



POLS/AMST 420: Political Attitudes and Behavior

Instructor: **Giovanny D. Pleites-Hernandez**
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Semester: Fall 2018
Office Phone: (865) 974-2261
Class: T/Th from 9:40 – 10:55 a.m.
Room: PHY-306

Course Description

This course will introduce students to some of the key topics in the study of American political behavior. Amongst the questions that we will explore over the semester are: What is public opinion and how is it measured? How informed are the American people? What factors influence the formation of political attitudes? How civically engaged are the individuals that comprise the American electorate, and what factors influence said engagement? What is partisanship, how does it develop, and how does it influence political behavior? What is the role of the media in regards to the relationship between the citizenry and the government? How responsive is the government to the American people?

In addition to the exploration of the questions mentioned above, we will also work on developing hard skills by engaging with surveys, questions, and statistical software. Students will analyze and interpret data, the latter of which is aimed at helping the development of their writing.

Course Structure

This course is an instructor-led reading seminar, which means that the majority of work done by students will be outside of the classroom. This includes reading the assigned materials, preparing notes based on those readings, and engaging in thoughtful discussion in the classroom. In addition to the readings and in-class discussions, there will also be several writing assignments including the term paper, all of which are described in detail below.

University/College/Departmental Curricular Objectives Met

This course satisfies part of the upper level requirement for the Political Science Major and Minor.

Program-Level Learning Objectives that the Course Supports

Students will develop basic research skills including the ability to develop a research question; formulate one or more testable hypotheses; construct a research design; and carry through a research project to completion.

Course-Specific Learning Objectives

After this class, students should be able to (1) write a coherent essay on a topic related to political behavior and/or attitudes; (2) have an understanding of how to conduct basic empirical analysis; (3) understand the foundations of individual opinions and political behavior; (4)

critically engage with peer-refereed publications; (5) conduct a literature review; (6) describe the extent to which the government is responsive to the interests of the American people.

Required Materials*

1. Rosalee A. Clawson and Zoe M. Oxley. 2011. *Conducting Empirical Analysis: Public Opinion in Action*. ** Washington, D.C.: Sage. ISBN: 9781608716739.

*Additional materials will be distributed in class, via e-mail, or posted on Canvas (<https://utk.instructure.com>).

**Referred to below as CEA.

Required Instructional Technology

Familiarity with the Canvas learning management system.

Student Assessment and Evaluation Methods

Attendance and Participation

You are expected to attend all class meetings*¹, complete the assigned readings before class (on Tuesday of a given week), and participate in class discussions. In addition, you will be required to send in 2 questions (total) each week based on the readings. These questions are to be emailed to me (gpleites@vols.utk.edu) **by 1:00 p.m. on the Monday of each week** and will be factored into your participation grade. Together, attendance (13%) and participation (22%) will make up 35% of your overall course grade.

*¹You may be excused from class with written evidence of sickness or required participation at a school-sponsored event. Individuals with more than 3 absences, unless cleared by the instructor, will receive a zero for attendance.

Workbook Exercises

You are responsible for completing the chapter exercises in the CEA workbook for 3 weeks. You will have 7 opportunities to complete these assignments. You are expected to complete all of the exercises in a given chapter (minus the “Mini-Research Projects”) and answer the questions accordingly. These workbook exercises will be **due on Thursday at 11:59 p.m.** of the corresponding week, unless otherwise stated. Note: You are to submit this and any other written assignments on the course Canvas page.

Mini-Research Project

At the end of each chapter in the CEA workbook, there a section titled “Mini-Research Project” and you are responsible for completing 1 of those. While it may be advantageous to complete it for one of the same chapters that you choose to do the workbook exercises for, you are not required to do so; the research project can be completed for any of the chapters in the book. The project needs to be turned in on, or before, the Tuesday leading up to Thanksgiving Break (**November 20th**) **by 11:59 p.m.**

