



Seminar in American Political Behavior

PSCI 510 01E

Fall 2015

6:00-8:45 PM Tue

SS 134

Professor: Dr. Jangsup Choi
E-mail: Jangsup.Choi@tamuc.edu
Office: Social Science Building 161
Phone: (903) 886-5314 (office)
Office hours: 12:30-2:00 T/Th; 3:15-5:15 T and by appointment

Course Information

Textbook required:

Lewis-Beck, Michael S., William G. Jacoby, Helmut Norpoth, and Herbert F. Weisberg. 2008. *The American Voter Revisited*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press. (ISBN: 978-0-472-05040-6).

McCarty, Nolan, Keith T. Poole, and Howard Rosenthal. 2006. *Polarized America: The Dance of Ideology and Unequal Riches*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press. (ISBN: 978-0262633611).

Goidel, Kirby. 2014. *America's Failing Experiment: How We the People Have Become the Problem*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. (ISBN: 978-1442247505).

Additional readings may be supplied on the web or in class.

Course Description

This seminar focuses on current research on American political behavior. It examines topics such as public opinion, and political participation, and may give particular attention to electoral politics and voting behavior. The antecedents of opinions and participation are analyzed along with the consequences and implications of people's opinions and behavioral patterns. Methods of studying these phenomena are critically assessed.

The study of political behavior focuses on the actions of—as opposed to the institutional constraints on—non-elite political actors (i.e., political citizens) as they interact with the political world through activities such as voting, joining parties and interest groups, protesting government actions, and consuming mass media. The course evaluates behavior from a variety of perspectives such as the psychological, economic, sociological, and political. Ultimately, this course will provide a setting for your own research in political behavior.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to

1. Discuss the major theories and controversies in research in political participation.
2. Discuss the major theories and controversies in research in voting behavior.

3. Discuss the major theories and controversies regarding ideology and party identification.
4. Demonstrate understanding about the current state of mass polarization.

Course Policies and Procedures

All students are expected to comply with the following requirements.

Classroom Civility

Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment which is conducive to learning. In order to assure that all students have an opportunity to gain from time spent in class, unless otherwise approved by the instructor, students are prohibited from using electronic devices, challenging instructor's authority, eating or drinking in class, coming in late or leaving early, making offensive remarks, reading newspapers, sleeping or engaging in any other form of distraction. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result in, minimally, a request to leave class. No student will be allowed to "dominate" any class period.

Electronic Devices

Switch off (or mute) personal electronic devices (cell phones, smartphones, iPads, iPods, mp3 players, and any kind) during class. If any of these devices are present in class, you will be asked to store them or leave the class immediately. Also tape recorders, camera and video phones, and all other visual and auditory recording or retention devices, are strictly prohibited in this class. Please do not bring or use those devices.

You may only use the laptop to take notes in a word processing program. No surfing or instant messages are allowed. Any student who uses the laptop for any purpose other than taking notes will not be allowed to use that laptop in this course for the rest of the term.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious offense and will not be tolerated. Plagiarism occurs when a student purposefully or unintentionally takes information directly from a source without proper citation. For example, forgetting to cite an author and page number with a quote is plagiarism, as is direct copying and pasting from a website. Plagiarism will result in an F for the course and notification to the university. Plagiarism is often a result of improper citation and/or acknowledgement of sources; therefore, we will be going over plagiarism in class so you can avoid common pitfalls (and an F!). If a student needs additional assistance, please consult me during my office hours.

Turnitin.com: All papers and exam answers should be posted on eCollege.

Technology Requirements

Because this is a web-enhanced course, all students must meet the following technology requirements to successfully complete this course.

Regular access to a good quality computer

Regular, high-quality Internet access, specifically, a high-speed internet connection, not dial-up or a cellular phone. Students should use the eCollege tutorial to test the quality and speed of their browser and ensure that it is compatible with the system. Students will need access to an Internet browser such as Internet Explorer.

