

**POSC 146**  
**MASS MEDIA & PUBLIC OPINION**  
Spring 2008

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Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday, 2:30-3:30 p.m. and by appointment

On-line web course materials available through <http://ilearn.ucr.edu/>

**Required Reading**

PS 146 Reader, UCR Printing & Reprographics available in UCR Bookstore (\$85.50).

Readings available on J-Stor and on-line, per syllabus. Links through course site at [ilearn.ucr.edu](http://ilearn.ucr.edu).

**Course Requirements**

Participation, clicker surveys	10%
Clicker quizzes	10%
Literature review proposal	5%
Midterm exam	20%
Article reviews	15% (5% each)
Literature review project	20%
Final examination	20%

**Course Description**

We will study public opinion – its character, sources, and functions – with attention to how mass media relates to the public. The class is also designed to explore the methods of social science research, in particular how scholars study public opinion and the media using survey research, laboratory experiments, content analysis, in-depth interviews, and other systematic research tools.

My primary objective for you is that you will leave the class with a greater knowledge and understanding of social science research on public opinion and mass media. I want you to be curious and start figuring out how to *systematically* address your questions. In the pages that follow, I elaborate on the tasks you will undertake in this course, including the development of a social science literature review on a topic related to public opinion and mass media.

My office hours are listed at the top of this syllabus. Please do not hesitate to come by during these scheduled times or contact me to schedule an appointment.

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*Notes*

Students with permanent and temporary disabilities should contact me to discuss arrangements, as well as contact Services for Students with Disabilities to request services.

All late papers will be graded, but with a 1/3 letter-grade reduction with each day it is late. Any paper that is turned in will receive partial credit.

Any student who plagiarizes, cheats, or fabricates data will receive no credit for the spoiled assignment. All cases will be referred to the Student Judicial Affairs office.

### Participation and clickers

Get a clicker from the Bookstore. Go to [clickers.ucr.edu](http://clickers.ucr.edu) and register your clicker. Before we do anything “real” (i.e., potentially counting for class credit), we will have a couple of clicker tests. Our clicker use in the class will involve **survey questions** for which there are no wrong answers (these will include questions of the kind you might hear as part of a survey interview), as well as **quiz questions** about readings for the course.

In order to get full participation credit in the class, you will need to have recorded an answer for 90% of all clicker questions (survey and quiz questions). If you answer 80-89% of the questions, you will receive 9/10 class percentage points; 70-79% earns you 8/10 class percentage points; and so on.

In order to receive full credit on the clicker quizzes, you will need to have answered at least 90% of the clicker quiz questions correctly. If you answer 80-89% of these questions correctly, you will receive 9/10 class percentage points; 70-79% earns you 8/10 class percentage points; and so on.

### Literature Review, Proposal, and Journal Article Critiques

I would like to see each of you produce a 9-12 page paper. Choose a promising research question about public opinion and/or mass media and develop a review of the literature on that question. For some examples, what does Political Science have to tell us about how media agenda-setting affects the salience of an issue, how recent immigrants develop ideas about American politics, or how policy makers take public opinion into account? This is an opportunity for you to develop your own interest in an area of research. For this paper, you will be required to choose and read 6-8 research articles outside of the readings on the syllabus. We will talk more about what I mean by a literature review during the course of the quarter. The paper will be due by 5 p.m. June 6.

In order to help you take full advantage of this opportunity to explore your interests in elections, I have designed several assignments related to the larger literature review. First, I would like each of you to propose a topic for your literature review in a brief, 1-2 page memorandum due April 18 at the end of class, in class. This memorandum will note the research question you will consider in the literature review and list several sources you intend to incorporate. Based on your proposal, I can make suggestions aimed at helping you with the literature review.

On, April 30, May 14, and May 28, you will turn in summaries or articles at the end of class, in class. Each must be a piece of scholarly research related to your literature review proposal. These should be listed on your initial proposal. The summaries will each be one page, identifying the research question, theoretical perspective, data and conclusions, as well as your own evaluation of the research. We will discuss more about what I am looking for in the book review as the deadline approaches.

