

INTERSECTING IDENTITIES IN PUBLIC OPINION (GOV 247)

SPRING 2014

Mondays & Wednesdays, 2:40pm-4:00pm in PAC 136

Dr. Brian Harrison, Ph.D. bfharrison@wesleyan.edu

Office/Office Hours: PAC 331; Mondays and Wednesdays 12pm-1pm

“One can state, without exaggeration, that the observation of and the search for similarities and differences are the basis of all human knowledge.”

--Alfred Nobel, 1966 (as quoted by Fransmyr 1996).

Purpose:

In our increasingly diverse society, most Americans identify with more than one group. These multiple identities often align with conflicting policy choices, such as when a Democratic parent may support increased social services spending from a partisan perspective but may also worry about the increasing national debt as a parent. Democracies rely on citizens to freely express preferences (Dahl 1989). Given the significance of identity, political elites often work to prime identities that will win over the most supporters. While political scientists have investigated the role of identity and identity strength in shaping political preferences, less is known about how these identities compete with one another.

This course will introduce social identity theory as well as in depth discussions of the major identities that affect political and social behavior, including but not limited to race and ethnicity, gender, information and knowledge, sexual orientation, religion, and partisanship. We will then turn to how these identities can overlap and conflict with each other and how the intersections of these and other identities can shape political discourse and rhetoric, media/information consumption, attitude formation, and political behavior.

As a result of this course, students will be able to:

Overall Course Objectives

- Explain what opinions are, how they are formed, and how they affect how we behave.
- Think about and appreciate the experiences and points-of-view of people who are or are perceived to be different than themselves
- Critically evaluate arguments and/or counter-arguments to contemporary debates surrounding identities and how they affect behavior

Specific Learning Objectives

- Read controversial and difficult material objectively and critically.
- Identify strengths and weaknesses in current scholarship on identity and how identities interact
- Engage with different approaches to the study of public opinion, identity formation, and intersectionality studies

Course Policies and Expectations

Below is a list of course policies and expectations. By staying in the course, you agree to abide by the following rules.

Etiquette: Although I will spend some of our class time lecturing, we will have many dialogues, both in class and online. In these discussions, you are encouraged to use your personal experiences and perspectives as well as your understanding of the course material and current events. Direct personal attacks against others in the class are not permitted. Insulting anyone one inside or outside the class on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, party affiliation, or national background is not permitted. Violations of these rules will be reflected in your grade and, if they continue, may result in disciplinary action by the University.

I highly value class discussion and interaction. I regard it as an integral part of the learning experience and learning from you is one of the joys of my job. Therefore, I expect you to attend lectures and to complete the assigned readings before attending class. I look forward to hearing your thoughts and your interpretations of the way the course material informs our understanding of current events. As a teacher, one of my primary goals is to empower students to claim their own education. I emphasize discussion and limit the number (and length) of my lectures. This discussion-based format means that you, along with your classmates, bear a lot of responsibility for the success of the class. You must hold each other accountable for the claims that you make and the ideas you express. And you must make sure that you come to class prepared with some thoughts/questions so that we can have respectful and productive discussions about the material.

Disability Resources: Wesleyan University is committed to ensuring that all qualified students with disabilities are afforded an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from its programs and services. To receive accommodations, a student must have a documented disability as defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, and provide documentation of the disability. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact Disability Resources as soon as possible.

If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact Dean Patey in Disability Resources, located in North College, Room 021, or call 860-685-2332 for an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations.

Copyrighted Class Materials: All course materials including but not limited to class notes, lectures, handouts, and presentations are the copyrighted materials of the professor. The copying and sale of any such materials will subject the involved parties to the provisions of the Federal Copyright Act.

Contested Grades – If you believe your grade is inaccurate, you must wait at least 24 hours before contesting it. If you wish to contest a grade, you will need to write a letter explaining why you believe a mistake was made in grading your assignment. After I have received and read the letter, we will schedule an appointment to discuss the matter; however, if you ask for a paper to be reevaluated, I reserve the right to reevaluate the entire contents of the assignment, and your grade can go up or go down as a result. Whenever possible, I encourage you to ask questions and clarifications about course assignments *before* turning them in.

Late Paper/Assignment Policy – All assignments are due *in class* on the class date (or final exam period) listed in the syllabus without exception unless I have specified otherwise. In fairness to those who complete assignments on time, *no late papers/assignments will be accepted for credit*. You are strongly encouraged to print one copy of all papers for your own records before handing them in and to print drafts as you write and/or to make frequent backups on multiple disks. “Lost paper” and “computer crash” claims will not be considered if you are unable to produce immediately at a minimum an advanced draft of your paper.

