

## PLCS 542: American Political Behavior

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Prof. Linn Fall 2014 Wednesday 9:05–12:05 009 Walker Building Phone: 863-9402 Email: slinn@la.psu.edu  
URL: [http://www.personal.psu.edu/sld8/blogs/suzanna\\_linn/](http://www.personal.psu.edu/sld8/blogs/suzanna_linn/) Office: 320 Pond Office hours: Tuesday 11:15-12:15, Wednesday 1:30-2:30 and by appointment

### Course Description.

This course surveys major themes in theory and research on electoral behavior, public opinion, and political participation generally. Readings will cover topics in public opinion and elections including: the nature of belief systems within the public; how people reason about politics and the process of attitude change; the role of the media; the dynamics of public opinion; political participation; presidential and congressional vote choice and election outcomes; race and gender in political behavior; and representation. The primary goal is to immerse students in the substance and research of political behavior and to get students to think about questions and how to answer them. This means seeing what other people have done and synthesizing it, framing questions, developing methods, and considering measurement. To that end, students will be required to do extensive reading and writing. Seminar participants will be expected to write a research proposal over the course of the semester.

### Grading

Your course grade will be based on

- Three short papers: 10% each
- Two written book reviews (10% each) and presentations (5% each).
- Class participation: 15%
- Final paper: 25%

### Short Papers

Throughout the course, you will be responsible for three short reading response papers. These are not summaries of the week readings but should discuss the theoretical contributions and findings of the readings in some way that situates the work in a larger context. They may:

- Provide a critique of the theory or methods and discuss the implications of your critique for the authors' conclusions.
- Propose extensions of the research in the form of additional questions and approaches for answering those new questions (data and methods) or alternative (better) designs to test the authors' theory or empirical implications of the theory.
- Compare and contrast the readings with those in a previous week.
- Compare and contrast the approaches, theories, assumptions of the different readings for the week and the implications for their designs, findings, etc.

Strong papers will be well-crafted as well as make good points. You will be responsible for sharing your thoughts in class each week you write a response paper. You will sign up for the weeks you are writing your three papers by September 10th. Papers should be single-spaced and 2-3 pages in length. You will distribute your papers to your classmates and to me before class the week they are due.

## Book Reviews and Presentations

In most weeks 1-3 optional books will be listed on the syllabus. You are to choose 2 books over the course of the semester from those listed to read, review, and present to the class. You will select the 2 books you will read by September 10 (if you want to read Zaller for the 10th, let me know as soon as possible). Each of you will read different books to ensure that a variety of books are covered. A good book review will discuss the book's objective(s), approach, and theoretical argument, the contribution the book makes to the (debates in the) field, whether the book was successful in achieving its objectives, as well as how well it was written and how it compares with other research on the topic. You will distribute your review to your classmates and to me before the class period in which it is listed on the syllabus. Book reports must be single-spaced and should be 2-3 pages in length. Your presentation should be prepared as a PowerPoint or other professional presentation and will be given the class period in which it appears on the syllabus.

## Literature Assessment OR Research Paper

You have two options for your final course paper. The first is a literature assessment paper. If you are early in your graduate career, I recommend this option. For this writing assignment you are to assess the current literature on a topic of your choosing, given my approval. This essay should be six to ten single spaced pages in length and is due near the end of the semester. The goal of the paper will be to assess and summarize the research about a particular topic, to identify the central question or questions, highlight the most important literature related to the topic, and provide commentary about the strengths and weaknesses of the current research in the area. If you are later in your graduate career, you should consider a research paper in public opinion or voting behavior. For this writing assignment you are encouraged to begin with a replication and to extend the work in some way. Paper topics should be approved by me.

## Books

### Academic Dishonesty

The Department of Political Science, along with the College of the Liberal Arts and the University, takes violations of academic dishonesty seriously. Observing basic honesty in one's work, words, ideas, and actions is a principle to which all members of the community are required to subscribe.

All course work by students is to be done on an individual basis unless an instructor clearly states that an alternative is acceptable. Any reference materials used in the preparation of any assignment must be explicitly cited. Students uncertain about proper citation are responsible for checking with their instructor.