Access and Navigation

Student will access this course using eCollege, the Learning Management System used by Texas A&M University-Commerce. Students can access their online courses using through the myLeo portal or directly from the URL <http://online.tamuc.edu>. In order to login, students will need both their CWID and password to access the myLeo site. If you do not know what your CWID or password is, please contact Technology Services at 903-468-6000 or by e-mail, helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

eCollege Student Technical Support

Technical support for eCollege is provided around the clock (24 hours a day/7 days a week) so if students experience technical issues with the class page itself they should contact the student help desk for assistance. Students can access support through one of three following methods:

1. Chat support: Students can access real-time chat support from within the course page by clicking on "Tech Support" in the tool bar and then clicking on "Chat Online."
2. Phone: Students can access phone support by calling the toll free phone number for eCollege, 1-866-656-5511.
3. E- mail: Student can request assistance by e-mail eCollege directly at helpdesk@online.tamuc.org. Please note that you might not receive a response for 24 hours if you use the e-mail option. eCollege also has extensive help files available. These can be accessed by clicking the 'Help' button on the toolbar.

Communication: Office hours and Email

The best way to contact me is to stop by my office during office hours or to schedule an appointment. Outside of class email is also the dominant means of communication between the instructor and students. The instructor can usually be reached by email with little difficulty. Due to the vast increase in spam email, any email sent to me MUST include a subject line such as "PSCI 510" identifying it as class related. Without such a subject line, it is likely to be deleted without being read.

Student Conduct

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook). Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services
Texas A&M University-Commerce
Gee Library Room 132
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835 Fax (903) 468-8148

Grading and Evaluation

Grading

The final grade will be determined on the following basis:

Requirement	Percentage	Due
Research Paper	30%	Dec. 15 (11:00 AM)
Research Presentation	5%	Dec. 8 (11:00 AM)
Attendance	10%	
Late-term Exam	20%	
Course Participation		
Weekly Questions	10%	Mondays by 6:00 PM
Readings Summary + Seminar Lead	15%	Weekly (in class)
In-class Discussion	10%	Weekly (in class)

Grading Scale

Standard	Grade	Points
Excellent	A	100-90
Good	B	89.9-80
Average	C	79.9-70
Below Average	D	69.9-60
Unacceptable	F	59.9-0

I will do my best to help students with any other needs they may have. Do not wait until the end of the semester to see assistance as that will be too late to make a difference. In all cases, it is necessary for the student to discuss their concerns with me as soon as possible after the concern develops. There is little that can be done at the end of the semester to compensate for earlier difficulties.

Note: I am not responsible for your scholarships, academic eligibility in extracurricular activities, or graduation eligibility. Do not come to me pleading that you “need” or “have to” get a certain grade. The grade you earn is the grade you will get. Under no circumstance will I arbitrarily change a grade, so do not ask. NO exceptions! Also, there will be NO extra project for this class regardless of the situation. Also, I am not allowed to dispense or discuss grades over the phone or via email, but grades will be posted on the class web.

Research Paper

In the first five weeks of the seminar you will submit a paper proposal outlining the research paper you will write for this course. The paper proposal should not exceed two pages and should contain a brief summary of the theory, the hypotheses tested and the methods and data to be used. You will fine tune your hypotheses for the final research paper. The research paper should be a piece of original research based on secondary or primary data sources. The research paper should be structured as a journal article or conference paper. The paper should be 18-22 pages in length. As part of your grade on the research paper you will be required to do a presentation of the paper in the last week of class. Late work will not be accepted under any circumstance. If you do not turn in your paper on time, you will receive a zero. I will discuss more details about the paper as the semester progresses.

Late-Term Exam

In week 11, you will be given a late-term exam in which you will be required to demonstrate your knowledge of the material covered in this seminar. You will have 48 hours to complete the exam after the questions are distributed.

The format of the late-term exam will resemble that of the department's qualifying exam. The exam will consist of 3 questions, of which you will answer two. You will be allowed to consult any of the course materials (books, readings, notes, discussion papers, and the like) but you are NOT allowed to discuss the exam with anyone but me. I will post the exam on eCollege at a specified point in time, and you will post your answers on eCollege.