Readings:

Required Book: Other readings will be put online or will be provided in class.

1. Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Required Assignments:

1. **Class Leadership (15%):** With a partner, each student—with assistance from Professor Harrison—will lead discussion once during the semester. Class leadership will correspond with the class for which students draft a response memo. In other words, you will lead discussion during the class for which you wrote a memo.

Coinciding with your class leadership, you should turn in a short paper (2 pages, single spaced) that synthesizes and critically analyzes the topics and readings of that day. The paper will be due at the beginning of the course for which you are the class leader (see above). The paper should address the key points of the readings and at least 3 questions for discussion. Note the paper should *not* simply summarize the readings but offer your thoughts on the themes, how those themes relate to previous readings, and ask a set of questions triggered by your interpretation. In other words, you should develop an original claim about the readings that suggests, for example, how they relate to one another or how they correspond with or contradict previous readings.

2. **Synthesis Paper (15%):** You will be given an essay prompt and will be expected to write a medium-length essay (5-7 pages) intended to be a critical analysis and/or synthesis paper; you will synthesize and link together different themes, questions, trends, social mechanisms, or topics in the course to make an original contribution to the study of identity politics. You should *not* just summarize the readings but instead should discuss how they compare to and contrast with other readings or contemporary identity politics in the U.S. context
3. **Original Research paper (20%):** You will write a longer paper (8-10 pages, double spaced) that proposes (in detail) a study or studies that may address an aspect of the course. Included in this paper is a relevant review of the literature on your topic(s), both from within course reading and outside of it, a clear motivation behind the question or problem, and a concrete method or methods to address your chosen topic. You need not conduct the research (i.e. collect data) but you should provide a framework for conducting it so someone reading the paper could easily implement the study or studies you propose.

4. Final Presentation (10%): You will make a professional presentation of your original research paper at the end of the semester. More details to come. The presentation should be 15-20 minutes and will discuss a topic from the course and/or will apply course readings to a contemporary issue in identity politics. You can outline how you might study the issue, a potential research design, and expected findings.
5. Final Exam/Paper (30%): You will receive an essay prompt and will be expected to draw from the a broad segment of the semester's readings, lectures, and class discussions to synthesize an argument about identity and identity politics in the United States. This is your opportunity to demonstrate what you have learned throughout the semester and to create linkages between topics and concepts.
6. Participation: (10%). We will have a variety of different exercises during class that will give you many opportunities to voice your opinions about the course materials and current events.

Writing Specifications: Unless otherwise noted, all written assignments must be typed, doubled spaced with one-inch margins, and in a 12-point font. Acceptable fonts are Palatino Linotype or Times New Roman. Please number your pages and be sure that your paper is stapled before you turn it in. The clarity of your writing will affect the strength of your argument and therefore students should proofread and spell-check their work carefully. You must cite any information and/or ideas that you take from someone else's work. Also note, you should limit your use of direct quotations (someone else's words surrounded by “”) to the rare occasion when the original author has stated your point perfectly and it cannot be improved. Otherwise, you are generally better off stylistically using your own words and citing the ideas and facts provided by other authors. For citations, I prefer that students use the American Psychological Association (APA). However, any citation method is acceptable as long as it is used correctly and consistently. For additional information on APA style, visit <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/> or <http://www.apastyle.org/learn/tutorials/basics-tutorial.aspx>.

Course Outline¹

Monday, January 27 – Introductions, Syllabus review

Wednesday, January 29– The Political and Social Relevance of Identity(ies)

- Baker, Katie J.M. “Diversity U Makes a U-Turn.” *Newsweek Magazine*, December 12, 2013. <http://mag.newsweek.com/2013/12/13/diversity-protest-activism-wesleyan.html>
 - M. McCoy and P. Scully. 2002. “Deliberative Dialogue to Expand Civic Engagement: What Kind of Talk Does Democracy Need?” *National Civic Review* 91(2).
 - Mundy, Lisa. 2014. “The Most Judged Woman in America.” Retrieved from http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2014/01/wendy-davis-the-most-judged-woman-in-america-102598_full.html#print#.UuW4J2Qo7go.
-

Monday, February 10– Public Opinion I

- Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. pp. 6-39.
 - Lau, Richard R. and David P. Redlawsk. 2001. Advantages and Disadvantages of Cognitive Heuristics in Political Decision Making. *American Journal of Political Science*, 45(4): 951-971.
 - Druckman, James N. and Arthur Lupia. 2000. Preference Formation. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 3: 1-24.
-

