

POLI 408 – Public Opinion and Public Policy (3 credits)
Fall 2021

Instructor: Dr. Mark Paradis

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Office Hours:

- Monday from 16:30-17:30 (H-1213)
- Wednesday from 16:45-17:30 (H-1125-28)

Class: Monday from 17:45-20:15 in H-1220

This research seminar is focused on the role of public opinion in shaping public policy. This course offers an overview of scholarly debates and research on public opinion, political communication, and public policy. Topics include: political reasoning with limited information; voter rationality and self-interest; framing and priming; partisanship; ideology; personality, values, and morality; emotions; voting and representation; polarization; and tolerance. We will use research drawn from Canada, the United States, and Europe to explore public opinion and public policy in Canada and Québec.

COURSE FORMAT

The course will be held in-person. Since this course is a seminar, attendance is required. Students are expected to follow all public health guidelines that are in place at the time.

COURSE READINGS

All course readings will be posted on Moodle for download. The reading level is quite high, but I have tried to give you a view of the diversity of the field. I have also tried to select a mixture of classic pieces and cutting edge new research. When relevant, I have tried to place readings in a sensible order, but this order is merely a suggestion.

REQUIREMENTS

Participation: 15%

This class is a seminar. Other than the first day of class, there will be no lectures. Therefore, attendance and participation are extremely important. Each week, students should come to class having read the assigned readings and prepared to discuss the topic of the week.

Weekly Questions: 10%

Each week, students will submit three (3) discussion questions based on the readings. These questions must be submitted on Moodle 24 hours before the class. Ideally, questions won't focus on a single reading, but will build links between multiple readings (although, questions on single readings may be acceptable). Also, as much as possible, questions should focus on the theory(ies) being developed, rather than the methods employed to test the theory or policy applications. Each student must submit questions for 8 of the 11 discussion weeks.

Discussion Leadership: 10%

In order to help structure the discussion each week, 1-2 students will be responsible for leading the discussion. When leading discussions, students should take extra care in doing the readings. The weekly questions are available in order to help you structure the discussion. You may use none, some, or all of the questions to structure a coherent discussion.

Response Papers: 30%

Twice during the semester, students will submit a 6-7 page (double-spaced) critical response paper to the readings for the chosen week. Papers should *briefly* summarize the readings and then discuss areas of strength, weakness, or opportunity for growth in the literature. Response papers are due the week after the topic is discussed in class. You may not submit a response paper for the week you are discussion leader or for the class on December 8.

Research Paper: 35%

Students will write a 20-page research paper on a topic of their choice. Papers can either be a) empirical papers or b) a critical review of the literature on a particular topic. Empirical papers require the selection of a research puzzle, the identification of a theory that could explain this puzzle, and provide evidence that tests the proposed theory. Critical review papers *do not* simply summarize the literature on the topic. Instead, it critically analyzes the literature and suggests a typology, areas of possible synthesis, critical weaknesses, or avenues for future research. Papers must be double-spaced with normal margins. References lists and appendices do not count towards the page limit. Papers are due on November 28 at the start of class.

LATE POLICY

Papers must be submitted by email by the end of class on November 26. Papers that are not turned in on time will be penalized 5% per day. Late papers will not receive any comments and will not be accepted more than a week late. If you are having any problems in handling the course load, please speak to me ASAP. There are more solutions available if you approach me in advance.

RE-GRADES

If you believe that your grade on an assignment does not reflect the quality of your work, it is your right to request a re-grade. However, you must follow these steps:

1. You must wait 7 days before requesting a re-grade.
2. You must submit a written statement detailing why you believe your grade should be changed. You should point to specific areas of your exam/paper that you believe were graded unfairly AND explain why.
3. I will then re-grade your ENTIRE assignment. I reserve the right to RAISE or LOWER your grade.
4. After the re-grade, if you still believe that your grade is unfair, you must then follow the Department's procedures for re-grades.