Critical Review

You are responsible for writing one critical review during the semester. The purpose of this assignment is for you to engage with the week’s readings and critically evaluate the merits of

those works, theoretical or methodological. This paper should be approximately three double-spaced pages (2.5 – 3 pages) in length and is expected to be well-organized, proof-read, and properly cited. For an idea of what a critical review is supposed to look like you can look at one of the major political science journals as they usually have them at the end of issues (e.g., [the Journal of Politics](#)). This assignment will be due by **Tuesday, November 6th at 9:00 a.m.**

Annotated Bibliography

As part of your term paper, on which you are required to cite at least 10 scholarly (peer-reviewed journal articles or books) sources, you will be responsible for writing an annotated bibliography over the course of the semester. Starting on the week of September 20th, you will be expected to send me one source (per week) related to your chosen topic for your term paper. You will do this until week 11 (November 1st), for a total of 7 sources. You have until **Sunday at 11:59 p.m. of a given week** to get the updated annotated bibliography uploaded to Canvas.

This is where you start to get a better understanding of what has been done in the past and how the question you are wanting to explore fits into the established literature on the subject. The university library (<https://www.lib.utk.edu/>) offers various sources (<https://www.lib.utk.edu/info/undergrad/>) to help you find prior studies related to your own topic. In addition to the journal article databases, Google Scholar (<https://scholar.google.com/>) is a valuable resource for finding works for this assignment.

Term Paper

For the term paper, you are expected to choose a topic on public opinion or political behavior that interests you. Then you are to look over the literature on said issue area to get a better understanding of what has been done. Once you have become more familiar with your topic, you can come up with a research question. This research question should be your guiding tool as you're looking through the literature and working towards the rest of the paper.

In order to receive full credit, your paper should have an introduction, a literature review/theory section, a hypothesis (or hypotheses), a research design, and a conclusion. The introduction should clearly state your research question and provide an overview of your paper. This first part is where you address the question of why your work is important. As with any other kind of writing, you want to engage with the reader and make your case as to why they should spend their time reading the rest of your work. The next section is the literature review, and here is where you demonstrate that you are familiar with the literature on your chosen subject. In addition, it is also where you situate your work in said literature (i.e., what does my project contribute to what we know about my chosen subject?). This is also where you lay out your theoretical framework and expectations for the project. This review should help guide the construction of a testable hypothesis (or hypotheses). For this paper, you are not expected to actually conduct the analysis, but you are expected to describe how you would answer your research question (and test your hypothesis) and what you would expect to find based on your review of the literature and hypothesis (or hypotheses). Finally, you are expected to discuss the implications of your work and any avenues for future research in closing.

Part of your grade (25%) for the term paper will come from an **in class presentation on Tuesday, December 4th**. This will be a short (5-7 minute) presentation where you give us an

idea of what your paper is about, how it fits into prior scholarship, and what you would expect to find given your exploration of the literature. Your completed paper is due the following week **on Monday, December 10th at 12:00 p.m.** and should be anywhere from 8 to 10 double-spaced pages in length, not including the references or cover page. As mentioned above, you are expected to cite at least 10 scholarly sources.

Late Work

No late work will be accepted. Make sure you pay attention to the due dates and the times at which these assignments are due.

Extra Credit

One extra credit opportunity will be made available before Thanksgiving break. More information will be presented in class and/or Canvas.

Examinations

There are no examinations in this course.

Grading and Course Requirements

Your final grade will be determined by your performance on the abovementioned assignments. See the following grading scale and assignment breakdown:

Grading Scale				Grading Formula	
				Attendance & Participation	35%
A	93 – 100	C	74 – 76	Workbook Exercises	20%
A-	90 – 92	C-	70 – 73	Mini-Research Project	5%
B+	87 – 89	D+	67 – 69	Critical Review	10%
B	84 – 86	D	64 – 66	Annotated Bibliography	10%
B-	80 – 83	D-	60 – 63	Term Paper	20%
C+	77 - 79	F	Below 60	Total	100%

Key Dates

Annotated Bibliography (1st source): due by Sunday, September 23rd at 11:59 p.m.

Annotated Bibliography (7th source): due by Sunday, November 4th at 11:59 p.m.

Critical Review: due by Tuesday, November 6th at 9:00 a.m.

CEA Mini-Research Project: due by Tuesday, November 20th at 11:59 p.m.

