

PSCI 3407A

Public Opinion and Public Policy

Time: Wednesday, 8:35 a.m. – 11:25 a.m.
Course location available on Carleton Central

I General information

Instructor: Steve White
Office: D696 LA(Loeb)
Office Hours: Wednesdays, 12:30-2:30 p.m., or by appointment (in person, or via Zoom)
Email: steve.white@carleton.ca

All email communication is to be via official Carleton university e-mail accounts and/or Brightspace, not personal emails.

II Course description

Public opinion in its many forms has become increasingly important for government decision-making and accountability processes. This course examines theories about the origins and dynamics of public opinion, the ways in which public opinion influences government policy and decision-making, and how decision-makers can shape public opinion.

III Course Format

This course consists of weekly lectures, with time set aside in each class for discussion/activities. Students are expected to actively participate in class activities led by the instructor. Required reading materials will be available through Brightspace. All assigned work will be submitted via Brightspace. Although most of the assigned readings incorporate analyses of mass survey data, a deep familiarity with survey methodology is not a prerequisite for this course. Understanding the theories and conclusions,

rather than the detailed empirical evidence supporting those theories and conclusions, is emphasized. Students will be introduced to core concepts in survey design and interpretation during the course.

IV Learning outcomes

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Distinguish between major theoretical approaches to understanding how opinions about matters of public policy are formed, and how they change
- Identify the key sources of individual-level differences in opinion
- Evaluate the relationship between public opinion and public policy in different contexts: what is the impact on democratic accountability?
- Develop basic skills in measuring public opinion and interpreting public opinion data.

V Texts

Required Text:

Anderson, Cameron D., and M. Turgeon (Eds.). 2023. *Comparative Public Opinion*. ISBN 978-0-367-64060-6. (This text is available at the [campus bookstore](#))

All other required course material is available online through the Ares library reserve system on Brightspace. Required readings for each week are listed in the course schedule.

VI Evaluation at a glance

Component	Value	Due Date
Attendance/Participation	10%	Cumulative
Midterm test	25%	In Class February 28
Short paper, component 1: research question and annotated bibliography	5%	Submitted online February 2
Short paper, component 2: meeting	-	Held in the week of March 4-8
Short paper, component 3: outline	5%	Submitted online March 15
Short paper, component 4: final paper	20%	Submitted online April 10
Final examination	35%	Exam period

VII Evaluation in detail

Attendance/Participation (10%): You are expected to attend every lecture, and be prepared to participate in discussions of the assigned topics. Student who are unable to attend a class must have a valid and documentable reason for absence (e.g. bereavement) in order to have that class omitted in the calculation of their attendance/participation grade.

Midterm test (25%): Students will answer any two out of four questions related to lectures up to and including the February 14 lecture. Questions will be provided on Brightspace on February 14.

Short Paper (30%): Students will craft a short 1500 to 1800-word paper regarding public opinion about a public policy issue. The paper will review existing public opinion research. Detailed instructions about each component of this paper will be provided on Brightspace in the first week of the course. The assignment consists of four components: a research question and annotated bibliography (5%); a meeting with the instructor about your paper (required to receive credit for the other paper components); a detailed outline of the paper (5%); and the final paper (20%). Late submissions for any component of this assignment without a valid and documentable reason (e.g. bereavement) will be penalized for each late day (including partial days).

Final examination (35%): Students will answer any three out of five questions related to lectures in the course. Questions will be provided to students on April 10. The examination will be held in the official examination period at a time and date scheduled by the University.

VIII Course schedule

January 10: Introduction

Anderson, C.D., & M. Turgeon. "Introduction." In *Comparative Public Opinion*, pp. 3-15. Routledge, 2023.

***Note: Students are not required to read this in advance of the introductory class.*

January 17: Defining and Measuring Public Opinion

Anderson, Christopher D., & Mathieu Turgeon. "Defining and Measuring Public Opinion." In *Comparative Public Opinion*, pp. 16-30. Routledge, 2023.

Krosnick, Jon A. "Questionnaire design." In *The Palgrave handbook of survey research*, pp. 439-455. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2018.

Popkin, Samuel L. "Information shortcuts and the reasoning voter." *Information, participation, and choice: An economic theory of democracy in perspective* (1993): 17-35.

January 24: Social Identities and Socialization

White, Stephen "Age and Public Opinion." In *Comparative Public Opinion*, pp. 41-62. Routledge, 2023.

Romualdi, Tyler, John Kennedy, & Christopher D. Anderson. "Class and Public Opinion." In *Comparative Public Opinion*, pp. 105-128. Routledge, 2023.

Djupe, Paul A. "Religion and Public Opinion." In *Comparative Public Opinion*, pp. 129-151. Routledge, 2023.

January 31: Social Pressure

Norris, Pippa. "Cancel culture: Myth or reality?." *Political studies* 71, no. 1 (2023): 145-174.

Asch, Solomon E. "Opinions and social pressure." *Scientific American* 193, no. 5 (1955): 31-35.

February 7: Media and Framing

Bastien, Frédérick. "The News Media Organizations and Public Opinion on Political Issues." In *Comparative Public Opinion*, pp. 310-323.