Wednesday, February 12– Public Opinion II

- Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Chapters 3 and 6
 - 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(3): 567-583.
 - Gallup, George. 1948. *A Guide to Public Opinion Polls*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. pp. 3-13.
-

Monday, February 17– Partisanship and polarization

- Donald Green, Bradley Palmquist, and Eric Schickler, *Partisan Hearts and Minds*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002 (Chapters 1-2).
 - Geoffrey L. Cohen, “Party over Policy.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 85(5), 2003, 808-822.
 - Alan I. Abramowitz, *The Disappearing Center*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010, Ch. 4 (“Polarization and Social Groups”).
-

¹ Note: This syllabus does not constitute a contract between the professor and the student. I reserve the right to make adjustments or modifications to the course at any time. Changes include but are not limited to assignments and grading criteria; readings or course requirements; grading policies; and course topics and schedule. Changes, if necessary, will be announced in class and/or on the course Moodle page.

Wednesday, February 19- Partisanship and Polarization

- Brooks, David. 2001. "One Nation, Slightly Divisible." *Atlantic Monthly* (December).
- Issenberg, Sasha. 2004. "Boo-Boos in Paradise." *Philadelphia Magazine* (April). http://www.phillymag.com/articles/booboos_in_paradise/.
- Fiorina, Morris P., and Samuel J. Abrams. 2008. "Political Polarization in the American Public." *Annual Review of Political Science* 11: 563-88.

Monday, February 24 - Political Behavior and Identity

- Klar, Samara. 2013. "The Influence of Competing Identity Primes on Political Preferences." *Journal of Politics*, 1-17.
- Tajfel, Henri. 1981, Human Groups & Social Categories: Studies in Social Psychology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 3 (pp. 41-53) and Chapter 11 (223-243)
- Taber, Charles S. and Milton Lodge. 2006. "Motivated skepticism in the Evaluation of Political Beliefs." *American Journal of Political Science*, 50(3): 755-769.

Wednesday, February 26- Political Behavior and Identity

- Jennings, M. Kent, Laura Stoker, and Jake Bowers. 2009. "Politics Across Generations: Family Transmission Reexamined." *Journal of Politics*, 71(3): 782-799.
- Alan S. Gerber, 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: 33-48.
- Walsh, Katherine Cramer. 2007. Talking about Race: Community Dialogues and the Politics of Difference. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 1.

Monday, March 3- Peer Editing Session (**failure to attend class this day will result in an automatic deduction of 50% of your Paper #1- synthesis paper grade**)

Wednesday, March 5- No assigned reading; in-class activity

PAPER 1 (SYNTHESIS PAPER) DUE (3/5)

Monday, March 10- Wednesday, March 19: Break!

Monday, March 24- Race and Ethnicity

- Dawson, Michael C. 2001. *Black Visions: The Roots of Contemporary African-American Political Ideologies*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 1-2.
 - Hutchings, Vince L., Valentino, Nick. 2004. "The centrality of race in American politics." *Annual Review of Political Science*, 7: 383-408.
-

Wednesday, March 26– Race & Ethnicity

- Barreto, Matt A, Gary Segura, GM, Woods, ND, “The mobilizing effect of majority-minority districts on Latino turnout.” *American Political Science Review*. 98: 65-75.
- Gay, Claudine. 2002. Spirals of trust? The effect of descriptive representation on the relationship between citizens and their government.” *American Journal of Political Science*, 4: 717-732.
- Griffin, J.D. and B. Newman. 2007. “The unequal representation of latinos and whites.” *Journal of Politics*, 69(4): 1032-1046.

Monday, March 31– Race & Ethnicity

- Pantoja, AD, Segura, Gary M. 2003. “Does ethnicity matter? Descriptive representation in legislatures and political alienation among Latinos.” *Social Science Quarterly*, 2: 441-460.
- Kinder, Donald R., and Nicholas Winter. 2001. “Exploring the Racial Divide: Blacks, Whites, and Opinion on National Policy.” *American Journal of Political Science*, 45(2): 439-56.
- Harrison, Brian F. & Melissa Michelson. Under Review. “It Does Matter if You’re Black or White: The Power of Race and Elite Cues.”

Wednesday, April 2– Gender and Feminism

- Hanson, Sonia, Peter Kivisto, & Elizabeth Hartung. “Confronting Intersecting Inequalities.” In Race, Gender, Sexuality, and Social Class: Dimensions of Inequality, Susan J. Ferguson, ed. Los Angeles: Sage Press, pp. 550-565.
- McCabe, Janice. 2005. “What in a Label? The Relationship between Feminist Self-Identification and ‘Feminist’ Attitudes among U.S. Women and Men.” *Gender and Society*, 19(4): 480-505.
- Lerner, Gerda. “Rethinking the Paradigm.” In Race, Gender, Sexuality, and Social Class: Dimensions of Inequality, Susan J. Ferguson, ed. Los Angeles: Sage Press, pp. 55-69.