In an examination setting, unless the instructor gives explicit prior instructions to the contrary, whether the examination is inclass or takehome, violations of academic integrity shall consist but are not limited to any attempt to receive assistance from written or printed aids, or from any person or papers or electronic devices, or of any attempt to give assistance, whether the one so doing has completed his or her own work or not.

Lying to the instructor or purposely misleading any Penn State administrator shall also constitute a violation of academic integrity.

In cases of any violation of academic integrity it is the policy of the Department of Political Science to follow procedures established by the College of the Liberal Arts. More information on academic integrity and procedures followed for violation can be found at:  
<http://laus.la.psu.edu/current-students/academics/academic-integrity/> college-policies.

#### Note to students with disabilities:

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. If you have a disability-related need for reasonable academic adjustments in this course, contact the Office for Disability Services (ODS) at 814-863-1807 (V/TTY). For further information regarding ODS, please visit the Office for Disability Services Web site at <http://equity.psu.edu/ods/>. Instructors should be notified as early in the semester as possible regarding the need for reasonable accommodations.

## Course Calendar: TENTATIVE Part 1: Introduction to the Study of Political

### Behavior

Week 1 August 27: Introduction Week 2 September 3: Why and how should we study political behavior?

• Readings:

- Bartels, Larry M. 2008. "The Study of Electoral Behavior." In Jan E. Leighley, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of American Elections and Political Behavior*.
- Converse, Philip E. 2006. "Researching Electoral Politics." *The American Political Science Review*. 100(4): 605-612.
- Berelson, Bernard. 1952. "Democratic Theory and Public Opinion." *Public Opinion Quarterly*. 16:313-330.
- Simon, H. 1985. "Human Nature in Politics: The Dialogue of Psychology with Political Science." *The American Political Science Review*. 79:293-304.
- Smith, Kevin, John R. Alford, Peter K. Hatemi, Jindon J. Eaves, Carolyn Funck, and John R. Hibbing. 2012. "Biology, Ideology, and Epistemology: How do We Know Political Attitudes are Inherited and Why Should We Care?" *The American Journal of Political Science*. 51(1):17-33.
- Optional books for summary presentation: None

Week 3 September 10: Meaning and Measurement of Public Opinion

• Reading:

- Lippmann, Walter. [1922] 1997. *Public Opinion*, chapter 1 (3-20).
- Druckman, James N., and Arthur Lupia. 2000. "Preference Formation." *Annual Review of Political Science*. 3:1-24.
- Verba, Sidney. 1996. "The Citizen as Respondent: Sample Surveys and American Democracy." *American Political Science Review*. 1-7.
- Zaller, John R. and Stanley Feldman. 1992. "A Simple Theory of the Survey Response: Answering Questions versus Revealing Preferences." *American Journal of Political Science*. 36:579-616.
- Optional books for summary presentation:
  - Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

### Part 2: Public Preferences

Week 4 September 17: Reasoning About Politics

• Reading:

- Kuklinski, James H., Quirk, Paul J., Jerit, Jennifer, Schwieder, David, and Rich, Robert F. 2000. "Misinformation and the Currency of Democratic Citizenship." *The Journal of Politics*. 62 (3):790-816.
- Gilens, Martin. 2012. "Two-Thirds Full? Citizen Competence and Democratic Governance" in *New Directions in Public Opinion*, ed. Adam Berinsky. New York: Routledge, ch. 3.
- James H. Kuklinski, Paul J. Quirk, Jennifer Jerit and Robert F. Rich. 2001. "The Political Environment and Citizen Competence." *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 45, No. 2 (April): 410-424.
- Tabor, Charles S. and Milton Lodge. 2006. "Motivated Skepticism in the Evaluation of Political Beliefs." *American Journal of Political Science*. 50(3): 755-760.
- 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. Replication archive: <http://huber.research.yale.edu/>

writings.html.

