

PSCI 3407A
Public Opinion and Public Policy
Tuesdays 14:35 – 17:25
Please Confirm Location on Carleton Central

Instructor: **Evren Tok**
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Please send an email to get an appointment in case you cannot make the assigned office hours. Only Carleton connect email is to be used in communications

The Nature of the Course

In order to understand the links between public opinion and public policy on a broad scale, our initial mission will be exploring what is meant by public opinion. Although it seems like public opinion has become synonymous with polling, there are many other ways public opinion can be understood. Next, we assess what is being measured when we talk about assessing public opinion and how it is measured, by using a variety of examples. Following that, we explore the interrelationships between public opinion, public policy and how interest groups, the media, and public officials make use of public opinion. Then, we will look at how public opinion can be engaged, and end with a discussion of new developments in public opinion measurement (internationally and domestically).

Required Sources ordered by the bookstore:

Butler, Peter M. 2007. *Polling and Public Opinion: A Canadian Perspective*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Barbara Norrande and Clyde Wilcox. 2009 *Understanding Public Opinion* Third Edition. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Evaluation:

Book review (maximum 1,000 words) due October 6, 15%

I need to approve the book in advance

In-class participation 20%

Major Seminar Paper (maximum 3000 words) and Presentation 50 %

Weekly Presentations 15 %

You will be assigned readings for each week in the first and second week of the course.

SESSION 1

Introduction (September 15)

- Introduction to the nature and structure of the course

Defining Public Opinion (September 22)

- What is public opinion?
- Evolution of our understanding of public opinion
- Importance of understanding how it is being defined

Required Readings:

Butler, Introduction.

Glynn, Carroll J, Susan Herbst, Garrett J. O'Keefe, and Robert. Y. Shapiro. 2004. Chapter 1: The Meanings of Public Opinion. In *Public Opinion* Second Edition, eds. Glynn et al, 3-34. Boulder, CO: Westview Books.

Lippman, Walter. *Public Opinion*. New York: Free Press Paperbacks (Simon and Schuster), 1997. [Original: 1922. Forward by Ronald Steel and Introduction.]

Riesman, D. and N. Glazer. 1948. The Meaning of Opinion. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 12 (4): 633-48.

SESSION 2

Attitudes, Preferences, Values, and Opinions (September 29)

- How to understand the formation and consistency of, and changes in, public opinion
- Sociological and psychological perspectives on the formation of public opinion
- What is being measured? (ie Attitudes? Preferences? Values?)
- What characteristics matter? Gender? Age? Race/Ethnicity?

Required Readings:

Butler, Peter M. 2007. Chapter 1: Polling and Understanding Public Opinion. In *Polling and Public Opinion: A Canadian Perspective*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Uslaner, Eric M. 2008. Where You Stand Depends Upon Where Your Grandparents Sat : The Inheritability of Generalized Trust. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 72 (4): 725- 740.

Sapiro, Virginia and Shauna L. Shames. 2010. The Gender Basis of Public Opinion. In *Understanding Public Opinion* Third Edition, eds. Barbara Norrande and Clyde Wilcox, 5-24. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Glynn, Carroll J, Susan Herbst, Garrett J. O'Keefe, and Robert. Y. Shapiro. 2004. Chapter 5: Stereotyping : Social Norms. In *Public Opinion* Second Edition, eds. Glynn et al, 167-210. Boulder, CO: Westview Books.

Supplementary

Alford, John R. and John R. Hibbing. 2010. The Ultimate Source of Political Opinions: Genes and the Environment. In *Understanding Public Opinion* Third Edition, eds. Barbara Norrander and Clyde Wilcox 43-56. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Glynn, Carroll J, Susan Herbst, Garrett J. O'Keefe, and Robert. Y. Shapiro. 2004. Chapter 4: Psychological Perspectives. In *Public Opinion* Second Edition, eds. Glynn et al, 119-165. Boulder, CO: Westview Books.

Belanger, Eric and Francois Petry. 2005. The Rational Public? A Canadian Test of the Page and Shapiro Argument. *International Journal of Public Opinion* 17 (2): 190-212.