### Examinations

You will also complete two examinations. The mid-term exam is scheduled for **Friday, May 2, in class**. If you are unable to take the mid-term exam at the scheduled time, you may schedule an alternate time by contacting me prior to the scheduled exam time and providing appropriate original-copies documentation (medical, military, etc.) for your inability to take the exam at the scheduled time. Scheduling a makeup exam is your responsibility. I will consider extreme medical emergencies, again with complete original documentation. The final exam will have a similar but longer format. It is scheduled for **Wednesday, June 11, 8-11 a.m.**

**Course Schedule**

- March 31 (M) Course introduction and outline**
- April 2 (W) Thinking about public opinion**  
Price, V. 1992. *Public opinion*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications. Chapter 3.  
“Conceptualizing the public.” pp. 22-44. **READER**
- April 4 (F) No class meeting, but by all means read the following –**  
Clawson, R.A., & Oxley, Z.M. 2008. *Public opinion: Democratic ideals, democratic practice*.  
Washington, DC: CQ Press. Chapter 1. Public opinion in a democracy. pp. 3-26.  
**READER**  
Converse, P. 1987. Changing conceptions of public opinion in the political process. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 51S:12-24. **JSTOR**
- April 7 (M) Attitudes**  
Erikson, R.S., & Tedin, K.L. 2007. *American public opinion: Its origins, content, and impact*.  
7th ed. New York: Pearson Longman. Chapter 3. Microlevel opinion: The  
psychology of holding opinions. pp. 58-91. **READER**  
**Clicker trial run**
- April 9 (W) Attitude-behavior linkage, non-attitudes**  
LaPiere, R.T. 1934. Attitudes vs. actions. *Social Forces* 13(2):230-237. **JSTOR**  
Asher, H. 2004. *Polling and the public: What every citizen should know*, 7th edition.  
Washington, DC: CQ Press. Chapter 2. The problem of non attitudes. pp. 32-54.  
**READER**
- April 11 (F) Survey research: Overview**  
Booker, R., & Schaefer, T. 2006. *Public opinion in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: Let the people speak*.  
Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Chapter 2. Measuring public opinion: Survey research  
pp. 25-66. **READER**  
**Clicker trial run**
- April 14 (M) Survey research: Questionnaire development**  
Krosnick, J. 1999. Survey methodology. *Annual Review of Psychology* 50:537-67. **ON-LINE**  
**Clicker quizzes begin**
- April 16 (W) Survey research: Challenges**  
Keeter, S., Kennedy, C., Clark, A., Tompson, T., & Mokrzycki, M. 2007. What’s missing  
from national RDD surveys? The impact of the growing cell-only population.”  
Presented at the 2007 annual conference of the American Association for Public  
Opinion Research, Anaheim, CA, May 17-20. **READER**  
Curtin, R., Presser, S., & Singer, E. 2005. Changes in telephone survey nonresponse over  
the past quarter century. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 69 (1), 87-98.
- April 18 (F) Other methods**  
Booker, R., & Schaefer, T. 2006. *Public opinion in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: Let the people speak*.  
Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Chapter 3. Measuring public opinion: Other methods  
pp. 67-89. **READER**  
**Literature review proposal due in class**