CHANGES TO THE SYLLABUS

I reserve the right to amend the schedule of meetings and assignments listed in this syllabus as might become necessary based on events throughout the semester. Any changes to the syllabus will be announced and students will receive an amended syllabus in writing. Copies of the most up to date syllabus can be found on the course website on Moodle

SCHEDULE

September 12 – Introduction to the Course

September 19 – Attitude Models and Public Opinion

- Required Readings:
 - Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press (selected chapter).
 - Zaller, John and Stanley Feldman. 1992. "A Simple Theory of the Survey Response: Answering Questions versus Revealing Preferences." *American Journal of Political Science* 36 (3): 579-616.
 - Carmines, Edward G. and Nicholas J. D'Amico. 2015. "The New Look in Political Ideology Research." *Annual Review of Political Science* 18: 205-216.
 - Taber, Charles and Milton Lodge. 2006. "Motivated Skepticism in the Evaluation of Political Beliefs." *American Journal of Political Science* 50 (3): 755-769.
 - Soroka, Stuart N. and Christopher Wlezien. 2004. "Opinion Representation and Policy Feedback: Canada in Comparative Perspective." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 37 (3): 531-559.
- Optional Readings:
 - Petry, François. 1999. "The Opinion-Policy Relationship in Canada." *The Journal of Politics* 61 (2): 540-550.
 - Chong, Dennis. 1993. "How People Think, Reason, and Feel About Rights and Liberties." *American Journal of Political Science* 37 (3): 867-899.

September 26 – Political Reasoning with Limited Information

- Required Readings:
 - Bartels, Larry M. 1996. "Uninformed Voters: Information Effects in Presidential Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 40 (1): 194-230.
 - Bittner, Amanda. 2007. "The Effects of Information and Social Cleavages: Explaining Issue Attitudes and Vote Choice in Canada." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 40 (4): 935-968.
 - Gaines, Brian J., James H. Kuklinski, Paul J. Quirk, Buddy Peyton, and Jay Verkuilen. 2007. "Same Facts, Different Interpretations: Partisan Motivation and Opinion on Iraq." *Journal of Politics* 69 (4): 957-974.
 - Gilens, Martin. 2001. "Political Ignorance and Collective Policy Preferences." *American Political Science Review* 95 (2): 379-396.
 - Kuklinski, James H., Paul J. Quirk, Jennifer Jerit, David Schwieder, and Robert F. Rich. 2000. "Misinformation and the Currency of Democratic Citizenship." *The Journal of Politics* 62 (3): 790-816.

- 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.
- Optional Readings:
 - Blais, Andre, Elisabeth Gidengil, and Anja Kilibarda. 2017. "Partisanship, Information, and Perceptions of Government Corruption." *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 29 (1): 95-110.
 - Althaus, Scott L. 1998. "Information Effects in Collective Preferences." *American Political Science Review* 92 (3): 545-558.
 - Lupia, Arthur. 1994. "Shortcuts versus Encyclopedias: Information and Voting Behavior in California Insurance Reform Elections." *American Political Science Review* 88 (1): 63-76.
 - Baum, Matthew. 2002. "Sex, Lies, and War: How Soft News Brings Foreign Policy to the Inattentive Masses." *American Political Science Review* 96 (1): 91-109.

October 3 – NO CLASS (Election Day)

October 10 – NO CLASS (Thanksgiving)

October 12 (Wednesday) – Framing and Priming Effects on Opinion

- Required Readings:
 - Chong, Dennis and James N. Druckman. 2007. "Framing Public Opinion in Competitive Democracies." *American Political Science Review* 101 (4): 637-655.
 - Chong, Dennis and James N. Druckman. 2010. "Dynamic Public Opinion: Communication Effects over Time." *American Political Science Review* 104 (4): 663-680.
 - Aaroe, Lene. 2011. "Investigating Frame Strength: The Case of Episodic and Thematic Frames." *Political Communication* 28 (2): 207-226.
 - Tesler, Michael. 2012. "The Spillover of Racialization into Health Care: How President Obama Polarized Public Opinion by Racial Attitudes and Race." *American Journal of Political Science* 56 (3): 690-704.
 - Harrell, Allison, Stuart Soroka, and Shanto Iyengar. 2014. "Race, Prejudice and Attitudes Toward Redistribution: A Comparative Experimental Approach." *European Journal of Political Research* 55: 723-744.
- Optional Readings:
 - Tversky, Amos and Daniel Kahneman. 1981. "The Framing of Decisions and the Psychology of Choice." *Science* 211 (4481): 453-458.
 - Slothus, Rune and Claes H. de Vreese. 2010. "Political Parties, Motivated Reasoning, and Issue Framing Effects." *The Journal of Politics* 72 (3): 630-645.
 - Soroka, Stuart, Antonia Maioni, and Pierre Martin. 2013. "What Moves Public Opinion on Health Care? Individual Experiences, System Performance, and Media Framing." *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* 38 (5): 893-920.
 - Hetherington, Marc J. and Thomas J. Rudolph. 2008. "Priming, Performance, and the Dynamics of Political Trust." *The Journal of Politics* 70 (2): 498-512.