Wawro, Gregory J. 2006. The Rationalizing Public? *Critical Review* 18 (1-3): 279- 296.

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.

Measuring Public Opinion (October 6)

- Critical assessment of public opinion measurement tools
- What are some of the issues associated with measuring public opinion?

Required Readings:

Butler, Chapter 2.

Lang, Kurt. 2008. What Polls Can and Cannot Tell Us About Public Opinion: Keynote Speech at the 60th Annual Conference of WAPOR. Forum: The Use of Opinion Polls. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 20 (1): 3-22.

Langer, Gary, Michael Traugott, and Robert Worcester. 2008. Comments on the Keynote: Comment by Gary Langer, Michael Traugott, and Robert Worcester. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 20 (1): 23-29.

Supplementary

Lang, Kurt. 2008. Reply to the Comments. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 20 (1): 30-32.

American Association for Public Opinion Research. *Best Practices for Survey and Public*

Opinion Research. Available online at <http://www.aapor.org/bestpractices?s=best%20practices%20for%20survey>

SESSION 3

Public Opinion and Democracy (October 13)

- Who undertakes public opinion research?
- Who uses public opinion research?
- How do governments use public opinion?
- Communications, performance measurement, decision-making, evaluation
- What impact does public opinion have on decision-makers and other policy actors?
- Should public opinion have a greater impact than it does?

Required Readings:

Petry, François and Matthew Mendelsohn. 2004. Public Opinion and Policy Making in Canada, 1994-2001. *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 37 (3): 505-530.

Burstein, Paul. 2003. The Impact of Public Opinion on Policy: A Review and Agenda. *Political Research Quarterly* 56: 29-40.

Page, Benjamin I. 1994. Democratic Responsiveness? Untangling the Links Between Public Opinion and Policy. *PS-Political Science and Politics* 27: 25-29.

Manza, Jeff and Fay Lomax Cook. 2002. The Impact of Public Opinion on Public Policy: The State of the Debate. In *Navigating Public Opinion: Polls, Policy, and the Future of American Democracy*, eds. Jeff Manza, Fay Lomax Cook and Benjamin I. Page, 17-32. New York: Oxford University Press. Available on library e-book site.

Supplementary

Soroka, Stuart and Wlezien, Christopher. 2002. *Degrees of Democracy: Public Opinion and Policy in Comparative Perspective*. Centre for Advanced Study in the Social Sciences Working Paper Series. Madrid: Juan March Institute. Available online at [http://www.degreesofdemocracy.mcgill.ca/Soroka&Wlezien\(JuanMarch\).pdf](http://www.degreesofdemocracy.mcgill.ca/Soroka&Wlezien(JuanMarch).pdf)

Takeshita, Toshio. 2006. Current Critical Problems in Agenda-Setting Research. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 18 (Autumn): 275-296.

Elections (October 20)

- How does public opinion shape peoples' votes in election contests?
- Partisanship, opinions, and elections
- Particular issues related to polling during elections
 - o Exit polls
 - o Election polls

Required Readings:

Herle, David, Jennifer Espey, Alex Swann, and Denise Brunsdon. 2008. Polls Got the Big Picture, Not the Regional Ones. *Policy Options* (November): 99-103.

Gosselin, Tania and Francois Petry. 2009. Regulation of Poll Reporting in Canada. *Canadian Public Policy* XXXV (1): 41-58.

Dobrzynska, Agnieszka, Andre Blais, and Richard Nadeau. 2003. Do the Media Have a Direct Impact on the Vote? The Case of the 1997 Canadian Election. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 15 (1): 27-43.

Neuman, Keith. 2006. Polls help us vote with our eyes wide open. *The Ottawa Citizen* online (February 1).

Supplementary

Ferguson, Peter A. and Cristine de Clercy. 2005. Regulatory Compliance in Opinion Poll Reporting During the 2004 Canadian Election. *Canadian Public Policy* 31 (3): 243-257.

Zukin, Cliff. *Sources of Variation in Published Election Polling: A Primer*. American Association for Public Opinion Research, 2004. Online at http://www.aapor.org/uploads/zukin_election_primer.pdf

SESSION 4**Policy Actors and Public Opinion (October 27)**

- How do political parties, elites, and interest groups represent public opinion?
- What impact does public opinion have on the forms of communication these actors use?

