Instructor: Dr. Carl L. Palmer  
Office: 433 Schroeder Hall  
Office Hours: Tuesday, 2-4, Thursday 2-3, or by appointment  
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Course Objectives:
This course is designed to be an overview of the topics in the field of public opinion. The goal of this course is to familiarize students with the research literature in public opinion. The foundations of public opinion and its implications for democratic politics are quite broad; this course will serve as an introduction to these concepts. As part of this discussion, we will discuss conceptual issues and issues of measurement in public opinion, the individual-level factors which influence citizen opinion, and the ways in which opinion may be shaped by political elites. By the end of the course, students should be able to critically evaluate theoretical arguments regarding the measurement of and factors that influence opinion, articulate arguments about these issues both orally and in writing, identify normative concerns regarding citizen behavior based upon the arguments we have read, and be capable of synthesizing research literature on a given topic in order to identify lacunae in the literature and conduct a research study to bridge those gaps.

Required Readings:
- Additional readings will be made available via ReggieNet (or can be downloaded from www.jstor.org).

Course Policies:

1. Exams must be taken at the times specified in the syllabus; makeup exams will be given only in the most extreme circumstances, with provided documentation of the absence. Makeup exams will consist of four essay questions. If you know you cannot make any one of the exam dates listed in the syllabus, you should not take this class.
2. Students will be expected to bring all readings to class to facilitate discussion. Coming to class unprepared will negatively affect a student’s participation grade.
3. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Please see the university’s policies regarding plagiarism and cheating online at the Dean of Students Office website.
4. All assignments must be submitted at the beginning of class on the due date in the syllabus; late assignments will lose 10% credit per day late. All assignments must be typed unless otherwise instructed.
5. To be considered for a regrade assignments or exams must be accompanied by a no greater than 1 page (single spaced) memo detailing your claim. Memos must provide justification for a change of grade using examples from course material, and will only be accepted after a 24-hour cooling-off period. Memos must be submitted within one week of the initial return date for the assignment or exam.

6. Usage of cell phones in lecture will not be permitted. Please silence all cell phones before coming to class. If I see anyone using a cell phone in class I will administer a pop quiz which will affect your participation grade. Laptop computers and tablets are permissible so long as they are used for academic uses during lecture.

7. Students may not photograph or use audio or video devices to record classroom lectures or discussions or visual materials that accompany them (e.g., lecture slides, whiteboard notes/equations). Students with disabilities who need to record classroom lectures or discussions must contact Student Access and Accommodation Services to register, request and be approved for an accommodation. Students who violate this policy may be subject to both legal sanctions for violations of copyright law and disciplinary action under the University’s Code of Student Conduct.

8. If you have special needs that require accommodation for exams, please let me know early on so that the appropriate measures can be taken. You will be required to provide documentation of your requirements.

9. If you have any questions at any point in the class, PLEASE ask. I will be happy to answer any questions about the course material. This includes if lecture is moving too quickly, or simply do not understand something. Keep in mind that this is YOUR responsibility.

10. Email: I strongly encourage email questions and comments. However, when you write you are expected to write as you would in any professional correspondence: Capital letters to start the first word of a sentence, “Dear Professor Palmer” (or “Hi Professor Palmer”) to open the email, correct spelling, capital letters in the correct places, punctuation, etc. (“Hey” is not appropriate.) It is likely that I will not answer emails phrased inappropriately or that include misspellings, etc., or I may give you a two-word response, “Course Expectations,” meaning that you should re-write your email in a more appropriate form and resend it. I will not answer questions that can be answered if you read the syllabus. I will either not answer or write back a one-word response: “syllabus”. See [http://www.phdcomics.com/comics.php?f=1795](http://www.phdcomics.com/comics.php?f=1795).

11. Lecture slides will not be posted online. Students missing class will be expected to obtain notes from other students in the class.

**Course Requirements:**

There will be 100 total points available in this course. Final grade breakdowns are as follows:

- A: 90-100
- B: 89-80
- C: 79-70
- D: 69-60
- F: 59 and below.
Final grades will **not** be rounded.

Points for the course will be allocated as follows:

*Participation/Reading Quizzes (10%): 10 pts*
While the course will primarily involve lecture, we will make time for active engagement with, and discussion of the readings. Students are expected to bring all readings to be discussed to each class meeting. Failure to come prepared will negatively reflect participation.

Additionally, pop reading quizzes will be administered. Students must be present for the quiz to receive credit, and the quizzes may not be made up.