Term Paper Presentations in Class: on Tuesday, December 4th

Term Paper: due by Monday, December 10th at 12:00 p.m.

Office Hours

You must make an appointment to meet with me by email (gpleites@vols.utk.edu). In addition to the set hours (Wednesday 7-10 a.m. in McClung Tower 1017), I am willing to work around your schedule whenever possible.

Technology

Computers and tablets are allowed in the classroom for note-taking and other class-related purposes. You are not allowed to use these devices for browsing the internet, social media, or checking email. Cell phones must be silenced and cannot be used in class at all. Failure to comply with these rules will result in a zero for both attendance and participation for the day. In addition, you may be asked to leave for the day.

Communication of Announcements

Announcements will be sent via e-mail to your official UTK e-mail address and/or posted on Canvas. You are responsible for monitoring your UTK e-mail account and the course Canvas site (<https://utk.instructure.com>) daily.

Email

All emails sent to me must include the following: the student's name, course section number (i.e., POLS 420-001), a proper and formal greeting, a clear subject line in regards to the email, and the actual request or question that prompted the email. You should expect a response within 72 hours.

The Writing Center

You are encouraged to visit The Writing Center (<http://writingcenter.utk.edu/>) on campus for help with assignments for this and other courses.

Academic Integrity

All rules concerning academic honesty as set out in the current edition of *Hilltopics* (<http://hilltopics.utk.edu/>) will be enforced. Particular attention should be paid to the section on plagiarism. Students are reminded of their obligation to abide by the UTK Honor Code: "An essential feature of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville is a commitment to maintaining an atmosphere of intellectual integrity and academic honesty. As a student of the university, I pledge that I will neither knowingly give nor receive any inappropriate assistance in academic work, thus affirming my own personal commitment to honor and integrity."

Learning Disabilities

Any student who feels he or she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact Student Disability Services (SDS) office (<http://sds.utk.edu/>) at 865-974-6087 to document their eligibility for services. Their office is located in Dunford Hall. SDS will work with students and faculty to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

The Student's Role in Improving Teaching and Learning through Course Assessment

At UT, it is our collective responsibility to improve the state of teaching and learning. During the semester, you may be requested to assess aspects of this course either during class or at the completion of the class. You are encouraged to respond to these various forms of assessment as a means of continuing to improve the quality of the UT learning experience.

University Civility Statement

Civility is genuine respect and regard for others: politeness, consideration, tact, good manners, graciousness, cordiality, affability, amiability and courteousness. Civility enhances academic freedom and integrity, and is a prerequisite to the free exchange of ideas and knowledge in the learning community. Our community consists of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and campus visitors. Community members affect each other's well-being and have a shared interest in creating and sustaining an environment where all community members and their points of view are valued and respected. Affirming the value of each member of the university community, the campus asks that all its members adhere to the principles of civility and community adopted by the campus: <http://civility.utk.edu/>.

Food Security Resources for Students

Any student who faces challenges securing their food and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support. Furthermore, please be aware of resources on campus like Smokey's Pantry that can assist you in accessing food and other non-perishable resources. Go here to learn more about Smokey's Pantry: <https://smokeyspantry.wordpress.com/>.

Alteration of this Syllabus

The instructor reserves the right to revise, alter, and/or amend this syllabus as necessary. Students will be notified by email and/or Canvas of any such revisions, alterations, and/or amendments.

Key Resources for Students

Political Science Department Website: <http://web.utk.edu/~polisci/>

Academic Planning: <http://www.utk.edu/advising>

Arts and Sciences Advising Services: <http://artsci.utk.edu/advising/>

Student Success Center: <http://studentsuccess.utk.edu>

Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs: <http://catalog.utk.edu>

Hilltopics: <http://dos.utk.edu>

Course Timetable: https://bannersb.utk.edu/kbanpr/bwckschd.p_disp_dyn_sched

Library: <http://www.lib.utk.edu>

Career Services: <http://career.utk.edu>

Schedule and Topics

Part I: Introduction to Course, Public Opinion, and Dealing with Data

Week 1: Course Introduction

August 23rd: Introduction

Week 2: Introduction to Survey Data, Data Analysis, and Interpreting Data

August 28th:

Clawson, Rosalee A. and Zoe M. Oxley. 2011. *Conducting Empirical Analysis: Public Opinion in Action*. Reference Appendix. (CEA Workbook).

