Public Opinion

PSCI 345 01E
Spring 2019
2:00-3:15 PM T/Th
SS 143

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Office: Social Science Building 161
Office hours: 11:30-2:00 PM Tue/Thr

Course Information

Textbooks required:
Erikson, Robert S. and Kent L. Tedin. 2015. *American Public Opinion* (9th edition). Boston, MA: Pearson (ISBN: 978-0-13-386267-6).

Asher, Herbert. 2017. *Polling and the Public: What Every Citizen Should Know* (9th edition). Washington, DC: CQ Press (ISBN: 978-1-5063-5242-8).

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

Course Description
This course is a study of public opinion in the United States including the sources and characteristics of political opinions, the role of the media in shaping opinion, and the impact of opinion on elections and public policy. Methods used in conducting polls are examined and applied.

This course examines sources and distribution of public opinion, measurement of public opinion, relationships between public opinion and public policy, institutions linking public opinion to government decisions.

Learning Objectives
Upon completion of this course
1. Students will understand the conceptualization and measurment of public opinion.
2. Students will evaluate political scinece theories of how people form opinoins and translate opinions into answers to survey questions.
3. Students will assess the significance of social class, race and ethnicity, religion, and ideology in explaining political attitudes and beliefs.

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
No personal electronic devices (laptops, tablets, cell phones, smartphones, iPads, iPods, mp3 players, and any kind) should not be present during class. 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.

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.

Student Discipline
I expect all students to maintain the highest level of personal responsibility and academic honesty which is discussed in Texas A&M University-Commerce Procedures A13.12 Academic Honesty. "Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism (the appropriation or stealing of the ideas or words of another and passing them off as one's own), cheating on exams or other course assignments, collusion (the unauthorized collaboration with others in preparing course assignments), and abuse (destruction, defacing, or removal) of resource material."

Academic dishonesty affects all individuals at the University and accordingly will not be tolerated. For this class, academic dishonesty includes cheating, plagiarism, collusion and/or falsifying academic work. Any and all instances of academic dishonesty will be referred to the appropriate offices on campus and may result in significant penalties.

Submitting Assignments
You are responsible for attaching the correct assignment to the correct submission folder. When you submit your assignment, you should always click on the submitted file(s) to make sure the assignment is there. You can tell if it is attached by clicking on the submitted file(s) and actually open and view the document. Submitting an incorrect document, a blank document, or no document is counted as failure to complete the assignment on time.

Each assignment or work should include your name in the content. Also make your computer file name, when adding your file(s) in the submission folder, using your last name and a specific assignment (i.e., Choi Activity1.docx).

Late Work
No late work accepted and work cannot be made up.

Technology Requirements

Browser support
D2L is committed to performing key application testing when new browser versions are released. New and updated functionality is also tested against the latest version of supported browsers. However, due to the frequency of some browser releases, D2L cannot guarantee that each browser version will perform as expected. If you encounter any issues with any of the browser versions listed in the tables below, contact D2L Support, who will determine the best course of action for resolution. Reported issues are prioritized by supported browsers and then maintenance browsers.

Supported browsers are the latest or most recent browser versions that are tested against new versions of D2L products. Customers can report problems and receive support for issues. For an optimal experience, D2L recommends using supported browsers with D2L products.

Maintenance browsers are older browser versions that are not tested extensively against new versions of D2L products. Customers can still report problems and receive support for critical issues; however, D2L does not guarantee all issues will be addressed. A maintenance browser becomes officially unsupported after one year.

Note the following:

- Ensure that your browser has JavaScript and Cookies enabled.
- For desktop systems, you must have Adobe Flash Player 10.1 or greater.
- The Brightspace Support features are now optimized for production environments when using the Google Chrome browser, Apple Safari browser, Microsoft Edge browser, Microsoft Internet Explorer browser, and Mozilla Firefox browsers.