October 17 – Writing WorkshopOctober 24 – Rationality and Self-Interest

- Required Readings:
 - Kahneman, Daniel. 2003. “Maps of Bounded Rationality: Psychology for Behavioral Economics.” *American Economic Review* 93 (4): 1449-1475.
 - Chong, Dennis, Jack Citrin, and Patricia Conley. 2001. “When Self-Interest Matters.” *Political Psychology* 22 (3): 541-570.
 - Campbell, Andrea Louise. 2002. “Self-Interest, Social Security, and the Distinctive Participation Pattern of Senior Citizens.” *American Political Science Review* 96 (3): 565-574.
 - van der Linden, Clifton and Justin Savoie. 2020. “Does Collective Interest or Self-Interest Motivate Mask Usage as a Preventive Measure Against COVID-19?” *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 53: 391-397.
 - Erikson, Robert and Laura Stoker. 2011. “Caught in the Draft: The Effects of Vietnam Draft Lottery Status on Political Attitudes.” *American Political Science Review* 105 (2): 221-237.
- Optional Readings:
 - Simon, Herbert A. 1995. “Rationality in Political Behavior.” *Political Psychology* 16 (1): 45-61.
 - Ashworth, Scott, Ethan Bueno de Mesquita, and Amanda Friedenberg. 2018. “Learning About Voter Rationality.” *American Journal of Political Science* 62 (1): 37-54.

October 31 – Partisanship: Identity and Biases

- Required Readings:
 - Huddy, Leonie, Lilliana Mason, and Lene Aaroe. 2015. “Expressive Partisanship: Campaign Involvement, Political Emotion, and Partisan Identity.” *American Political Science Review* 109 (1): 1-17.
 - Leeper, Thomas J. and Rune Slothuus. 2014. “Political Parties, Motivated Reasoning, and Public Opinion Formation.” *Political Psychology* 35 (S1): 129-156.
 - Bullock, John G. 2011. “Elite Influence on Public Opinion in an Informed Electorate.” *American Political Science Review* 105 (3): 496-513.
 - Merolla, Jennifer L, Laura B. Stephenson, and Elizabeth J. Zechmeister. 2008. “Can Canadians Take a Hint? The (In)Effectiveness of Party Labels as Information Shortcuts in Canada.” *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 41 (3): 673-696.
 - Kevins, Anthony and Stuart N. Soroka. 2018. “Growing Apart? Partisan Sorting in Canada, 1992-2015.” *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 51 (1): 103-133.
- Optional Readings:
 - Cohen, Geoffrey L. 2003. “Party Over Policy: The Dominating Impact of Group Influence on Political Beliefs.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 85 (5): 808-822.
 - Bartels, Larry M. 2002. “Beyond the Running Tally: Partisan Bias in Political Perception.” *Political Behavior* 24 (2): 117-150.

- Rahn, Wendy. 1996. "The Role of Partisan Stereotypes in Information Processing about Political Candidates." *American Journal of Political Science* 37: 472-496.

November 7 – Ideology and Personality

- Required Readings:
 - Jost, John T., Christopher M. Federico, and Jaime L. Napier. 2009. "Political Ideology: Its Structure, Function, and Elective Affinities." *Annual Review of Psychology* 60: 307-333.
 - Duckitt, John and Chris G. Sibley. 2009. "A Dual-Process Motivational Model of Ideology, Politics, and Prejudice." *Psychological Inquiry* 20 (2/3): 98-109.
 - Feldman, Stanley and Christopher Johnston. 2014. "Understanding the Determinants of Political Ideology." *Political Psychology* 35 (3): 337-358.
 - Gerber, Alan S., Gregory A. Huber, David Doherty, and Conor M. Dowling. 2011. "The Big Five Personality Traits in the Political Arena." *Annual Review of Political Science* 14: 265-287.
 - Mondak, Jeffrey, Matthew V. Hibbing, Damarys Canache, Mitchell A. Seligson, and Mary R. Anderson. 2010. "Personality and Civic Engagement: An Integrative Framework for the Study of Trait Effects on Political Behavior." *American Political Science Review* 104 (1): 85-110.
- Optional Readings:
 - Gerber, Alan, 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: 111-133.
 - McClosky, Herbert and Dennis Chong. 1985. "Similarities and Difference Between Left-Wing and Right-Wing Radicals." *British Journal of Political Science* 15 (3): 329-363.