Required Readings:

Belanger, Eric. 2003. Issue ownership by Canadian political parties 1953 – 2001. *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 36 (3): 539-554.

Petry, François. 2007. How Policy Actors View Public Opinion. In *Policy Analysis in Canada: the State of the Art*, edited by Laurent Dobuzinskis, Michael Howlett, and David Laycock, 375-398. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Herle, David. 2007. Poll-Driven Politics: The Role of Public Opinion in Canada. *Policy Options* (May): 19-25.

Zaller, John R. 1992. Epilogue: The question of elite domination of public opinion. In *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*, 310-332. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Supplementary

Edwards III, George C. and B. Dan Wood. 1999. Who Influences Whom? The President, Congress, and the Media. *American Political Science Review* 93 (June): 327ff.

Cross, William and Lisa Young. 2004. *Youth Involvement in Political Parties*. Opinion-Canada (Centre for Research and Information on Canada). Available online at http://www.opinion-canada.ca/_admin/upload/276.pdf.

Media and Public Opinion (November 3)

- Media reporting on and commissioning of public opinion polls
- Relationship between media and opinion formation
- o Shaping? Influencing? Which way(s) does the relationship go?

Required Readings:

Butler, Chapter 3.

Alboim, Elly. 2001. *The Media and Public Policy*. Queen's University School of Policy Studies Working Paper No. 19 (May). Available online at http://www.queensu.ca/sps/working_papers/files/sps_wp_19.pdf

Steven Chaffee and Stacey Frank Kanihan. 1997. Learning About Politics from the Mass Media. *Political Communication* 14 (4): 421-430.

Nisbet, Erik C. 2008. Media Use, Democratic Citizenship, and Communication Gaps in a Developing Democracy. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 20 (4): 454-482.

SESSION 5

Shaping, Educating, and Manipulating Public Opinion (November 10)

- How can public opinion be better impacted and engaged?
- What processes and policy actors have the most impact on public opinion?
- What techniques have been developed to address the shortfalls of traditional public opinion research? How might deliberative polling which educates and informs deliberative dialogue change the way we think about polling, and its value for governments?
- Communications and social marketing

Required Readings:

Butler, Chapter 5.

Goidel, Robert Kirby, C.M. Freeman, S. Procopio, and C. F. Zewe. 2008. Who Participates in the "Public Square" and Does It Matter? *Public Opinion Quarterly* 72 (4): 792-803.

Fishkin, J.S., Luskin, R.C., and Jowell, R. 2000. Deliberative polling and public consultation. *Parliamentary Affairs* 53(4): 659-666.

McCluskey, Michael R., Sameer Deshpande, Dhavan V. Shah, and Douglas M. McLeod. 2004. The Efficacy Gap and Political Participation: When Political Influence Fails to Meet Expectations. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 16 (4): 437-455.

New Developments in Public Opinion (November 17)

- Public opinion research has expanded globally, and is reaching countries with little previous experience of expressive public opinion. What are the results of this process?
- New developments in public opinion – particularly web-based assessment – faces challenges and provides great opportunity. What are the challenges facing the measurement of public opinion?

Required Readings:

Taylor H. 1995. Horses for Courses: How Different Countries Measure Public Opinion in Different Ways. *Public Perspective* 6 (2): 3-7.

Tang, Wenfang. 2005. Collecting Public Opinion in China. In *Public Opinion and Political Change in China*, 33-52. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Varughese, George. 2007. Practical Challenges: Conducting Survey Research in Afghanistan. *Public Opinion Pros* (April). Available online at http://www.publicopinionpros.com/from_field/2007/apr/varughese.asp

Supplementary

Loosveldt, Geert and Vicky Storms. 2008. Measuring Public Opinion about Surveys. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 20 (1): 74-89.

Lenihan, Don. 2006. Something happening here: Internet could trump polling, focus groups. *CIO Government Review* (October), 4.

Delli Carpini. 2000. Gen.com: Youth, Civic Engagement, and the New Information Environment. *Political Communication* 17: 341-349.