Desktop Support

Browser	Supported Browser Version(s)	Maintenance Browser Version(s)
Microsoft® Edge	Latest	N/A
Microsoft® Internet Explorer®	N/A	11
Mozilla® Firefox®	Latest, ESR	N/A
Google® Chrome™	Latest	N/A
Apple® Safari®	Latest	N/A

Tablet and Mobile Support

Device	Operating System	Browser	Supported Browser Version(s)
Android™	Android 4.4+	Chrome	Latest
Apple	iOS®	Safari, Chrome	The current major version of iOS (the latest minor or **point** release of that major version) and the previous major version of iOS (the latest minor or **point** release of that major version). For example, as of June 7, 2017, D2Lsupports iOS 10.3.2 and iOS 9.3.5, but not iOS 10.2.1, 9.0.2, or any other version. Chrome: Latest version for the iOS browser.
Windows	Windows 10	Edge, Chrome, Firefox	Latest of all browsers, and Firefox ESR.

- You will need regular access to a computer with a broadband Internet connection. The minimum computer requirements are:
    - 512 MB of RAM, 1 GB or more preferred
    - Broadband connection required courses are heavily video intensive
    - Video display capable of high-color 16-bit display 1024 x 768 or higher resolution

- You must have a:
    - Sound card, which is usually integrated into your desktop or laptop computer
    - Speakers or headphones.
    - *For courses utilizing video-conferencing tools and/or an online proctoring solution, a webcam and microphone are required.

- Both versions of Java (32 bit and 64 bit) must be installed and up to date on your machine. At a minimum Java 7, update 51, is required to support the learning management system. The most current version of Java can be downloaded at: JAVA web site http://www.java.com/en/download/manual.jsp

- Current anti-virus software must be installed and kept up to date.

Running the browser check will ensure your internet browser is supported.
Pop-ups are allowed.
JavaScript is enabled.
Cookies are enabled.

- You will need some additional free software (plug-ins) for enhanced web browsing. Ensure that you download the free versions of the following software:
    - Adobe Reader https://get.adobe.com/reader/
    - Adobe Flash Player *(version 17 or later)* https://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/
    - Adobe Shockwave Player https://get.adobe.com/shockwave/
    - Apple Quick Time http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/

- At a minimum, you must have Microsoft Office 2013, 2010, 2007 or Open Office. Microsoft Office is the standard office productivity software utilized by faculty, students, and staff. Microsoft Word is the standard word processing software, Microsoft Excel is the standard spreadsheet software, and Microsoft PowerPoint is the standard presentation software. Copying and pasting, along with attaching/uploading documents for assignment submission, will also be required. If you do not have Microsoft Office, you can check with the bookstore to see if they have any student copies.

Access and Navigation

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

Communication and Support

Brightspace Support
Need Help?

Student Support
If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

Technical Support
If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778 or click on the **Live Chat** or click on the words "click here" to submit an issue via email.

System Maintenance
Please note that on the 4th Sunday of each month there will be System Maintenance which means the system will not be available 12 pm-6 am CST.

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

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 345" identifying it as class related. Without such a subject line, it is likely to be deleted without being read.

Student Conduct

Code of Student Conduct: All students enrolled at the university shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. *Faculty have the authority to request students who exhibit inappropriate behavior to leave the class and may refer serious offenses to the University Police Department and/or the Dean of Students for disciplinary action.* Failure to comply with the Code of Student Conduct and commonsensical directions listed above may result in a verbal request to cease inappropriate behavior, your immediate removal from the class, being immediately dropped from the class, and/or a review by an appropriate university disciplinary agency. For more information on this subject, please see the Student Guidebook.

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.

Campus Concealed Carry

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to ((http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf) and/or consult your event organizer). Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

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
StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

Grading and Evaluation

Grading
The final grade will be determined on the following basis:

Requirement	Percentage
Attendance/Participation	10%
Class Activity	15%
Exam 1	15%
Exam 2	15%
Final Exam	15%
Research Paper	30%

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 university web page.

Attendance
"Eighty five percent of success is merely showing up." — Woody Allen —
Attendance is mandatory. Class attendance is crucial to your understanding of the concepts, issues, processes and not all of them will be covered in the assigned texts. Attendance is part of the course experience the same as lectures, texts, exams, and other course elements. Attending class can only help your grade so I strongly suggest you show up to class on a regular class.

