kuklinski (ed.), *Thinking about Political Psychology*. New York: Cambridge University Press. pp. 281-301.
- Lupia, Arthur. 1994. "Shortcuts versus Encyclopedias: Information and Voting Behavior in California Insurance Reform Elections." *American Political Science Review* 88(1): 63-76.
- Gilens, Martin. 2001. "Political Ignorance and Collective Policy Preferences." *American Political Science Review* 95(2): 379-396.
- Bartels, Larry M. 1996. "Uninformed Votes: Information Effects in Presidential Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 40(1): 194-230.
- Jerit, Jennifer, Jason Barabas, and Toby Bolsen. 2006. "Citizens, Knowledge, and the Information Environment." *American Journal of Political Science* 50(2): 266-282.

Week 5 (February 13): Public Opinion and Political Attitudes

- *Key, V.O. 1961. *Public Opinion and American Democracy*. New York: Knopf. pp. 3-18 (Introduction).
- Zaller, 1-7, 11
- *Citrin, Jack, and Donald Philip Green. 1990. "The Self-Interest Motive in American Public Opinion." In Samuel Long (ed.), *Research in Micropolitics*, Volume 3. Greenwich: JAI Press. pp. 1-27.
- *Sears, David O. 1993. "Symbolic Politics: A Socio-Psychological Theory." In Shanto Iyengar and William J. McGuire (eds.), *Explorations in Political Psychology*. Durham: Duke University Press. pp.113-149.
- *Bartels, Larry M. 2003. "Democracy with Attitudes." In Michael B. MacKuen and George Rabinowitz (eds.), *Electoral Democracy*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Week 6 (February 20): Information Processing and Decision Making

- Huddy et al., Chapters 4-6
- Lau, Richard R., and David P. Redlawsk. 2001. "Advantages and Disadvantages of Cognitive Heuristics in Political Decision Making." *American Journal of Political Science* 45(4): 951-971.
- Brader, Ted, Nicholas A. Valentino, and Elizabeth Suhay. 2008. "What Triggers Public Opposition to Immigration? Anxiety, Group Cues, and Immigration Threat." *American Journal of Political Science*, 52(4): 959-978.

Taber, Charles S., and Milton Lodge. 2006. "Motivated Skepticism in Political Information Processing." *American Journal of Political Science* 50(3): 755-69.

Gaines, Brian J., James H. Kuklinski, Paul J. Quirk, Buddy Peyton, and Jay Verkuilen. 2007. "Same Facts, Different Interpretations: Partisan Motivation and Opinion on Iraq." *Journal of Politics* 69(4): 957-974

Nyhan, Brendan, and Jason Reifler. 2010. "When Corrections Fail: The Persistence of Political Misperceptions." *Political Behavior* 32(2): 303-330.

Week 7 (February 27): Groups and Political Behavior

*Sherif, Muzafer. 1956. "Experiments in Group Conflict." *Scientific American* 195(5): 54-58.

*Tajfel, Henri. 1970. "Experiments in Intergroup Discrimination." *Scientific American* 223(5): 96-102.

Huddy et al., Chapter 25

Huddy, Leonie, and Stanley Feldman. 2009. "On Assessing the Political Effects of Racial Prejudice." *Annual Review of Political Science* 12: 423-447.

Tesler, Michael. 2013. "The Return of Old Fashioned Racism to White Americans Partisan Preferences in the Early Obama Era." *Journal of Politics* 75(1): 110-123.

Peffley, Mark, and Jon Hurwitz. 2007. "Persuasion and Resistance: Race and the Death Penalty in America." *American Journal of Political Science* 51(4): 996-1012.

Hopkins, Daniel J. 2010. "Politicized Places: Explaining Where and When Immigrants Provoke Local Opposition." *American Political Science Review* 104(1): 40-60.

Weaver, Vesla M., and Amy E. Lerman. 2010. "Political Consequences of the Carceral State." *American Political Science Review* 104(4): 817-833.