Attendance/Participation

"Eighty five percent of success is merely showing up." — Woody Allen —

Students are expected to attend every class session; attendance will be taken regularly. Each unexcused absence beyond one (1) instance will result in a 10% reduction in the attendance grade. Students sleeping, talking, text messaging or otherwise not paying attention in class will be marked absent. Students who arrive late or leave early will be counted as absences.

Consistent with University policies and procedures, students who are absent for 2 class meetings will be administratively dropped from the class. There will be no "excused" absences aside for official university activities or documented medical issues. Students are required to provide documentation by the next class meeting to receive an excused absence.

Weekly Questions

One of the most underrated skills in academia is the ability to ask *good* questions. (Contrary to popular belief, there are such things as stupid questions.) This is your chance to practice. The questions should be analytical (theoretical) or methodological in nature and can focus directly on the reading or attempt to develop a tangential line of inquiry. In the latter case, these questions may be ideas for future research and/or conference papers. Perhaps you were inspired by an "off hand" comment in a footnote, or would like to examine how a particular work's thesis might be updated to understand political behavior. You may also develop questions that "speak" to multiple readings. Be creative. You are permitted one "bye" week of your own choosing.

Readings Summary Reports / Seminar Lead

Each student will be assigned to a group for the duration of the course. Each group is required to lead seminar meetings. It is very important that seminar leaders come to class well prepared with interesting and thought provoking questions and topics of conversation.

As a seminar leader each group will be required to write a weekly report summarizing the readings to be discussed in class that week. These reports will be useful in preparing for your qualifying exams. Only one report is required, but make copies to circulate to everyone. The author(s) of each weekly report will be pre-assigned to guarantee a fair workload.

Reports should summarize the following elements: 1) the principal question under investigation; 2) the theoretical perspective being used; 3) the logic of the argument; 4) the research design/methodology used; and 5) a suggested (brief) alternative methodology/research design. You may also want to include brief critiques of the work, though the primary intent of these reports is to provide you with future study guides. A secondary goal is to get you into working groups to discuss the readings so as to give us a "running start" for class discussion.

In order to receive credits, seminar leaders should prepare hardcopies of reading summaries for classmates in the class and post MS-Word documents of their summaries on eCollege by 11 AM, next day of seminar lead.

In-Class Discussion

Weekly class discussion will be open. Each student will be responsible for getting the discussion going. Although I will come with some structured design, the discussion is free to follow whatever path develops. Consider the class time to be a good, old-fashioned barroom debate (only more sober).

Course Schedule

This is the anticipated course schedule, but it may be subject to minor revisions as the semester progresses. Most of the readings are available through JSTOR or other electronic database.

Week 1 (Sep. 1) Introduction and Organizational Meeting

Week 2 (Sep. 8) Approaches to Political Behavior

Lewis-Beck et al. 2008. Chs. 1 and 2.

Aldrich, John H. 1994. Rational Choice Theory and the Study of American Politics. In *The Dynamics of American Politics: Approaches and Interpretations*, edited by Lawrence C. Dodd and Calvin Jillson. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Krosnick, Jon A. 1999. Survey Research. *Annual Review of Psychology* 59: 537-567.

Converse, Philip E. 2006. Researching Electoral Politics. *American Political Science Review* 100 (4): 605-612.

Alford, John R., Carolyn L. Funk, and John R. Hibbing. 2005. Are Political Orientations Genetically Transmitted? *American Political Science Review* 99 (2): 153-167.

Week 3 (Sep. 15) Political Knowledge

Luskin, Robert C. 1990. Explaining Political Sophistication. *Political Behavior* 12 (4): 331-361.

Delli Carpini, Michael X., and Scott Keeter. 1993. Measuring Political Knowledge: Putting First Things First. *American Journal of Political Science* 37 (4): 1179-1206.

Mondak, Jeffrey. 2001. Developing Valid Knowledge Scales. *American Journal of Political Science* 45 (1): 224-238.

Highton, Benjamin. 2009. Revisiting the Relationship between Educational Attainment and Political Sophistication. *The Journal of Politics* 71 (4): 1564-1576.

