POLITICAL PARTIES, INTEREST GROUPS, & PUBLIC OPINION (PO 165)¹

Tuesdays & Fridays, 12:30-1:45pm in Donnarumma 131 Dr. Brian Harrison, Ph.D. <u>bharrison3@fairfield.edu</u> Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:45-2:45pm, by appointment in Donnarumma 338

"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

This course examines the nature of public opinion and how partisanship and political parties, identities and interest groups impact it. Does the public really have an opinion? If so, how is it measured? How do individual-level characteristics impact it and what (if anything) should representatives do in reaction to public opinion? It also discusses various linkage models that describe representation of citizens by leaders.

Additionally, the course looks at the role of identity in public opinion. 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. How does an individual's mix of identities complicate the idea of political representation?

This course will introduce social identity theory as well as in depth discussions of the major identities that affect public opinion, 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, interest group action, 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

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 page.

Specific Learning Objectives

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

Course Policies and Expectations

Below is a list of course policies and expectations. By remaining enrolled in the course, you agree to abide by the rules and regulations outlined below.

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 inside or outside the class on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, 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: Fairfield University is committed to providing qualified students who have disabilities an equal opportunity to access the benefits, rights, and privileges of its services, programs, and activities in an accessible setting. Disability Support Services (DSS) facilitates effective, reasonable classroom accommodations for all students on campus who disclose a disability, meet the eligibility requirements, and request accommodations. Students are encouraged to meet with each professor to review accommodation requests and how they will pertain to each class. Students should talk to professors about how their disability affects learning and how the accommodations will be implemented at the beginning of each semester.

Note: it is the responsibility of the student to contact the appropriate university authorities and to make the professor aware of any necessary accommodations as soon as possible, preferably in the first week or two of the semester.

If you are currently registered with the DSS office, please see the exam schedule and resources on the DSS website. If you would like to register with the DSS office, please contact the DSS director Jennifer L. Claydon at jclaydon@fairfield.edu.

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 in multiple places. "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 will be provided in class, uploaded to the course website, or available through Fairfield's library.

Required Assignments:

1. Class Leadership and Memo Paper (10%): With a partner, each student—with assistance from Professor Harrison—will lead discussion at least once during the semester. 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, double-spaced) 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 public opinion. You should *not* just summarize the readings but instead should discuss how they compare to and contrast with other readings or public opinion in the U.S. context.

- 3. **Public Opinion/Representation paper (25%):** You will write a longer paper (8-10 pages, double-spaced) that investigates (in detail) public opinion of a certain identity group in the United States and a certain public policy. The paper should look at public opinion toward the policy among that group and focus on how (if at all) political elites are responsive toward it. 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.
- 4. **Final Presentation (10%):** You will make a professional presentation of your public opinion/representation paper at the end of the semester. The presentation should be roughly 15-20 minutes and will summarize your paper in more detail. More details to come.
- 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 public opinion, partisanship, interest groups, 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 Outline

Tuesday, January 20- Introductions, Syllabus review

Friday, January 23: The Political and Social Relevance of Identity(ies)

- 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.

Tuesday, January 27: Class cancelled due to snow

Friday, January 30: 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.

Tuesday, February 3: Public Opinion II

- Druckman, James N. and Arthur Lupia. 2000. Preference Formation. Annual Review of Political Science, 3: 1–24.
- Zaller, John. 1992. The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion. Chapters 3 and 6

Friday, February 6: Sampling

- Sears, David. 1986. "College Sophomores in the Laboratory: Influence of a Narrow Data Base on Social Psychology's View of Human Nature" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 51: 515-30.
- Druckman, James N. & Cindy D. Kam. 2011. "Students as Experimental Participants: A Defense of the 'Narrow Base." In <u>Cambridge Handbook of</u> <u>Experimental Political Science</u>, Druckman, Green, Kuklinski, Lupia, eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Streb, M., and S. Pinkus. 2004. "When Push Comes to Shove." In *Polls and Politics: The Dilemmas of Democracy* (Chapter 6). State University of New York Press.

