

POSC 256
SEMINAR IN PUBLIC OPINION & MASS MEDIA
Winter 2004
Tuesdays 2-5 PM

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Hours: Wednesday, 11 a.m. - 12 p.m. and by appointment

This course explores public opinion and the mass media in the U.S. We will focus on three major areas of scholarly investigation: Individual attitudes, opinions, and preferences; aggregate or collective public will; and influences of the media on the mass public. This course is intended to provide you with a thorough review of literature and prepare you to demonstrate this knowledge on a field examination treating mass political behavior as well as in the design of your own original research.

Required Books

Alvarez, R. Michael and John Brehm. 2002. *Hard Choices, Easy Answers: Values, Information, and American Public Opinion*. Princeton University Press. ISBN 069109635X.

Cook, Timothy E. 1998. *Governing with the News: The News Media as a Political Institution*. University of Chicago Press. ISBN 0226115003

Gamson, William. 1992. *Talking Politics*. Cambridge University Press. ISBN 0521436796

Gilens, Martin. 2000. *Why Americans Hate Welfare: Race, Media, and the Politics of Antipoverty Policy*. University of Chicago Press. ISBN 0226293653

Herbst, Susan. 1995. *Numbered Voices: How Opinion Polling Has Shaped American Politics*. University of Chicago Press. ISBN 0226327434

Lupia, Arthur, and Mathew D. McCubbins. 1998. *The Democratic Dilemma: Can Citizens Learn What They Need to Know?* Cambridge University Press. ISBN 0521585937

Mutz, Diana. 1998. *Impersonal Influence: How Perceptions of Mass Collectives Affect Political Attitudes*. Cambridge University Press. ISBN 0521637260

Zaller, John. 1999. *A Theory of Media Politics: How the Interests of Politicians, Journalists, and Citizens Shape the News*. Not yet available in print: Typescript. University of California, Los Angeles.
<http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/polisci/faculty/zaller/media%20politics%20book%20.pdf>

In addition to these books, there will be a great deal of supplementary readings, discussed below. Most of these will be available either through J-STOR (www.jstor.org) or through other electronic resources at the library (library.ucr.edu). Note these abbreviations, many of which are likely familiar to you: APSR (*American Political Science Review*), AJPS (*American Journal of Political Science*), BJPS (*British Journal of Political Science*), JOP (*Journal of Politics*), APQ (*American Politics Quarterly*), POQ (*Public Opinion Quarterly*), PB (*Political Behavior*).

Course Assignments

Weekly Readings Memoranda

Every one of you is expected to participate in class discussion. In order to help you prepare for this class discussion, I would like you to write a memo each week responding to the readings. These reaction memos should analyze and integrate insights from the readings and push beyond, incorporating some of your own ideas about the topic at hand. Compare and contrast the readings, critique theory and methodology. Pay particular attention to how these readings integrate with and inform your own research questions. Be careful to go beyond summaries of the week's readings: Certainly you should cite major ideas from them, but focus on your critique, analysis, and thoughts. These memos should be 3-5 pages, but the important aspect is your insight, not the length of the writing. The memos are due each week on Monday at 4:00 p.m. and should be e-mailed to me (martin.johnson@ucr.edu). This way I will have a chance to thoroughly read your memos. Please do not turn them in late.

These weekly writing assignments and your class participation together are worth 50 percent of your course grade.

Research Design

You are responsible for writing a research design paper, due March 18 by 5 p.m. by e-mail or in my box in the Political Science department. Your research design will develop and pose a research question related to media bias. The paper will explain why the research question is interesting and how it relates to literature about media politics. This is different from a review of literature in several respects: The design will focus on the development of an original set of theoretical expectations – informed by literature on the topic – and the discussion of an appropriate method for collecting evidence that would support (or fail to support) the expectations you develop. This paper should be 15-20 pages and incorporate literature outside of the course's main readings. Done well, this design will be executable and perhaps in time form the basis of a full-length research paper for a conference, your prospectus, or even a publication down the road.

To keep you on track, I would like to see a proposal for your research design – identifying the research question, why you think it is important, and a couple of the sources you plan to use – by the end of the day January 29. The proposal should 1-2 pages.

Survey data homework

Finally, I plan to have you conduct a data exercise using public opinion survey data. If you do not already know how to do this, at some point you need to learn how to pull a dataset into a analysis program like SPSS. Why not now? I will provide more details later in the quarter and the assignment will be due February 27. It will be worth 5 percent of your grade.

