Public Opinion and Voting Behavior
Spring 2011
Wednesdays 6:30-9:15

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This class is a graduate seminar on public opinion and voting behavior. We will examine such topics as the meaning of public opinion, the distribution of public opinion major issues, and factors related to vote turnout and vote choice.

This class has two major assignments. The first is a paper (15-20 pages) which can take on of two forms; either a research design proposal or a full-fledged research project. The second major assignment will be an in class exam, designed to help students prepare for the public opinion/voting behavior portion of comprehensive exams.

Requirements:
Your course grade is based on the following components:
Seminar Participation: 20%
Written Assignments: 20%
Class Presentation: 5%
Final Paper: 35%
Final Exam: 25%

Seminar Participation: I expect that you show up to class ready to participate. While you’re reading you should take notes: highlight ideas that you find interesting or questionable and be ready to discuss them in class.

Written assignments: During the course of the term, I will expect you to submit five two-page (double-spaced) reaction papers. Each of these reaction papers should be a critical, research-based reaction to one or more of the readings and end with two thought questions for class discussion. These are due by the Tuesday prior to the relevant day’s readings, by midnight.

Readings: The majority of reading for this class will be articles, but we'll rely heavily on the following books:

Course Timeline

January 19th: Introduction

January 26th: Meaning and Measurement of Public Opinion

Walter Lippman, Public Opinion, Ch. 1, pp 3-20.


Zaller, Ch. 1-3

February 2nd: Ignorance


February 9th: Ideology and Political Reasoning


February 16th: Self Interest and Symbolic Politics


February 23rd: Values


March 2nd: Persuasion


March 9th: Media


March 23rd: Race and Racial Attitudes


Mendelberg, Tali. The Race Card, Chapters 1, 6, 7.


Correll, Park, Judd and Wittenbrink. The Police Officer’s Dilemma: Using Ethnicity to Disambiguate Potentially Threatening Individuals.

March 30th: Issues and Candidates


MacKuen, Michael B., Robert Erikson, and James Stimson. 1992. Peasants or Bankers?: The


**April 6th: Campaigns**


**April 13th: Political Participation**


Han, Hahrie. *Moved to Action*. Chapter 5.
April 20th: Mobilization and Turnout


April 27th: Representation


May 4th: Class Presentations