Tuesday, February 10: Surveys/Measurement

- "Pollster Finds Error on Holocaust Doubts," New York Times May 20, 1994.
- "How Are Questionnaires Put Together," by Michael W. Traugott and Paul J. Lavrakas, 2000.
- "Diet Soda: Fewer Calories, Greater Stroke Risk?" ABC News, February 9, 2011.
- "Polling Experiment Finds Question Order Linked to Obama Approval," Los Angeles Times, February 23, 2012.

Friday, February 13: In-Class Public Opinion Activity

Tuesday, February 17: NO CLASS (President's Day makeup)

Friday, February 20: Media Effects/Persuasion

- 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.
- Brader, T. 2005. "Striking a Responsive Chord." American Journal of Political Science 49(2): 388-405.

Tuesday, February 24: Partisanship/political parties

- Donald Green, Bradley Palmquist, and Eric Schickler. <u>Partisan Hearts and Minds</u>. 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, <u>The Disappearing Center</u>, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010, Chapter 4 ("Polarization and Social Groups."

Friday, February 27: Polarization and Partisanship

- 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.

Tuesday, March 3: Peer editing Day

(Failure to attend class this day will result in an automatic deduction of 50% of your Paper #1 grade)

Friday, March 6: Political Behavior and Identity I

- 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.

PAPER 1 DUE at 12:30pm

Tuesday, March 10, Friday, March 13: NO CLASS

Tuesday, March 17: Political Behavior and Identity II

- Klar, Samara. 2013. "The Influence of Competing Identity Primes on Political Preferences." *Journal of Politics*, 1-17.
- Taber, Charles S. and Milton Lodge. 2006. "Motivated skepticism in the Evaluation of Political Beliefs." *American Journal of Political Science*, 50(3): 755-769.

Friday, March 20: Identity, Social Order, and Representation

- Tajfel, Henri. 1981, <u>Human Groups & Social Categories: Studies in Social Psychology.</u> Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 3 (pp. 41-53) and Chapter 11 (223-243)
- 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.
- 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.

Tuesday, March 24: Race and Ethnicity I

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

Friday, March 27: Race and Ethnicity II

- 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.
- Griffin, J.D. and B. Newman. 2007. "The Unequal Representation of Latinos and Whites." *Journal of Politics*, 69(4): 1032-1046.
- 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.

Tuesday, March 31: Gender and Feminism I

- Hanson, Sonia, Peter Kivisto, & Elizabeth Hartung. "Confronting Intersecting Inequalities." In <u>Race, Gender, Sexuality, and Social Class: Dimensions of</u> 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 <u>Race, Gender, Sexuality, and Social Class: Dimensions of Inequality,</u> Susan J. Ferguson, ed. Los Angeles: Sage Press, pp. 55-69.

NO CLASS: Friday, April 3

Tuesday, April 7: Gender and Feminism II

- 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 <u>Race, Gender, Sexuality, and Social</u> <u>Class: Dimensions of Inequality,</u> Susan J. Ferguson, ed. Los Angeles: Sage Press, pp. 566-576.

Friday, April 10: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity I

- LeVay, Simon. 2011. <u>Gay, Straight, and the Reason Why.</u> 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.
- Harrison, Brian F. & Melissa R. Michelson. Forthcoming. "God and Marriage: Activating Religious Identity to Influence Attitudes on Same-Sex Marriage." In <u>Listen, We Need to Talk: Facilitating Political Communication through</u> <u>Strategic Identity Priming</u>. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Tuesday, April 14: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity II

- 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.

Friday, April 17: PEER EDITING SESSION

(Failure to attend class this day will result in an automatic deduction of 50% of your policy paper grade)

Tuesday, April 21: FINAL PRESENTATIONS (attendance mandatory)

Friday, April 24: FINAL PRESENTATIONS (attendance mandatory)

Tituay, April 24. Tital I RESERVITITIONS (attendance mandatory)

Tuesday, April 28: Course wrap-up and review. Final paper prompt handed out.

FINAL PAPERS:

May 8: Final Papers due by 5 p.m. via e-mail. No hard copy necessary.

NOTE: No late papers will be accepted. Please e-mail a copy of your paper to bharrison3@fairfield.edu no later than 5/8 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.