- April 21 (M) Experiments**  
 Johnson, J.B., & Reynolds, H.T. 2005. *Political science research methods*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press. Chapter 3. Research design. pp. 49-64. **READER**  
 Iyengar, S, Peters, M.D., & Kinder, D.R. 1982. "Experimental Demonstrations of the 'Not-So-Minimal' Consequences of Television News Programs." *American Political Science Review* 76(4):848-858. **JSTOR**
- April 23 (W) Content analysis**  
 Johnson, J.B., & Reynolds, H.T. 2005. *Political science research methods*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press. Chapter 8. Document analysis: Using the written record. pp. 222-229. **READER**  
 Robinson, M.J., and Sheehan, M.A. 1983. *Over the wire and on TV: CBS and UPI in campaign '80*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. **READER**
- April 25 (F) Attitude stability**  
 Clawson, R.A., & Oxley, Z.M. 2008. *Public opinion: Democratic ideals, democratic practice*. Washington, DC: CQ Press. Chapter 4. Attitude stability and attitude change. pp. 95-122. **READER**
- April 28 (M) Ideology**  
 Clawson, R.A., & Oxley, Z.M. 2008. *Public opinion: Democratic ideals, democratic practice*. Washington, DC: CQ Press. Chapter 5. Ideological innocence and critiques. pp. 125-152. **READER**
- April 30 (W) Mid-term review**  
**First article summary and critique due in class**
- May 2 (F) Midterm exam, in class**
- May 5 (M) Political socialization: Nurture**  
 Sears, D.O., & Levy, S. 2003. Childhood and adult political development. In Sears, D.O., Huddy, L., & Jervis, R., eds. *Oxford handbook of political psychology*. pp. 60-109. **READER**
- May 7 (W) Political socialization: Nature?**  
 Alford, J.R., Funk, C.L., & Hibbing, J.R. 2005. Are political orientations genetically transmitted? *American Political Science Review* 99:153-167. **ON-LINE**
- May 9 (F) News media and democracy**  
 Graber, D. 2003. The media and democracy: Beyond myths and stereotypes. *Annual Review of Political Science* 6:139-160. **ON-LINE**
- May 12 (M) News media, history**  
 Mayer, J.D. 2008. *American media politics in transition*. Boston, MA: McGraw Hill. Chapter 4. The history of American journalism before electronic media. pp. 75-106. **READER**
- May 14 (W) News media, production**  
 Entman, R.M. 2005. The nature and sources of news. In Geneva Overholser and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, eds. *The Press*. New York: Oxford University Press. pp. 48-65. **READER**  
**Second journal article summary and critique due in class**

- May 16 (F) News media as an institution**  
 Hamilton, J.T. 2005. The market and the media. In Geneva Overholser and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, eds. *The Press*. New York: Oxford University Press. pp. 351-371.  
**READER**  
 Schudson, M. 2002. The news media as political institutions. *Annual Review of Political Science* 5:249-269. **ON-LINE**
- May 19 (M) Media effects**  
 Kinder, D.R. 2003. Communication and politics in the age of information. In Sears, D.O., Huddy, L., & Jervis, R., eds. *Oxford handbook of political psychology*. pp. 357-393.  
**READER**
- May 21 (W) Media effects: Limitations**  
 Wattenberg, M. 2007. *Is voting for young people?* New York: Pearson Longman. Chapters 1-2. pp. 9-60. **READER**
- May 23 (F) Campaign effects**  
 Iyengar, S., & Simon, A.F. 2000. "New Perspectives and Evidence on Political Communication and Campaign Effects." *Annual Review of Psychology* 51:149-169.  
**ON-LINE**
- May 26 (M) No class meeting, no readings**
- May 28 (W) Televised negativity**  
 Mutz, D.C., Reeves, B. 2005. The New Videomalaise: Effects of Televised Incivility on Political Trust. *American Political Science Review* 99(1): 1-15. **ON-LINE**  
**Third journal article summary and critique due in class**
- May 30 (F) No class meeting. Work on your paper.**
- June 2 (M) Media effects and the politics of race**  
 Gilens, M. 2000. *Why Americans Hate Welfare: Race, Media, and the Politics of Antipoverty Policy*. University of Chicago Press. Chapter 5. The news media and the racialization of poverty. pp. 102-132. **READER**
- June 4 (W) Media and domestic public policy**  
 Erikson, R.S., & Tedin, K.L. 2007. *American public opinion: Its origins, content, and impact*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Pearson Longman. Chapter 11, "Public Opinion and the Performance of Democracy." pp. 325-337. **READER**  
 Molotch, Harvey L., David L. Prottess, and Margaret Gordon. 1987 "The Media-Policy Connection: Ecologies of News." In David L. Paletz, ed. *Political Communication Research: Approaches, Studies, Assessments*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing.  
**READER**
- June 6 (F) Media and foreign policy**  
 Matthew A. Baum, Philip B.K. Potter. N.d. The relationship between mass media, public opinion, and foreign policy: Toward a theoretical synthesis. *Annual Review of Political Science*. Forthcoming. **ON-LINE**  
**Final paper due by 5 p.m.**
- June 11 (W) Final exam, 8-11 a.m**