November 14 – Values and Morality

- Required Readings:
 - Hatemi, Peter K. and Rose McDermott. 2016. "Give Me Attitudes." *Annual Review of Political Science* 19: 331-350.
 - Graham, Jesse, Jonathan Haidt, and Brian A. Nosek. 2009. "Liberals and Conservatives Rely on Different Sets of Moral Foundations." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 96 (5): 1029-1046.
 - Jung, Jae-Hee. 2020. "The Mobilizing Effect of Parties' Moral Rhetoric." *American Journal of Political Science* 64 (2): 341-355.
 - Goren, Paul, Harald Schoen, Jason Reifler, Thomas Scotto, and Willaim Chittick. 2016. "A Unified Theory of Value-Based Reasoning and U.S. Public Opinion." *Political Behavior* 38: 977-997.
 - Rathbun, Brian C., Joshua D. Kertzer, Jason Reifler, Paul Goren, and Thomas J. Scotto. 2016. "Taking Foreign Policy Personally: Personal Values and Foreign Policy Attitudes." *International Studies Quarterly* 60: 124-137.
- Optional Readings:
 - Federico, Christopher M., Christopher R. Weber, Damla Ergun, and Corrie Hunt. 2013. "Mapping the Connections Between Politics and Morality: The Multiple

Sociopolitical Orientations Involved in Moral Intuition.” *Political Psychology* 34 (4): 589-61.

- Kertzer, Joshua D., Kathleen E. Powers, Brian C. Rathbun, and Ravi Iyer. 2014. “Moral Support: How Moral Values Shape Foreign Policy Attitudes.” *The Journal of Politics* 76 (3): 825-840.
- Clifford, Scott and Jennifer Jerit. 2013. “How Words Do the Work of Politics: Moral Foundations Theory and the Debate over Stem Cell Research.” *The Journal of Politics* 75 (3): 659-671.

November 21 – Emotions

- Required Readings:
 - Huddy, Leonie, Stanley Feldman, Charles Taber, and Gallya Lahav. 2005. “Threat, Anxiety, and Support of Anti-Terrorism Policies.” *American Journal of Political Science* 49 (3): 610-625.
 - Weber, Christopher. 2013. “Emotions, Campaigns, and Political Participation.” *Political Research Quarterly* 66 (2): 414-428.
 - Peterson, Michael Bang, Daniel Sznycer, Leda Cosmides, and John Tooby. 2012. “Who Deserves Help? Evolutionary Psychology, Social Emotions, and Public Opinion about Welfare.” *Political Psychology* 33 (3): 395-418.
 - Rhodes-Purdy, Matthew, Rachel Navarre, and Stephen M. Utych. 2021. “Populist Psychology: Economics, Culture, and Emotions.” *The Journal of Politics* 83 (4): 1559-1572.
 - Druckman, James N. and Rose McDermott. 2008. “Emotion and the Framing of Risky Choice.” *Political Behavior* 30 (3): 297-321.
- Optional Readings:
 - Healy, Andrew J., Neil Malhotra, and Cecilia Hyunjung Mo. 2010. “Irrelevant Events Affect Voters’ Evaluations of Government Performance.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 107 (29): 12804-12809.
 - Lodge, Milton and Charles S. Taber. 2005. “The Automaticity of Affect for Political Leaders, Groups, and Issues: An Experimental Test of the Hot Cognition Hypothesis.” *Political Psychology* 26 (3): 455-482.
 - Weeks, Brian E. 2015. “Emotions, Partisanship, and Misperceptions: How Anger and Anxiety Moderate the Effect of Partisan Bias on Susceptibility to Political Misinformation.” *Journal of Communication* 65: 699-719.
 - Small, Deborah A., Jennifer S. Lerner, and Baruch Fischhoff. 2006. “Emotion Priming and Attributions for Terrorism: Americans’ Reactions in a National Field Experiment.” *Political Psychology* 27 (2): 289-298.