Summary

Weekly writing assignments & class participation	50%
Research Design, including proposal	45%
Data project	5%

1. January 6: Course Introduction

2. January 13: Thinking about public opinion

Blumer, Herbert. 1948. "Public Opinion and Public Opinion Polling." *American Sociological Review* 13(5):542-549.

Key, V.O., Jr. 1961. *Public Opinion and American Democracy*. Ch.1 "Introduction," pp. 2-26.

Price, Vincent. 1992. *Public Opinion*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications. This is a very short book.

Sniderman, Paul. 1993. "The New Look in Public Opinion Research." In Ada Finifter, ed. *Political Science: The State of the Discipline II*. Washington, DC: APSA.

3. January 20: Individual opinion – The psychology of attitudes

Ajzen, Icek, and Martin Fishbein. 1980. *Understanding Attitudes and Predicting Social Behavior*. Chapter 1, 2, 13. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Eagly, Alice H., and Shelley Chaiken 1998. "Attitude structure and function." In Daniel T. Gilbert, Susan T. Fiske, and Gardner Lindzey, eds. *Handbook of Social Psychology*. 4th edition. Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.

Fazio, Russell. 1995. "Attitudes as Object-Evaluation Associations: Determinants, Consequences, and Correlates of Attitude Accessibility." In Richard Petty and Jon A. Krosnick, eds. *Attitude Strength: Antecedents and Consequences*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Huckfeldt, Robert, Jeffrey Levine, William Morgan, and John Sprague. 1999. "Accessibility and the Political Utility of Partisan and Ideological Orientations." *AJPS* 43(3):888-911.

LaPiere, Richard T. 1934. "Attitudes vs. Actions." *Social Forces* 13(2):230-237.

4. January 27: Opinion Formation, Knowledge, and Sophistication

Alvarez, R. Michael and John Brehm. 2002. *Hard Choices, Easy Answers: Values, Information, and American Public Opinion*. Princeton University Press. ISBN 069109635X.

Converse, Phillip. 1964. "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics." In David Apter, ed. *Ideology and Discontent*. Free Press.

Lavine, Howard. 2002. "On-line Versus Memory-Based Process Models of Political Evaluation." In Kristen Renwick Monroe, ed. *Political Psychology*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Lodge, Milton, Marco R. Steenbergen, and Shawn Brau. 1995. The Responsive Voter: Campaign Information and the Dynamics of Candidate Evaluation. *American Political Science Review*. 89:309-326.

Peffley, Mark A., and Jon Hurwitz. 1985. "A Hierarchical Model of Attitude Constraint." *AJPS* 29:871-90.

Zaller, John. The Nature and Origin of Mass Opinions. Ch.3 "How citizens acquire information and convert it into public opinion." 40-52

JANUARY 29 RESEARCH DESIGN PROSPECTUS DUE

5. February 3 : Persuasion and learning

Cobb, Michael D., and James H. Kuklinski. 1997. "Changing Minds: Political Arguments and Political Persuasion." *AJPS* 41(1):88-121.

Lau, Richard R., Richard A. Smith, and Susan T. Fiske. 1991. "Political Beliefs, Policy Interpretations, and Political Persuasion." *Journal of Politics* 53(3):644-675.

Lupia, Arthur, and Mathew D. McCubbins. 1998. *The Democratic Dilemma: Can Citizens Learn What They Need to Know?* Cambridge University Press.

Petty, Richard E., J.R. Priester, and D.T. Wegener. 1994. "Cognitive Processes in Attitude Change." In Robert S. Wyer, Jr., Thomas K. Srull, eds. *Handbook of Social Cognition*. Erlbaum.

Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Ch. 7-8

6. February 10: Opinion research

- Brady, Henry E. 2000. "Contributions of Survey Research to Political Science." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 33(1): 47-57.
- Davis, Darren W. 1997. "Nonrandom Measurement Error and Race of Interviewer Effects Among African Americans." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 61(1):183-207
- Hart, Roderick. 2000. *Campaign Talk*. Princeton University Press. Ch. 8 (199-225) and Appendix 1 (245-251).
- Herbst, Susan. 1995. *Numbered Voices: How Opinion Polling Has Shaped American Politics*. University of Chicago Press. ISBN 0226327434
- Kern, Montague, and Marion Just. 1995. "The Focus Group Method: Advertising, Campaign News and the Construction of Campaign Images." *Political Communication* 12:127-145.
- Kinder, Donald R. "Coming to Grips with the Holy Ghost." Ch. 2 in Donald R. Kinder and Thomas R. Palfrey, eds. *Experimental Foundations of Political Science*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Krosnick, Jon. 1999. "Survey methodology" *Annual Review of Psychology* 50:537-67.