*Assignments (10%): 10pts, 2.5 pts per exercise*
There will be a series of exercises utilizing the Survey Documentation and Analysis website (sda.berkeley.edu) that will walk you through analyzing and interpreting opinion data in preparation for the final paper assignment. Generally, the exercises consist of multiple-choice and short-answer questions. On these assignments, you are welcome to work with other students; however, each student must turn in their own assignment. Assignments unless otherwise noted must be typed. Due dates for these problems sets are listed in the syllabus.

*Final Paper (20%):*
There will be a required 8-10 page (double-spaced, 1 inch margins, 12 point font) research paper, due at the time of the final exam. In preparation for the research paper, you are required to submit your paper topic for approval (1pt), an annotated bibliography (2pts), and a research design (2pts). The paper topic will be of your own choosing, but must somehow relate to public opinion. The final paper should consist of a literature review, testable hypotheses based upon your review of the literature, a research design, and data analysis based upon either existing opinion data, or data from a survey that you conduct, and will be worth 15pts.

Due dates are listed in the syllabus. **Final papers will not be accepted from students failing to complete all assignments related to the paper. Assignments related to the paper will not be accepted any later than two weeks after the original due date.**

*Exam 1 (20%): 20pts*
Multiple choice, identification, and short answer questions.

*Exam 2 (20%): 20 pts*
Multiple choice, identification, and short answer questions.

*Exam 3 (20%): 20 pts*
The final exam will *not* be cumulative, and will consist of multiple choice, identification, and short answer questions.

**Course Schedule:**
Week 1: What is Public Opinion?
Jan. 15 – Introductions and syllabus
Jan. 17 – What is Public Opinion?

Week 2: Measuring Public Opinion
Jan. 22 – Polling
- Clawson and Oxley. Public Opinion, pp. 29-42.
Jan. 24 – Sampling and Error
- Asher, chapter 4.

Week 3: Measuring Public Opinion continued
Jan. 29 – Interviewer Bias
Jan. 31 – Attitudes and Nonattitudes
- Asher, chapter 2.

Week 4: Citizen Sophistication – Paper Topics due 2/7
Feb. 5 – Knowledge and Attention
Feb. 7 – Heuristic Shortcuts


**Week 5: Political Persuasion and Attitude Change – exercise 1 due 2/14**

Feb. 12 – Attitude Stability and Change


Feb. 14 – Misinformation and Competence


**Week 6: Origins of Opinions – Exam 1 2/21**

Feb. 19 – Political Socialization

• Clawson and Oxley. *Public Opinion*, chapter 2.


Feb. 21 – Exam 1

**Week 7: Origins of Opinions continued**

Feb. 26 – Partisanship and Ideology


Feb. 28 – Values, Self-Interest


Week 8: Origins of Opinions continued – Annotated Bibliographies due 3/7
Mar. 5 & 7 – Social Groups and Group Identity

Week 9: Spring Break
Mar. 12 & 14 – no class

Week 10: Media Effects – exercise 2 due 3/21
Mar. 19 & 21 – Psychological Effects of the Media

Week 11: Media and Campaign Effects – Research Design due 3/28
Mar. 26 – Public Opinion and the Media

Mar. 28 – Public Opinion and Political Campaigns

Week 12: Democratic Ideals – Exam 2 on 4/2
Apr. 2 – Exam 2
Apr. 4 – MPSA meeting, no class

Week 13: Polarization
Apr. 9 – Support for Civil Liberties and Civil Rights
Apr. 11 – Are Opinions Polarized?

Week 14: Expressions of Opinion – exercise 3 due 4/18
Apr. 16 – Public Opinion and Foreign Affairs
Apr. 18 – Public Opinion and Poverty

Week 15: Expressions of Opinion continued
Apr. 23 – Public Opinion and Abortion
Apr. 25 – Trust in Government
Week 16: Final Conclusions – exercise 4 due 5/2
Apr. 30 – Public Opinion and Political Elites
  • Clawson and Oxley. Public Opinion, chapter 12.
May 2 – Conclusions
POL 312 Syllabus Contract

To acknowledge that you have read and accepted the course syllabus and that you understand your responsibilities for this semester you must upload a digitally signed syllabus contract. To digitally sign your syllabus contract download this page and type your name and below. Signed syllabus contracts should be uploaded as a pdf to ReggieNet by Tuesday, January 22, 2019, at the beginning of class.

Name

Date