November 28 – Voting and Representation

- Required Readings:
 - Lau, Richard and David P. Redlawsk. 1997. “Voting Correctly.” *American Political Science Review* 91 (3): 585-598.
 - Huber, Gregory A., Seth J. Hill, and Gabriel S. Lenz. 2012. “Sources of Bias in Retrospective Decision Making: Experimental Evidence on Voters’ Limitations in Controlling Incumbents.” *American Political Science Review* 106 (4): 720-741.

- Grose, Christian R., Neil Malhotra, and Robert Parks Van Houweling. 2015. "Explaining Explanations: How Legislators Explain Their Policy Positions and How Citizens React." *American Journal of Political Science* 59 (3): 724-743.
- Soontjens, Karolin. 2022. "Do Politicians Anticipate Voter Control? A Comparative Study of Representatives' Accountability Beliefs." *European Journal of Political Research* 61: 699-717.
- Anderson, Cameron D. 2008. "Economic Voting, Multilevel Governance and Information in Canada." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 41 (2): 329-354.
- Gerber, Alan S., Donald P. Green, and Christopher W. Larimer. 2008. "Social Pressure and Voter Turnout: Evidence from a Large-Scale Field Experiment." *American Political Science Review* 102 (1): 33-48.
- Optional Readings:
 - Daoust, Jean-François and Damien Bol. 2020. "Polarization, Partisan Preferences and Strategic Voting." *Government and Opposition* 55 (4): 578-594.
 - Blais, André, Carol Galais, and Maxime Coulombe. 2018. "The Effect of Social Pressure from Family and Friends on Turnout." *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 36 (9): 2824-2841.
 - Bodet, Marc André, Melanee Thomas, and Charles Tessier. 2016. Come Hell or High Water: An Investigation of the Effects of a Natural Disaster on a Local Election." *Electoral Studies* 43: 85-94.
 - Gilens, Martin. 2005. "Inequality and Democratic Responsiveness." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 69 (5): 778-796.
 - Lenz, Gabriel S. 2009. "Learning and Opinion Change, Not Priming: Reconsidering the Priming Hypothesis." *American Journal of Political Science* 53 (4): 821-837.
 - Butler, Daniel M. and David W. Nickerson. 2011. "Can Learning Constituency Opinion Affect How Legislators Vote? Results from a Field Experiment." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 6: 55-83.
 - Tomz, Michael, Jessica L.P. Weeks, and Keren Yarhi-Milo. 2020. "Public Opinion and Decisions About Military Force in Democracies." *International Organization* 74 (1): 119-143.

December 5 – Political Tolerance and Polarization

- Required Readings:
 - Prior, Markus. 2013. "Media and Political Polarization." *Annual Review of Political Science* 16: 101-127.
 - Druckman, James N., Erik Peterson, and Rune Slothuus. 2013. "How Elite Partisan Polarization Affects Public Opinion Formation." *American Political Science Review* 107 (1): 57-79.
 - Peffley, Mark, Marc L. Hutchison, and Michal Shamir. 2015. "The Impact of Persistent Terrorism on Political Tolerance: Israel, 1980 to 2011." *American Political Science Review* 109 (4): 817-832.
 - Banting, Keith and Stuart Soroka. 2020. "A Distinctive Culture? The Sources of Public Support for Immigration in Canada, 1980-2019." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 53 (4): 821-838.

- Harell, Allison, Stuart Soroka, and Shanto Iyengar. 2017. "Locus of Control and Anti-Immigrant Sentiment in Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom." *Political Psychology* 38 (2): 245-260.
- Optional Readings:
 - Hopkins, Daniel J. 2010. "Politicized Spaces: Explaining Where and When Immigrants Provoke Local Opposition." *American Political Science Review* 104 (1): 40-60.
 - Barbera, Pablo, John T. Jost, Jonathan Nagler, Joshua A. Tucker, and Richard Bonneau. 2015. "Tweeting from Left to Right: Is Online Political Communication More than an Echo Chamber?" *Psychological Sciences* 26 (10): 1531-1542.
 - Chong, Dennis. 1994. "Tolerance and Social Adjustment to New Norms and Practices." *Political Behavior* 16 (1): 21-53.

December 8 – Survey Experiments in Public Opinion Research

- Required Readings:
 - Gaines, Brian J., James H. Kuklinski, and Paul J. Quirk. 2007. "The Logic of the Survey Experiment Reexamined." *Political Analysis* 15 (1): 1-20.
 - Barabas, Jason and Jennifer Jerit. 2010. "Are Survey Experiments Externally Valid." *American Political Science Review* 104 (2): 226-242.