Monday, April 7 – Gender and Feminism

- Somerville, Siobhan. “Scientific Racism and the Emergence of the Homosexual Body.” *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 5: 243-266.
 - Audre Lorde, “I am Your Sister: Black Women Organizing Across Sexualities” (1980). In Blasius and Phelan, eds. 1997. We Are Everywhere. New York: Routledge, p. 472
 - Collins, Patricia Hill. “Toward a New Vision: Race, Class, and Gender as Categories of Analysis and Connection.” In Race, Gender, Sexuality, and Social Class: Dimensions of Inequality, Susan J. Ferguson, ed. Los Angeles: Sage Press, pp. 566-576.
-

Wednesday, April 9– Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity

- Nagoshi, Julie L., Stephan/ie Brzuzy, & Heather K. Terrell. 2012. “Deconstructing the Complex Perceptions of Gender Roles, Gender Identity, and Sexual Orientation among Transgender Individuals.” *Feminism & Psychology*, 22(4), 405-422.
- LeVay, Simon. 2011. Gay, Straight, and the Reason Why. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapters 1, 5.
- Hunter, Marcus Anthony. 2010. “All the Gays are White and all the Blacks are Straight: Black Gay Men, Identity, and Community.” *Sexuality Research and Social Policy* 7 (2): 81-92.

Monday, April 14– Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

***Peer Review (failure to attend class this day will result in an automatic deduction of 50% of your research paper grade)**

- Ayres, Ian & Jennifer Gerarda Brown. 2005. Straightforward: How to Mobilize Heterosexual Support for Gay Rights. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. pp. 1-59.
- Gilley, B.J., Becoming two-spirit: Gay identity and social acceptance in Indian country. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2006, Chapter 2: From gay to Indian, pp. 23-50.

Wednesday, April 16– Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity

- Blaius, Mark. 2001. “An Ethos of Lesbian and Gay Existence.” In Sexual Identities, Queer Politics, Mark Blasius ed. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, pp. 143-177.
- Harrison, Brian F. & Melissa R. Michelson. “Not That There’s Anything Wrong with That: The Effect of Personalized Appeals on Marriage Equality Campaigns.” *Political Behavior*, 34 (2): 325-344.
- Hollibaugh, Amber. “Queers Without Money: They are Everywhere. But We Refuse to See Them.” In Race, Gender, Sexuality, and Social Class: Dimensions of Inequality, Susan J. Ferguson, ed. Los Angeles: Sage Press, pp. 259-262.

Monday, April 21– Religion

- Hammond, Phillip E. & Kee Warner. “Religion and Ethnicity in Late-Twentieth-Century America.” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 527: 55-66.
- Peek, Lori. 2005. “Becoming Muslim: The Development of a Religious Identity.” *Sociology of Religion*, 66: 215-242.
- Ajrouch, Kristine J. & Abdi M. Kusow. 2007. “Racial and Religious Contexts: Situational identities among Lebanese and Somali Muslim Immigrants.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 30: 72-94.

RESEARCH PAPER DUE

Wednesday, April 23- Religion & Sexuality

- Thumma, Scott. 1991. "Negotiating a Religious Identity: The Case of the Gay Evangelical." *Sociological Analysis*, 52: 333-347.
- Rodriguez, Eric M. & Suzanne C. Ouellete. 2000. "Gay and Lesbian Christians: Homosexual and Religious Identity Integration in the Members and Participants of a Gay-Positive Church." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 39: 333-347.
- Harrison, Brian F. & Melissa R. Michelson. Forthcoming. "God and Marriage: Activating Religious Identity to Influence Attitudes on Same-Sex Marriage." In Listen, We Need to Talk: Facilitating Political Communication through Strategic Identity Priming. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Monday, April 28; Wednesday, April 30; Monday, May 5; Wednesday, May 7:
Presentations: (**Attendance mandatory**)

Final paper assignment handed out Wednesday, May 7

Reading period: Friday, May 9- Tuesday, May 13

Final exam/paper period: Tuesday, May 13- Friday, May 16

Final Paper Due: Friday, May 16, 5pm

NOTE: No late papers will be accepted. Please e-mail a copy of your paper to bfharrison@wesleyan.edu by 5/16 at 5pm. When I receive it, I will acknowledge receipt; if you do not get a confirmation e-mail from me, your paper was not received and you should send again.