Clawson, Rosalee A. and Zoe M. Oxley. 2017. *Public Opinion: Democratic Ideals, Democratic Practice*. Thousand Oaks: CQ Press. Appendix.

August 30th: CEA Ch. 1 in class (bring your computer)

Part II: Citizen Capability

Week 3: Citizen Competence and Political Knowledge

September 4th:

Delli Carpini, Michael X., and Scott Keeter. 1996. *What Americans Know About Politics and Why It Matters*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Ch. 2.

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.

Gilens, Martin. 2016. In *New Directions in Public Opinion*. Edited by Adam J. Berinsky. New York: Routledge. Ch. 3 "Two-thirds Full? Citizen Competence and Democratic Governance" p. 54-78.

September 6th: CEA Ch. 7: Political Knowledge

Week 4: Information Processing and Heuristics

September 11th and 13th:

Lupia, Arthur. 1994. "Shortcuts versus Encyclopedias: Information and Voting Behavior in California Insurance Reform Elections." *American Political Science Review* 88(1): 63-76.

Lodge, Milton, and Marco R. Steenbergen. 1995. "The Responsive Voter: Campaign Information and the Dynamics of Candidate Evaluation." *American Political Science Review* 89(2):309-26.

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

Skim: Lau, Richard P., and David P. Redlawsk. 2001. "Advantages and Disadvantages of Cognitive Heuristics in Political Decision Making." *American Journal of Political Science* 45(4): 951-71.

Part III: Roots of Individual Opinions

Week 5: Political Socialization, Genetics, Emotions, and Personality

September 18th and 20th:

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

Alford, John R., Carolyn L. Funk, and John R. Hibbing. 2005. "Are Political Orientations Genetically Transmitted?" *American Political Science Review* 99(2): 153-67.

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): 959-78.

Skim: 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): 111-33.

September 20th: CEA Ch. 2: Political Socialization

Week 6: Groups

September 25th:

Sears, David O., Carl P. Hensler, and Leslie K. Speer. 1979. "Whites' Opposition to 'Busing': Self-Interest or Symbolic Politics?" *American Political Science Review* 73(2): 369-384.

Cramer, Katherine J. 2016. *The Politics of Resentment*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. Ch. 1 - 3.

McKenzie, Brian, and Stella M. Rouse. 2013. "Shades of Faith: Religious Foundations of Political Attitudes among African Americans, Latinos, and Whites." *American Journal of Political Science* 57(1): 218-35.

September 27th: CEA Ch. 6: Pluralistic Roots of Public Opinion

Week 7: Party Identification

October 2nd:

Lewis-Beck, William G. Jacoby, Helmut Norpoth, and Herbert F. Weisberg. 2008. *The American Voter Revisited*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press. Chs. 6 and 7.

Klar, Samara and Yanna Krupnikov. 2016. *Independent Politics: How American Disdain for Parties Leads to Political Inaction*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chs. 1-3.

October 4th: Fall Break

Week 8: Polarization

October 9th:

Fiorina, Morris P. 2013. "America's Missing Moderates: Hiding in Plain Sight." *The American Interest*.

Abramowitz, Alan I. 2013. "Polarized or Sorted? Just What's Wrong with Our Politics Anyway?" *The American Interest*.

Skim: Ellis, Christopher and James A. Stimson. 2011. In *Facing the Challenge of Democracy: Explorations in the Analysis of Public Opinion and Political Participation*. Edited by Paul M. Sniderman and Benjamin Highton. "Pathways to Conservative Identification: The Politics of Ideological Contradiction in the United States."

October 11th: CEA Ch. 5: Ideology

Week 9: Campaigns

October 16th and 18th:

Finkel, Steven E. 1993. "Reexamining the 'Minimal Effects' Model in Recent Presidential Campaigns." *The Journal of Politics* 55(1): 1-21.

Holbrook, Thomas M. 1996. *Do Campaigns Matter?* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. Ch. 5.