Druckman, James N. "The implications of framing effects for citizen competence." *Political behavior* 23, no. 3 (2001): 225-256. **Note: students only read pp. 225-231.

Nisbet, Matthew C. "Communicating climate change: Why frames matter for public engagement." *Environment: Science and policy for sustainable development* 51, no. 2 (2009): 12-23.

February 14: Partisanship, Ideology, and Motivated Reasoning

Chassé, Philippe, & Éric Bélanger. "Ideology and Public Opinion." In *Comparative Public Opinion*, pp. 173-193.

Stephenson, Laura B. "Partisanship and Public Opinion." In *Comparative Public Opinion*, pp. 194-213.

Strickland, April A., Charles S. Taber, and Milton Lodge. "Motivated reasoning and public opinion." *Journal of health politics, policy and law* 36, no. 6 (2011): 935-944.

February 21: WINTER BREAK (NO CLASS)

February 28: Emotions and Personality

Ackermann, Kathrin, & Jan Eckardt. "Personality and Public Opinion." In *Comparative Public Opinion*, pp. 152-172.

Druckman, J.N., McDermott, R. Emotion and the Framing of Risky Choice. *Polit Behav* 30, 297-321 (2008).

Fletcher, J., H. Bastedo, & J. Hove. 2009. "Losing Heart: Declining Support and the Political Marketing of the Afghanistan Mission," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 42: 911-937.

March 6: MIDTERM TEST

March 13: Material Interests versus Symbolic Politics

Chong, Dennis, Jack Citrin, and Patricia Conley. "When self-interest matters." *Political Psychology* 22, no. 3 (2001): 541-570.

Matsubayashi, Tetsuya, & Masateru Yamatani. "Personality and Public Opinion." In *Comparative Public Opinion*, pp. 241-258.

Kevins, Anthony. "The Impact of Labour Market Vulnerability: Explaining Attitudes Towards Immigration in Europe." In *Comparative Public Opinion*, pp. 259-283.

March 20: How Public Opinion Affects Policy

Petry, François. "How policy makers view public opinion." *Policy analysis in Canada: The state of the art* (2007): 375-398.

Petry, F., & M. Mendelsohn. 2004. Public Policy and Policy Making in Canada, 1994-2001. *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 37: 505-529.

Gilens, Martin. "Inequality and democratic responsiveness." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 69, no. 5 (2005): 778-796.

March 27: How Policy and Politicians Affect Public Opinion

Wlezien, C. 1995. "The Public as Thermostat: Dynamics of Preferences for Spending," *American Journal of Political Science* 39: 981–1000.

Jacobs, L.R., and R.Y. Shapiro. Politics and Policymaking in the Real World: Crafted Talk and the Loss of Democratic Responsiveness. Navigating Public Opinion: Polls, Policy, and the Future of American Democracy (2002), 54-75.

Soss, Joe, and Sanford F. Schram. "A public transformed? Welfare reform as policy feedback." *American political science review* 101, no. 1 (2007): 111-127.

April 3: Populism and Democratic Elitism

Bartels, Larry M. "Public Opinion and Democratic Politics." In *Democracy Erodes from the Top*, pp. 217-238. Princeton, 2023.

Peffley, Mark, & Robert Rohrschneider. "Elite Beliefs and the Theory of Democratic Elitism." In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior*, pp. 65-79. Oxford University Press, 2007.

IX Policies and Procedures

Email: Students must use Carleton University email accounts for all their correspondence with instructor or teaching assistant. *Indicate the course number (PSCI 3407A) in your email.* Students' first point of contact should be their assigned teaching assistants.

Late Penalties: Assignments are due on the dates specified in the course outline. *All assignments not submitted by the due date will be considered late.* Late assignments will be subject to a penalty of 5% per day thereafter, with a maximum late penalty of up to 30%. Assignments that are more than two weeks past the due date will not be accepted.

No extensions on assignments will be granted after their due dates. Exceptions will be made only in those cases of very exceptional circumstances (e.g. illness, bereavement).

Accommodations: Students requiring accommodations other than those outlined in the "Academic Accommodations" section of this document should speak with the instructor in the *first week* of the course.

Appeals: A grade appeal form will be provided on Brightspace. Students who wish to appeal a grade should fill out the form and submit it to their teaching assistant within one week of receiving the grade. If a student is not satisfied with the response to their appeal, they should resubmit the appeal to the course instructor.

Sharing Course Materials: Teaching and learning activities, including videos, lectures, discussions, presentations, etc., by both instructors and students, are copy protected and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s). All course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, outlines, and other materials, are also protected by copyright and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s).

Students registered in the course may take notes and make copies of course materials for their own educational use only. *Students are not permitted to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly for commercial or non-commercial purposes without express written consent from the copyright holder(s).*

Recording Lectures: *Students are not permitted to record lectures, meetings, office hours, or*

tutorials without the consent of the instructor.

Collaborative Work: Two or more students are not permitted to submit the same work for evaluation.

Submitting the same assignment as another student will be considered plagiarism.