7. February 17: Political discussion and social influence

- Gamson, William. 1992. *Talking Politics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Mutz, Diana. 1998. *Impersonal Influence: How Perceptions of Mass Collectives Affect Political Attitudes*. Cambridge University Press.
- McPhee, William N. 1963. "A Theory of Informal Social Influence," with Robert B. Smith and Jack Ferguson. In *Formal Theories of Mass Behavior*. New York: Free Press. pp. 74-103.
- Robert Huckfeldt, Paul E. Johnson, John Sprague. 2002. "Political Environments, Political Dynamics, and the Survival of Disagreement." *Journal of Politics* 64:1-21.
- Noelle-Neumann, Elisabeth. 1993. *The Spiral of Silence: Public Opinion – Our Social Skin*, 2nd edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 1-3, pp. 1-57

8. February 24: Public opinion in collectives: Rational public and policy influence

- Durr, Robert H. 1993. "What Moves Policy Sentiment?" *APSR* 87: 158-70
- MacKuen, Michael. 2002. "Political Psychology and the Micro-Macro Gap in Politics." In James H. Kuklinski, ed. *Thinking about Political Psychology*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Norrander, Barbara. 2000. "The Multi-Layered Impact of Public Opinion on Capital Punishment Implementation in the American States." *Political Research Quarterly* 53:771-793.
- Stimson, James A. 2002. "The Micro Foundations of Mood." In James H. Kuklinski, ed. *Thinking about Political Psychology*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Stimson, James A., Michael B. MacKuen, and Robert S. Erikson. 1995. "Dynamic Representation." *APSR*. 89:543-65.
- Wlezien, Christopher B. 1995. "The Public as Thermostat: Dynamics of Preferences for Spending." *AJPS*. 39:981-1000.
- Wright, Gerald C., Robert S. Erikson, and John P. McIver. 1987. "Public Opinion and Policy Liberalism in the American States." *AJPS* 31: 980-1001.

FEBRUARY 27 DATA HOMEWORK DUE

9. March 2: Media effects, agenda setting, framing, and priming

Bartels, Larry M. 1993. "Messages Received: The Political Impact of Media Exposure." *APSR* 87:267-85.

Gilens, Martin. 2000. *Why Americans Hate Welfare: Race, Media, and the Politics of Antipoverty Policy*. University of Chicago Press.

Iyengar, Shanto, and Adam F. Simon. 2000. "New Perspectives and Evidence on Political Communication and Campaign Effects." *Annual Review of Psychology* 51:149-69.

Iyengar, Shanto, Mark D. Peters, and Donald R. Kinder. 1982. "Experimental Demonstrations of the "Not-So-Minimal" Consequences of Television News Programs." *APSR* 76:848-858.

Krosnick, Jon A., and Donald R. Kinder. 1990. "Altering the Foundations of Support for the President Through Priming." *APSR* 84(2): 497-512.

Nelson, Thomas E., Rosalee A. Clawson, and Zoe M. Oxley. 1997. "Media Framing of a Civil Liberties Conflict and Its Effect on Tolerance" *APSR* 91(3): 567-583

10. March 9: The news media as a political institution

Bovitz, Gregory L, James N. Druckman, and Arthur Lupia. 2002. "When Can a News Organization Lead Public Opinion?" *Public Choice* 113:127-55.

Cook, Timothy E. 1998. *Governing with the News: The News Media as a Political Institution*. University of Chicago Press.

Page, Benjamin I. 1996. "The Mass Media as Political Actors." *PS: Political Science and Politics*. 29(1):20-24.

Zaller, John. 1999. *A Theory of Media Politics: How the Interests of Politicians, Journalists, and Citizens Shape the News*. Typescript. University of California, Los Angeles.
<http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/polisci/faculty/zaller/media%20politics%20book%20.pdf>

MARCH 18 RESEARCH DESIGN DUE