- - Optional books for summary presentation:
  - Lodge, Milton, and Charles S. Tabor. 2013. *The Rationalizing Voter*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
  - Delli Carpini, Michael X., and Scott Keeter. 1996. *What Americans Know About Politics and Why It Matters*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Week 5 September 24 Attitudes and Attitudes Change: The Role of the Media

- Readings:
  - Behr, Roy L. and Shanto Iyengar. 1985. "Television News, Real-World Cues, and Changes in the Public Agenda." *The Public Opinion Quarterly*. 49(1): 38-57.
  - Miller, Joanne M. and Jon A. Krosnick. 2000. "News Media Impact on the Ingredients of Presidential Evaluations: Politically Knowledgeable Citizens Are Guided by a Trusted Source." *American Journal of Political Science*. 44(2):301-315.
  - Soroka, Stuart N. 2003. "Media, Public Opinion, and Foreign Policy." *The International Journal of Press/Politics*. 8(1):27-48. OR Soroka, Stuart N. 2006. "Good News and Bad News: Asymmetric Responses to Economic Information." *The Journal of Politics*. 68(2):372-385.
  - Ladd, Jonathan McDonald and Gabriel S. Lenz. 2009. "Exploiting a Rare Communication Shift to Document the Persuasive Power of the News Media." *American Journal of Political Science*. 53(2):394-410.
  - Prior, Markus. 2013. "Media and Political Polarization." *Annual Review of Political Science*. 16:101-127.
- - Optional books for summary presentation:
    - Prior Markus. 2007. *Post-Broadcast Democracy: How Media Choice Increases Inequality in Political Involvement and Polarizes Elections*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
    - Levendusky, Matthew. 2013. *How Partisan Media Polarize America*. Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press.

#### Week 6 October 1: Attitudes and Attitudes Change: The Role of Framing

- Readings:
  - Chong, Dennis and James N. Druckman. 2007. "Framing Theory." *Annual Review of Political Science*. 10:103-26.
  - Tversky, Amos and Daniel Kahneman. 1981. "The Framing of Decisions and the Psychology of Choice." *Science, New Series*, 211(4481):453-458.
  - Ledgerwood and Boydston. 2014. "Sticky Prospects: Loss Frames are Cognitively Stickier than Gain Frames."
  - Kellstedt, Paul M. 2000. "Media Framing and the Dynamics of Racial Policy Preferences." *American Journal of Political Science*. 44(2):245-260.
  - Chong, Dennis and James N. Druckman. 2013. "Counterframing Effects." *Journal of Politics*. 75(1):16.
  - OR Chong, Dennis and James N. Druckman. 2010. "Dynamic Public Opinion: Communication Effects over Time." *The American Political Science Review*. 104(4):663-680. OR Druckman (2001) The Implications of Framing Effects for Citizen Competence." *Political Behavior*. 23(3): 225-256.
- - Optional books for summary presentation:

– Iyengar, Shanto. 1991. *Is Anyone Responsible? How Television Frames Political Issues*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

#### Week 7 October 8: Dynamics of Public Opinion

- Readings: Presidential Approval, Consumer Sentiment, Mood,
  - De Boef, Suzanna and Kellstedt, Paul M. 2004. “The Political (and Economic) Origins of Consumer Confidence,” *American Journal of Political Science*, 48(4): 633–649.
  - Durr, Robert H. 1993. “What Moves Policy Sentiment?” *The American Political Science Review*, 87(1): 158–170.
  - Ferguson, Grant, Kellstedt, Paul M and Linn, Suzanna. 2013. “How Does the Economy Shape Policy Preferences?” *Electoral Studies*, 32(3): 544–550.
  - MacKuen, Michael B and Erikson, Robert S and Stimson, James A. 1992. “Peasants or bankers? The American electorate and the US economy.” *The American Political Science Review*, 86(3): 597–611.
  - Barbera, Pablo, Boydston, Amber, Linn, Suzanna and Nagler Jonathan. 2014. “Economic Conditions, Economic Perceptions, and Media Coverage of the United States Economy.” Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the European Political Science Association, Edinburgh, Scotland, June, 2014.
- - Optional books for summary presentation:
    - Page, Benjamin I. and Robert Y. Shapiro. 1992. *The Rational Public: Fifty Years of Trends in American Policy Preferences*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
    - Stimson, James A. 1999. *Public Opinion in America: Moods, Cycles, and Swings* (2nd edition). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
    - Ellis, Christopher and James A. Stimson. 2012. *Ideology in America*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