Converse, Philip E. 2000. Assessing the Capacity of Mass Electorates. *Annual Review of Political Science* 3: 331-353.

Week 4 (Sep. 22) Information Processing and Effect

Althaus, Scott L. 1998. Information Effects in Collective Preferences. *American Political Science Review* 92 (3): 545-558.

Lupia, Arthur. 1994. Shortcuts versus Encyclopedias: Information and Voting Behavior in California Insurance Reform Elections. *American Political Science Review* 88 (1): 63-76.

Gilens, Martin. 2001. Political Ignorance and Collective Policy Preferences. *American Political Science Review* 95 (2): 379-396.

Jerit, Jennifer, Jason Barabas, and Toby Bolsen. 2006. Citizens, Knowledge, and the Information Environment. *American Journal of Political Science* 50 (2): 266-282.

Week 5 (Sep. 29) Party Identification (Individual Level)

Lewis-Beck et al. 2008. Chs. 6 and 7.

Niemi, Richard G. and M. Kent Jennings. 1991. Issues and Inheritance in the Formation of Party Identification. *American Journal of Political Science* 35 (4): 970-988.

Franklin, Charles H. and John E. Jackson. 1983. The Dynamics of Party Identification. *American Political Science Review* 77 (4): 957-973.

Bartels, Larry M. 2000. Partisanship and Voting Behavior, 1952-1996. *American Journal of Political Science* 44 (1): 35-50.

Gaines, Brian J., James H. Kuklinski, Paul J. Quirk, Buddy Peyton, and Jay Verkuilen. 2007. Same Facts, Different Interpretations: Partisan Motivation and Opinion on Iraq. *The Journal of Politics* 69 (4): 957-974.

Week 6 (Oct. 6) Macro-Level Party Identification

- Box-Steffensmeier, Janet M. and Renee M. Smith. 1996. The Dynamics of Aggregate Partisanship. *American Political Science Review* 90 (3): 567-580.
- Mackuen, Michael B., Robert S. Erikson, and James A. Stimson. 1989. Macropartisanship. *American Political Science Review* 83 (4): 1125-1142.
- Green, Donald, Bradley Palmquist, and Eric Schickler. 1998. Macropartisanship: A Republication and Critique. *American Political Science Review* 92 (4): 883-899.
- Erikson, Robert S., Michael B. Mackuen, and James A. Stimson. 1998. What Moves Macropartisanship? A Response to Green, Palmquist, and Schickler. *American Political Science Review* 92 (4): 901-912.

Week 7 (Oct. 13) Ideology

- Lewis-Beck et al. 2008. Ch. 9.
- Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, Boston, MA: Addison-Wesley. Ch. 8.
- Converse, Philip E. 1964. The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics. In *Ideology and Discontent*, edited by David E. Apter. New York: The Free Press of Glencoe.
- Peffley, Mark A. and Jon Hurwitz. 1985. A Hierarchical Model of Attitude Constraint. *American Journal of Political Science* 29 (4): 871-890.
- Taber, Charles and Milton Lodge. 2006. Motivated Skepticism in the Evaluation of Political Beliefs. *American Journal of Political Science* 50 (3): 755-769.

Week 8 (Oct. 20) Political Participation

- Lewis-Beck et al. 2008. Ch. 5.
- Blais, Andre. 2000. *To Vote or Not to Vote: The Merits and Limits of Rational Choice Theory*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press. Introduction.
- Brady, Henry E., Sidney Verba, and Lehman Schlozman. 1995. Beyond SES: A Resource Model of Political Participation. *American Political Science Review* 89 (2): 271-294.
- Timpone, Richard J. 1998. Structure, Behavior, and Voter Turnout in the United States. *American Journal of Political Science* 92 (1): 145-158.
- Plutzer, Eric. 2002. Becoming a Habitual Voter: Inertia, Resources, and Growth in Young Adulthood. *American Political Science Review* 96 (1): 41-56.