Hillygus, D. Sunshine. 2005. "Campaign Effects and the Dynamics of Turnout Intention in Election 2000." *The Journal of Politics* 67(1): 50-68.

Skim: Gelman, Andrew and Gary King. 1993. "Why Are American Presidential Election Campaign Polls So Variable When Votes Are So Predictable?" *British Journal of Political Science* 23(4): 409-51.

Week 10: Mass Media Influence

October 23rd:

Gilens, Martin. 1999. *Why Americans Hate Welfare*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chs. 5 and 6.

Iyengar, Shanto, and Donald Kinder. 2010. *News that Matters*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chs. 1-3, and 7.

October 25th: CEA Ch. 3: Mass Media

Part IV: Political Participation and Government Responsiveness

Week 11: Civic Engagement, Trust, and Political Participation

October 30th:

Brady, Henry E., Sidney Verba, and Kay Lehman Schlozman. 1995. "Beyond SES: A Resource Model of Political Participation." *American Political Science Review* 89: 271-94.

Brehm, John and Wendy Rahn. 1997. "Individual-Level Evidence for the Causes and Consequences of Social Capital." *American Journal of Political Science* 41(3): 999-1023.

Hetherington, Marc J. 1998. "The Political Relevance of Political Trust." *American Political Science Review* 92: 791-08.

Skim: Gerber, Alan, and Donald Green. 2000. "The Effect of Canvassing, Direct Mail, and Telephone Contact on Voter Turnout: A Field Experiment." *American Political Science Review* 94: 653-663.

November 1st: CEA Ch. 10: Trust in Government and Social Capital

Week 12: Models of Vote Choice

November 6th and 8th:

Berelson, Bernard R., Paul F. Lazarsfeld, and William N. McPhee. 1954. *Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Ch. 4.

Green, Donald, Bradley Palmquist, and Eric Shickler. 2002. *Partisan Hearts & Minds: Political Parties and the Social Identities of Voters*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Ch. 8.

Rudolph, T.J. and J.T. Grant. 2002. "An Attributional Model of Economic Voting: Evidence from the 2000 Presidential Election." *Political Research Quarterly* 55(4): 805-23.

Week 13: Minority Representation

November 13th and 15th:

Griffin, John D. and Brian Newman. 2005. "Are Voters Better Represented?" *Journal of Politics* 67(4): 1206-27.

Broockman, David E. 2014. "Distorted Communication, Unequal Representation: Constituents Communicate Less to Representatives Not of Their Race." *American Journal of Political Science* 58(2): 307-21.

Juenke, Eric Gonzalez, and Robert R. Preuhs. 2012. "Irreplaceable Legislators? Rethinking Minority Representatives in the New Century." *American Journal of Political Science* 56(3): 705-15.

Skim: Merolla, Jennifer L., Abbylin H. Sellers, and Derek J. Fowler. 2013. "Descriptive Representation, Political Efficacy, and African Americans in the 2008 Presidential Election." *Political Psychology* 34(6): 863-75.

Week 14: Macropolitics

November 20th: Stimson, James A., Michael B. Mackuen, and Robert S. Erikson. 1995. "Dynamic Representation." *American Political Science Review* 89(3): 543-565.

November 22nd: Thanksgiving Break

Week 15: The Connection Between the People and Government

November 27th:

Canes-Wrone, Brandice, David W. Brady, and John F. Cogan. 2002. "Out of Step, Out of Office: Electoral Accountability and House Members' Voting" *American Political Science Review* 96(1): 127-40.

Canes-Wrone, Brandice, and Kenneth W. Shotts. 2004. "The Conditional Nature of Presidential Responsiveness to Public Opinion" *American Journal of Political Science* 48(4): 690-706.

Casillas, Christopher J., Peter K. Enns, and Patrick C. Wohlfarth. 2011. "How Public Opinion Constrains the U.S. Supreme Court." *American Journal of Political Science* 55 (1): 74-88.

November 29th: CEA Ch. 11: Impact of Public Opinion on Policy

Week 16: Class Presentations

December 4th: Term Paper Presentations

Week 17: Finals Week

December 10th: Term Paper Due