

**Readings in Public Opinion**  
**Political Science 703**  
**Spring, 2000**

Professor Thomas E. Nelson 2044 Derby Hall 292-6408 nelson.179@osu.edu	Monday, Wednesday, 9:30–11:18 2078 Derby Hall Office Hours: Monday 1:30-3:30
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This course examines the structure and dynamics of modern American public opinion. We will analyze the content of opinion (who thinks what), and its process (why they think that). Readings will come from the scholarly literature in political science and social psychology, reflecting your instructor's particular tastes and orientation toward this field.

This is both a traditional seminar and a "virtual" class, meaning that a significant amount of our interaction and learning will happen online. There is a WebCT site for the class, available through the Political Science Department homepage, and you will be expected to visit it early and often.

Student Responsibilities. I expect you to participate actively, thoughtfully, and respectfully in discussions, both in class and online. I don't expect brilliance at every turn, but rather a sincere effort to grapple with the material. You are also expected to lead discussion during one class session. Lastly, you will write a midterm examination and a final paper. Here are the specific requirements:

- ◆ *Midterm examination.* An essay exam covering topics and literature from the first half of the course. Available at the website. Worth 30% of the grade.
- ◆ *Final paper.* An empirical research proposal examining an original question relating to public opinion. Due at the end of the quarter. Worth 50% of the grade.
- ◆ *Discussion.* Active participation during in-class discussions. Also, you must participate in threaded discussions at the website. I will expect at least one legitimate contribution every week. Finally, you must lead discussion during one class session; see the appendix for suggestions. Worth 20% of the grade.

### **Topics and Readings**

Two books are required for purchase, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*, by John Zaller; and *What Americans Know About Politics and Why It Matters*, by Michael Delli Carpini and Scott Keeter. They should be in the bookstores by week 2, or order them online.

### **Week 1: Defining the Field**

Kinder, Donald R. 1998. "Opinion and Action in the Realm of Politics". *Handbook of Social Psychology, 4th Edition II*: 778-867.

**Week 2: Attitude Theory**

- Zajonc, Robert B. 1980. "Feeling And Thinking: Preferences Need No Inferences". *American Psychologists* 35: 151-75.
- Huckfeldt, Robert, Jeffrey Levine, William Morgan, and John Sprague. 1999. "Accessibility and the Political Utility of Partisan and Ideological Orientations". *American Journal of Political Science* 43: 888-911.
- Tesser, Abraham, and Leonard Martin. 1996. "The Psychology of Evaluation". *Social Psychology: Handbook of Basic Principles* 400-432.
- Anderson, Norman H. 1973. "Information Integration Theory Applied to Attitudes About U.S. Presidents". *Journal of Educational Psychology* 84: 1-8.
- Ajzen, Icek 1991. "The Theory of Planned Behavior". *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 50: 179-211.

**Week 3: Sophistication**

- Delli Carpini, Michael X., Scott Keeter. 1996. *What Americans Know About Politics and Why It Matters* .

**Week 4: Taste (Ideology)**

- Jennings, M. Kent 1992. "Ideological Thinking Among Mass Publics And Political Elites". *Public Opinion Quarterly* 56: 419-41.
- Converse, Philip E. 1964. "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics". *Ideology and Discontent* 206-261.
- Page, Benjamin, Robert Y. Shapiro, and Glenn R. Dempsey. 1987. "What Moves Public Opinion?". *American Political Science Review* 81: 23-43.
- Abramowitz, Alan, and Kyle L. Saunders. 1998. "Ideological Realignment in the U.S. Electorate". *Journal of Politics* 60: 634-652.

**Week 5: The Psychology of Public Opinion**

- Zaller, John 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Public Opinion* .

**Week 6: Interests and Values**

- Sears, David O., Richard R. Lau. 1983. "Inducing Apparently Self-interested Political Preferences". *American Journal Of Political Science* 27: 223-51.
- Quattrone, George A., Amos Tversky. 1988. "Contrasting Rational And Psychological Analyses Of Political Choice". *American Political Science Review* 82: 720-36.