Week 9 (Oct. 27) Latino and Black Political Participation

- Leighley, Jan E., and Arnold Vedlitz. 1999. Race, Ethnicity, and Political Participation: Competing Models and Contrasting Explanations. *The Journal of Politics* 61 (4): 1092-1114.
- Tate, Katherine. 1991. Black Political Participation in the 1984 and 1988 Presidential Elections. *American Political Science Review* 85 (4): 1159-1176.
- Calhoun-Brown, Allison. 1996. African American Churches and Political Mobilization: The Psychological Impact of Organizational Resources. *The Journal of Politics* 58 (4): 935-953.
- Valdez, Zulemn. 2011. Political Participation Among Latinos in the United States: The Effect of Group Identity and Consciousness. *Social Science Quarterly* 92 (2): 466-482.
- Choi, Jangsup, Gamal Gasim, and Dennis Patterson. 2011. Identity, Issues, and Religious Commitment and Participation: Explaining Turnout among Mosque-Attending Muslim Americans. *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 11 (3): 343-364.

Week 10 (Nov. 3) Electoral Decision

- Lewis-Beck et al. 2008. Chs. 13 and 14.
- Niemi, Richard G. and Herbert F. Weisberg (eds.). 2001. *Controversies in Voting Behavior* (4th edition). Washington, DC: CQ Press. Ch. 10.

- Erikson, Robert S. 1989. Economic Conditions and the Presidential Vote. *American Political Science Review* 83 (2): 567-573.
- Norpoth, Helmut. 1996. Presidents and the Prospective Voter. *The Journal of Politics* 58 (3): 776-792.

Week 11 (Nov. 10) Late-Term Exam

Week 12 (Nov. 17) Issue Voting

- Petrocik, John R. 1996. Issue Ownership in Presidential Elections, with a 1980 Case Study. *American Journal of Political Science* 40 (3): 825-850.
- Carmines, Edward G., and James A. Stimson. 1980. The Two Faces of Issue Voting. *American Political Science Review* 74 (1): 78-91.
- Bartels, Larry M. 1996. Uninformed Votes: Information Effects in Presidential Elections. *American Journal of Political Science* 40 (1): 194-230.
- Hillygus, D. Sunshine and Todd G. Shields. 2005. Moral Issues and Voter Decision Making in the 2004 Presidential Election. *PS: Political Science and Politics* 38 (2): 201-209.

Week 13 (Nov. 24) Elections, Campaigns, and Representation

- Abramowitz, Alan I., Brad Alexander, and Matthew Gunning. 2006. Incumbency, Redistricting, and the Decline of Competition in U.S. House Elections. *The Journal of Politics* 68 (1): 75-88.
- Ansolabehere, Stephen, Shanto Iyenger, Adam F. Simon, and Nicholas Valentino. 1994. Does Attack Advertising Demobilize the Electorate? *American Political Science Review* 88 (4): 829-838.
- Griffin, John D. 2006. Electoral Competition and Democratic Responsiveness: A Defense of the Marginality Hypothesis. *The Journal of Politics* 68 (4): 911-921.
- Erikson, Robert S. and Gerald C. Wright. 2001. "Voters, Candidates, and Issues in Congressional Elections. In *Congress Reconsidered* (7th edition), edited by Lawrence C. Dodd and Bruce I. Oppenheimer. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Week 14 (Dec. 1) Polarization

- McCarty, Nolan, Keith T. Poole, and Howard Rosenthal. 2006. *Polarized America: The Dance of Ideology and Unequal Riches*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Layman, Geoffrey C., Thomas M. Carsey, and Juliana Menasce Horowitz. 2006. "Party Polarization in American Politics: Characteristics, Causes, and Consequences." *Annual Review of Political Science*. 9: 83-110.
- Abramowitz, Alan I. and Kyle L. Saunders. 2008. "Is Polarization a Myth?" *Journal of Politics* 70 (2): 542-555.
- Goidel, Kirby. 2014. *America's Failing Experiment: How We the People Have Become the Problem*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Week 15 (Dec. 8) Research Presentation

Week 16 (Dec. 15) Research Paper