Week 8 (March 6): Media Influence

Arceneaux and Johnson, entire

Levendusky, Matt. 2013. "Why Do Partisan Media Polarize Viewers?" *American Journal of Political Science* 57(3): 611-623.

Huddy et al., Chapter 18

*Iyengar, Shanto, and Donald Kinder. 1987. *News That Matters*. Chicago: Chicago University Press. Chapters 2-3, 7.

- Lenz, Gabriel. 2009. "Learning and Opinion Change, Not Priming: Reconsidering the Evidence for the Priming Hypothesis." *American Journal of Political Science* 53(4): 821-37.
- Dennis Chong and James N. Druckman. 2007. "Framing Public Opinion in Competitive Democracies." *American Political Science Review* 101(4): 637-656.
- Prior, Markus. 2005. "News vs. Entertainment: How Increasing Media Choice Widens Gaps in Political Knowledge and Turnout." *American Journal of Political Science* 49(3): 577-592.
- Hayes, Danny, and Matt Guardino. 2011. "The Influence of Foreign Voices on U.S. Public Opinion." *American Journal of Political Science* 55(4): 830-850.

Week 9 (March 13): Spring Break

Week 10 (March 20): Social Networks and Social Influence

Mutz, *Hearing the Other Side*, entire

Huckfeldt, Robert, Paul E. Johnson, and John Sprague. 2002. "Political Environments, Political Dynamics, and the Survival of Disagreement." *Journal of Politics* 64(1): 1-21.

*Sinclair, Betsy. 2013. *The Social Citizen: Peer Networks and Political Behavior*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. pp. xi-41 (Preface, Chapters 1-2).

Week 11 (March 27): Voter Turnout and Participation

*McDonald, Michael P. 2010. "American Voter Turnout in Historical Perspective." In Jan E. Leighley (ed.), *Oxford Handbook of American Elections and Political Behavior*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp. 125-143.

John Aldrich. 1993. "Rational Choice and Turnout." *American Journal of Political Science* 37(1): 246-278.

Lewis-Beck et al., Chapter 5.

Berinsky, Adam J. 2005. "The Perverse Consequences of Electoral Reform in the United States." *American Politics Research* 33(4): 471-491.

Gerber, Alan S., and Donald P. Green. 2000. "The Effects of Canvassing, Telephone Calls, and Direct Mail on Voter Turnout: A Field Experiment." *American Political Science Review* 94(3): 653-663.

Arceneaux, Kevin, and David W. Nickerson. 2009. "Who Is Mobilized to Vote? A Re-Analysis of 11 Field Experiments." *American Journal of Political Science* 53(1): 1-16.

Putnam, Robert D. 1995. "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital." *Journal of Democracy* 6(1): 65-78.

Week 12 (April 3): No Class

Week 13 (April 10): Vote Choice

Lewis-Beck et al., Chapters 1-4, 6-8, 11-15.

Zaller, Chapter 10

*Sides, John, and Lynn Vavreck. *The Gamble: Choice and Chance in the 2012 Presidential Election*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. pp. 174-225 (Chapter 7).

Gerber, Alan S., James G. Gimpel, Donald P. Green, and Daron R. Shaw. 2011. "How Large and Long-Lasting Are the Persuasive Effects of Televised Campaign Ads? Results from a Randomized Field Experiment." *American Political Science Review* 105(1): 135-150.

Week 14 (April 17): Opinion and Policy

Gilens, entire

Stimson, James A., Michael B. Mackuen, and Robert S. Erikson. 1995. "Dynamic Representation." *American Political Science Review* 89(3): 543-565.

Lax, Jeffrey R., and Justin H. Phillips. 2012. "The Democratic Deficit in the States." *American Journal of Political Science*. 56(1): 148-166.

Zaller, Chapter 12

Week 15 (April 24): Mini-Conference