Feldman, Stanley 1988. "Structure and Consistency in Public Opinion: the Role of Core Beliefs and Values". *American Journal of Political Science* 32: 416-440.

Feldman, Stanley, John Zaller. 1992. "The Political Culture of Ambivalence: Ideological Responses to the Welfare State". *American Journal of Political Science* 36: 268-307.

Chong, Dennis 1996. "Rational Choice Theory's Mysterious Rivals". *The Rational Choice Controversy* 37-58.

### **Week 7: Tolerance**

Kuklinski, James H., Ellen Riggle, Victor Ottati, Norbert Schwarz, And Robert S. Wyer, Jr.. 1991. "The Cognitive And Affective Bases Of Political Tolerance Judgments". *American Journal Of Political Science* 35: 1-27.

Gross, Kimberley, Donald R. Kinder. 1998. "A Collision of Principles? Free Expression, Racial Equality, and the Prohibition of Racist Speech". *British Journal of Political Science* 28: 445-471.

Gibson, James 1998. "A Sober Second Thought: An Experiment in Persuading Russians to Tolerate". *American Journal of Political Science* 42: 819-850.

Sullivan, John L., James Piereson, and George E. Marcus. 1979. "An Alternative Conceptualization of Political Tolerance: Illusory Increases 1950s-1970s". *American Political Science Review* 73: 781-794.

### **Week 8: Race**

Bobo, Lawrence, James R. Kluegel. 1993. "Opposition To Race-targeting: Self-interest, Stratification Ideology, Or Racial Attitudes?". *American Sociological Review* 58: 443-464.

Sniderman, Paul M., Thomas Piazza, Philip E. Tetlock, and Ann Kendrick. 1991. "The New Racism". *American Journal of Political Science* 35: 423-47.

Kinder, Donald R., and Lynn M. Sanders. 1996. *Divided by Color: Racial Politics and Democratic Ideals* .

Dawson, Michael C. 1994. *Behind the Mule: Race and Class in African-American Politics* .

### **Week 9: Media**

Price, Vincent, and David Tewksbury. 1997. "News Values and Public Opinion: A Theoretical Account of Media Priming and Framing". *Progress in the Communication Sciences* 13: 173-211.

- Iyengar, Shanto, Mark D. Peters & Donald R. Kinder. 1982. "Experimental Demonstration of the 'Not-So-Minimal' Consequences of Television News Programs. *American Political Science Review* 76: 848-58.
- Nelson, Thomas E., Rosalee A. Clawson, Zoe M. Oxley. 1997. "Media Framing Of A Civil Liberties Conflict And Its Effect On Tolerance". *American Political Science Review* 91: 567-583.
- Freedman, Paul, Ken Goldstein.. 1999. "Measuring Media Exposure and the Effect of Negative Advertising". *American Journal of Political Science* 43: 1189-1208.
- Shaw, Darron 1999. "The Effect of TV Ads and Candidate Appearances on Statewide Presidential Votes, 1988-96". *American Political Science Review* 93: 345-361.

### **Week 10: Methods Under the Microscope**

- Schwarz, Norbert, Robert M. Groves, Howard Schuman. 1998. "Survey Methods". *The Handbook Of Social Psychology, 4th Edition* 2: 143-179.
- Tourangeau, Roger, Kenneth A. Rasinski. 1988. "Cognitive Processes Underlying Context Effects In Attitude Measurement". *Psychological Bulletin* 103: 299-314.
- Berinski, Adam J. 1999. "The Two Faces of Public Opinion". *American Journal of Political Science* 43: 1209-1230.
- Zaller, John, Stanley Feldman. 1992. "A Simple Theory of the Survey Response: Answering Questions versus Revealing Preferences". *American Journal of Political Science* 36: 579-616.
- Bischoping, Katherine, Howard Schuman. 1992. "Pens and Polls in Nicaragua: An Analysis of the 1990 Preelection Surveys" *American Journal of Political Science* 36: 331-350.