Farrell D.M. 1998. Political Consultancy Overseas: The Internationalization of Campaign Consultancy. *PS: Political Science and Politics* 31 (3): 171-176.

SESSION 6

Public Opinion on Policy Issues (November 24)

- What are the opinions held by Canadian and Saskatchewan people on different issues?
- How might these fit in a “global” or comparative context?
- How are these opinions impacted by gender, race, ethnicity, culture, and social class?

Required Readings:

Butler, Chapter 4.

Adams, Michael. 2003. *Fire and Ice: The United States, Canada, and the Myth of Converging Values*. Toronto, ON: Penguin Canada.

Anderssen, Erin and Michael Valpy, et al. 2004. *The New Canada: A Globe and Mail Report on the Next Generation*. Toronto, ON: McClelland and Stewart.

Bricker, Darrell and John Wright. 2005. *What Canadians Think About Almost Everything*. Toronto, ON: Doubleday Canada.

Supplementary

Lawson, Robert J. 2005. Understanding Alienation in Western Canada: Is "Western Alienation" the Problem? Is Senate Reform the Cure? *Journal of Canadian Studies* 39 (2): 127-157.

O'Neill, Brenda. 2001. Generational Patterns in the Political Opinions and Behaviours of Canadians: Separating the Wheat from the Chaff. *Policy Matters* 2 (5).

December 1st: Paper Presentations and Discussion

Academic Accommodations

For students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (500 University Centre) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Registered PMC students are required to contact the centre (613-520-6608) every term to ensure that the instructor receives your request for accommodation. After registering with the PMC, make an appointment to meet with the instructor in order to discuss your needs **at least two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations**. If you require accommodation for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodation to PMC by **November 16, 2009 for December examinations** and **March 12, 2010 for April examinations**.

For Religious Observance: Students requesting accommodation for religious observances should apply in writing to their instructor for alternate dates and/or means of satisfying academic requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist, but no later than two weeks before the compulsory academic event. Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor(s) involved. Instructors will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage

to the student. Instructors and students may contact an Equity Services Advisor for assistance (www.carleton.ca/equity).

For Pregnancy: Pregnant students requiring academic accommodations are encouraged to contact an Equity Advisor in Equity Services to complete a *letter of accommodation*. Then, make an appointment to discuss your needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first academic event in which it is anticipated the accommodation will be required.

Plagiarism: The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This can include:

- 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;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in "substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.

Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They include a mark of zero for the plagiarized work or a final grade of "F" for the course.

Oral Examination: At the discretion of the instructor, students may be required to pass a brief oral examination on research papers and essays.

Submission and Return of Term Work: Papers must be handed directly to the instructor and will not be date-stamped in the departmental office. Late assignments may be submitted to the drop box in the corridor outside B640 Loeb. Assignments will be retrieved every business day at **4 p.m.**, stamped with that day’s date, and then distributed to the instructor. For essays not returned in class please attach a **stamped, self-addressed envelope** if you wish to have your assignment returned by mail. Please note that assignments sent via fax or email will not be accepted. Final exams are intended solely for the purpose of evaluation and will not be returned.

Approval of final grades: 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.

Course Requirements: Failure to write the final exam will result in a grade of ABS. FND (Failure No Deferred) is assigned when a student's performance is so poor during the term that they cannot pass the course even with 100% on the final examination. In such cases, instructors may use this notation on the Final Grade Report to indicate that a student has already failed the course due to inadequate term work and should not be permitted access to a deferral of the examination. Deferred final exams are available ONLY if the student is in good standing in the course.

Connect Email Accounts: All email communication to students from the Department of Political Science will be via Connect. Important course and University information is also distributed via the Connect email system. It is the student's responsibility to monitor their Connect account.

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. Holding social events, debates, and panel discussions, CPSS aims to involve all political science students in the after-hours academic life 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 numerous opportunities which will complement both academic and social life at Carleton University. To find out more, please email carletonpss@gmail.com, visit our website at poliscisociety.com, or come to our office in Loeb D688.

Official Course Outline: The course outline posted to the Political Science website is the official course outline.