#### Week 8 October 15: Party Identification

- Reading:
  - Michael Lewis-Beck, William Jacoby, Helmut Norpoth, and Herbert Weisberg. 2008. *The American Voter Revisited*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
    - Chapter 6. “The Impact of Party Identification.”
    - Chapter 7. “The Development of Party Identification.”
  - Green, Donald Philip, and Bradley Palmquist. 1994. “How Stable Is Party Identification?” *Political Behavior*, 16(4): 437-466.
  - MacKuen, Michael, Robert Erikson, and James A. Stimson. 1989. “Macropartisanship.” *The American Political Science Review*. 83(4):1126-42.
  - Green, Donald, Palmquist, Bradley and Eric Schickler. 1998. “Macropartisanship: A Replication and Critique.” *The American Political Science Review*. 92(4): 883-900.
  - Erikson, Robert S., MacKuen, Michael B. and James A. Stimson. 1998. “What Moves Macropartisanship? A Reply to Green, Palmquist, and Schickler.” *The American Political Science Review*, 92(4): 901-912.
  - Highton, Benjamin and Cindy Kam. 2011. “The Long-Term Dynamics of Partisanship and Issue Orientations.” *The Journal of Politics* 73(1): 202-215.
  - Carsey, Thomas M. and Geoffrey C. Layman. 2006. “Changing Sides or Changing Minds? Party Identification and Policy Preferences in the American Electorate.” *American Journal of Political Science*, 50(2):464-477.
- Optional books for summary presentation:



- Levendusky, Matthew. 2009. *The Partisan Sort: How Liberals Became Democrats and Conservatives Became Republicans*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

## Part 3: Voting and Elections

### Week 9 October 22: Participation

- Readings:
  - Arceneaux, Kevin and David Nickerson. 2009. "Who is Mobilized to Vote? A Re-analysis of 11 Field Experiments." *American Journal of Political Science*. 53(1):1-16.
  - Plutzer, Eric. 2002. "Becoming a Habitual Voter: Inertia, Resources, and Growth in Young Adulthood." *The American Political Science Review*. 96: 41-56.
  - Fowler, James H. 2008. "Genetic Variation in Political Participation." *The American Political Science Review*. 102:233-48.
  - Hansford, Thomas G. and Brad T. Gomez. 2010. "Estimating the Electoral Effects of Voter Turnout." *The American Political Science Review*. 104(2): 268-288.
- Optional books for summary presentation:
  - Leighley, Jan E. and Jonathan Nagler. 2013. *Who Votes Now?: Demographics, Issues, Inequality, and Turnout in the United States*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
  - Schlozman, Kay Lehman, Sidney Verba and Henry E. Brady. 2012. *The Unheavenly Chorus: Unequal Political Voice and the Broken Promise of American Democracy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Parts 1, 2, and 4.

### Week 10 October 29: Vote Choice

- Readings:
  - Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde, Change and Continuity in the 2008 and 2010 Elections.
    - Chapter 5. "Social Forces and the Vote"
    - Chapter 6. "Candidates, Issues, and the Vote"
    - Chapter 7. "Presidential Performance and Candidate Choice."
  - – Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper and Row. (Chapter 3; See also 7 & 8).
  - – Michael Tomz and Robert Van Houweling. 2008. "Candidate Positioning and Voter Choice." *The American Political Science Review*. 102(3): 303-318.
  - – Lenz, Gabriel. 2009. "Learning and Opinion Change, Not Priming: Reconsidering the Evidence for the Priming Hypothesis." *American Journal of Political Science*. 53(4): 812-837.
  - – Jessee, Stephen A. 2010. "Partisan Information and Spatial Voting in the 2008 Presidential Election." *The Journal of Politics*. 72(2): 327-40.
- Optional books for summary presentation:

- Fiorina, Morris. 1981. *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

#### Week 11 November 5: Election Outcomes

- Readings:
  - Hibbs Jr, Douglas A. 2000. "Bread and Peace Voting in US Presidential Elections." *Public Choice*, 104(12): 149-180. Replication data available here: <http://www.douglas-hibbs.com>.
  - Bartels, Larry M. 2009. *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age*. Princeton: Princeton University Press (chapter 4).
  - Linn, Suzanna and Jonathan Nagler. 2014. "Economic Voting and Economic Inequality." Paper presented at Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting. Chicago, IL.
  - Robert S. Erikson, Michael B. MacKuen, and James A. Stimson. 2002. *The Macro Polity*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 7.
- Optional books for summary presentation:
  - Bartels, Larry M. 2009. *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

#### Week 12 November 12: Congressional Elections

- Readings:
  - Bafumi, Joseph, Erikson, Robert and Christopher Wlezien. 2010. "Balancing, Generic Polls, and Midterm Congressional Elections." *The Journal of Politics* 72(3):705-719.
  - Prior, Markus. 2006. "The Incumbent in the Living Room: The Rise of Television and the Incumbency Advantage in U.S. House Elections." *The Journal of Politics*. 68(3):657-673.
  - Clinton, Joshua D. 2006. "Representation in Congress: Constituents and Roll Calls in the 106th House." *The Journal of Politics*. 68(2):397-409,
  - Ansolabehere, Stephen and Philip Edward Jones. 2010. "Constituents? Responses to Congressional Roll Call Voting." *The American Political Science Review*. 54(3): 683-597.
  - Carson, Jamie, Engstrom, Erik, and Jason Roberts. 2007. "Candidate Quality, the Personal Vote, and the Incumbency Advantage in Congress." *The American Political Science Review*. 101(2): 289-301.
  - Stone, Walter J., Fulton, Sarah A., Maestas, Cherie D., and L. Sandy Maisel. 2010. "Incumbency Reconsidered: Prospects, Strategic Retirement, and Incumbent Quality in U.S. House Elections." *The Journal of Politics*. 72(1):178-190.
- Optional books for summary presentation:

– Jacobson, Gary C. 2013. *The Politics of Congressional Elections*. 8th edition. Pearson Education.

Week 13 November 19: Identity—Race and Gender

- Readings:
  - Banks, Antoine J. and Nicholas A. Valentino. 2012. “Emotional Substrates of White Racial Attitudes.” *American Journal of Political Science*. 46(2):286-97.
  - White, Ismail K. 2007. “When Race Matters and When it Doesn’t: Racial Group Differences in Response to Racial Cues.” *The American Political Science Review*. 101(2):339-54.
  - Manza, Jeff and Clem Brooks. 1998. “The Gender Gap in U.S. Presidential Elections: When? Why? Implications?” *American Journal of Sociology*, 103(5):1235-1266.
  - Howell, Susan E. and Christine L. Day. 2000. “Complexities of the Gender Gap.” *The Journal of Politics* 62(3): 858-874.
- Optional books for summary presentation:
  - Hajnal, Zoltan, and Taeku Lee. 2011. *Why Americans Don’t Join the Party : Race, Immigration, and the Failure (of Political Parties) to Engage the Electorate*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
  - Iversen, Torben and Rosenbluth, Frances McCall. 2010. *Women, Work, and Politics: The Political Economy of Gender Inequality*. New Haven: Yale University Press. by

Week 14 November 26: Thanksgiving Break

Week 15 December 3: (Dynamic) Representation

- Readings:
  - Robert S. Erikson, Michael B. MacKuen, and James A. Stimson. 2002. *The Macro Polity*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 9 and 11.
  - Page, Benjamin I. and Robert Y. Shapiro. 1992. *The Rational Public: Fifty Years of Trends in American Policy Preferences*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 1,2,8,9.
  - Wlezien, Christopher. 2004. “Patterns of Representation: Dynamics of Public Preferences and Policy.” *Journal of Politics*.66:1-24.
- Optional books for summary presentation:
  - Erikson, Robert S., Michael B. MacKuen, and James A. Stimson. 2002. *The Macro Polity*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
  - Stimson, James A. 2004. *Tides of Consent*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Week 16 December 10: Presentations