Use of Artificial Intelligence: *The use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools to produce assessed content is not permitted in this course.* It is considered a violation of academic integrity standards. Please refer to the policy in the Appendix of this document.

Appendix

Student Mental Health

As a university student, you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you. Here is a list that may be helpful:

Emergency Resources (on and off campus): <https://carleton.ca/health/emergencies-and-crisis/emergency-numbers/>

- **Carleton Resources:**

- Mental Health and Wellbeing: <https://carleton.ca/wellness/>
- Health & Counselling Services: <https://carleton.ca/health/>
- Paul Menton Centre: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>
- Academic Advising Centre (AAC): <https://carleton.ca/academicadvising/>
- Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS): <https://carleton.ca/csas/>
- Equity & Inclusivity Communities: <https://carleton.ca/equity/>

- **Off Campus Resources:**

- Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region: (613) 238-3311 or TEXT: 343-306-5550, <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/>
- Mental Health Crisis Service: (613) 722-6914, 1-866-996-0991, <http://www.crisisline.ca/>
- Empower Me: 1-844-741-6389, <https://students.carleton.ca/services/empower-me-counselling-services/>
- Good2Talk: 1-866-925-5454, <https://good2talk.ca/>
- The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: <https://walkincounselling.com>

Requests for Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

Academic consideration for medical or other extenuating circumstances: Please contact your instructor if you are experiencing circumstances that (a) are beyond your control, (b) have a significant impact your capacity to meet your academic obligations, and (c) could not have reasonably been prevented. Decisions on academic consideration are in your instructor's discretion; they will be guided by the course learning outcomes and the principle of good faith. Please see [here](#) for more details. For considerations relating to course work, your instructor may request that you complete the [Self-Declaration form](#). To apply for a deferral of your final exam, you must submit the Self-Declaration form to the Registrar's Office no later than three days after the scheduled examination or take-home due date.

Pregnancy accommodation: Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For accommodation regarding a formally-scheduled final exam, you must complete the Pregnancy Accommodation Form ([click here](#)).

Religious accommodation: Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details [click here](#).

Accommodations for students with disabilities: If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation, or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, reach out to your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. For more details, [click here](#).

Accommodation for student activities: Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and to the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom. Reasonable accommodation will be provided to students who engage in student activities at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more information, please [click here](#).

For more information on academic accommodation, please contact the departmental administrator or visit: students.carleton.ca/course-outline.

Sexual Violence Policy

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated. Survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is an essential element of a productive and successful career as a student. Carleton's [Academic Integrity Policy](#) addresses academic integrity violations, including plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, misrepresentation, impersonation, withholding of records, obstruction/interference, disruption of instruction or examinations, improper access to and/or dissemination of information, or violation of test and examination rules. Students are required to familiarize themselves with the university's academic integrity rules.

Plagiarism

The Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This includes reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include, but are not limited to: books, articles, papers, websites, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, art works, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, material on the internet and/or conversations.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- Any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else;
- Using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- Using another’s data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgement;
- Submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one’s own; and
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s work and/or failing to use quotations marks.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

Unless explicitly permitted by the instructor in a particular course, any use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools to produce assessed content (e.g., text, code, equations, image, summary, video, etc.) is considered a violation of academic integrity standards.

Procedures in Cases of Suspected Violations

Violations of the Academic Integrity Policy are serious offences which cannot be resolved directly with the course's instructor. When an instructor suspects a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy, the Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student. Penalties are not trivial. They may include a mark of zero for the assignment/exam in question or a final grade of "F" for the course. More information on the University's Academic Integrity Policy can be found at: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>.

Intellectual property

Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).

Submission and Return of Term Work

Papers must be submitted directly to the instructor according to the instructions in the course outline. The departmental office will not accept assignments submitted in hard copy.

Grading

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor, subject to the approval of the faculty Dean. Final standing in courses will be shown by alphabetical grades. The system of grades used, with corresponding grade points is:

Percentage	Letter grade	12-point scale	Percentage	Letter grade	12-point scale
90-100	A+	12	67-69	C+	6
85-89	A	11	63-66	C	5
80-84	A-	10	60-62	C-	4
77-79	B+	9	57-59	D+	3
73-76	B	8	53-56	D	2
70-72	B-	7	50-52	D-	1

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by an instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

Carleton E-mail Accounts

All email communication to students from the Department of Political Science will be via official Carleton University e-mail accounts and/or Brightspace. As important course and university information is distributed this way, it is the student's responsibility to monitor their Carleton University email accounts and Brightspace.

Carleton Political Science Society

The Carleton Political Science Society (CPSS) has made its mission to provide a social environment for politically inclined students and faculty. By hosting social events, including Model Parliament, debates, professional development sessions and more, CPSS aims to involve all political science students at Carleton University. Our mandate is to arrange social and academic activities in order to instill a sense of belonging within the Department and the larger University community. Members can benefit through our networking opportunities, academic engagement initiatives and numerous events which aim to complement both academic and social life at Carleton University. To find out more, visit us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/CarletonPoliticalScienceSociety/>.

Official Course Outline

The course outline posted to the Political Science website is the official course outline.