Class attendance counts 10% toward your final grade. Roll will be taken regularly. Repeated absence will be detrimental to your final grade, as will repeated tardiness, which is disruptive to your classmates. 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 3 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.

Class Activities
There will be several class activities. Students should complete these activities. More specific information will be provided later.

Examinations
There will be two midterm exams and a final exam. The exams will combine short-answer and essay questions. The exams will cover material from the assigned readings, lectures, and class discussion. The exams will always include material from the readings that have not been discussed in lectures. Bring bluebooks. Store all materials beneath your seat during the exam. Once the first exam is turned in, no more exams will be distributed so show up on time.

After each exam full grade information will be posted on the class web. This information will be updated after each exam and immediately before the final exam period. It is each student's responsibility to check this grade information after each exam and notify the instructor if s/he believes it contains any errors. Errors can be corrected if brought to the instructor's attention promptly. Do not wait weeks or until the end of the semester to discover or mention errors. By then it is probably too late.

Makeup Exams
I expect that students will take exams on the day that they are given. If you have a legitimate reason for missing an exam (e.g. severe illness or injury requiring professional medical care) AND you have supporting documentation for your absence, then you may request taking the make-up exam. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements to take a make-up exam within two days of the date the exam was missed. If you have an excuse that is documented and have been verified by me and do miss the exam, all make up exams will be given on the last day of class (May 2) during the scheduled class time. In addition, students will not be permitted to make up more than one exam on this day. No makeup exam will be given for the final exam. Make-up exams, at the discretion of the instructor, may be in a complete essay format.

Research Paper
A major portion of this class will be the completion of a research paper. This research paper requires students to analyze public opinion data and attempt to answer a question related to salient public opinion.

A research paper should be 15-16 pages in length and it is due by 11 am, Friday, May 3. A good paper will include an introduction, thesis statement, and a conclusion. A handout with details on the research paper will be distributed later.

Course Schedule

Students are responsible for reading assigned chapters before the class covers them. This is the anticipated course schedule, but it may be subject to minor revisions as the semester progresses.

Jan. 15
Introduction, Overview, and Organizational Meeting

Part I: The Nature of Public Opinion

Jan. 17, 22 & 24
Introduction to Public Opinion (Erikson & Tedin Ch. 1)
Jan. 29 & 31
Practice of Survey Research
Feb. 5 & 7
Polling and Data Analysis (Erikson & Tedin Ch. 2; Asher Ch. 1)
Feb. 12 & 14
Micro-level Opinion (Erikson & Tedin Ch. 3)
Feb. 19 & 21
Macro-level Opinion (Erikson & Tedin Ch. 4)
Feb. 26
Exam 1

Part II: Measuring Public Opinion

Feb. 28 & March 5
Population and Sample (Asher Ch. 4; Erikson & Tedin Ch. 2)
March 7
Question Types and Wording (Asher Ch. 3; Erikson & Tedin Ch. 2)
March 12
Interviewing Techniques (Asher Ch. 5)
March 19 & 21
Spring Break
March 14 & 26
Analyzing and Interpreting Polls (Asher Ch. 8)
March 28
Exam 2

Part III: Differences in Public Opinion

April 2 & 4
Political Socialization and Democratic Stability (Erikson & Tedin Chs. 5-6)
April 9 & 11
Group Differences in Opinions (Erikson & Tedin Ch. 7)
April 16 & 18
Public Opinion and Democracy (Erikson & Tedin Chs. 9-11; Asher Chs. 7 & 9)
April 23, 25 & 30

	Research Presentation
May 2	
	Make-up Exam
May 3	
	Due Research Paper
May 7	
	1:15 PM **Final Exam**

Important Dates

March 1 (Tue)	Exam 1
March 9 (Wed)	Due Research Proposal
March 31 (Thr)	Exam 2
May 3 (Fri)	Due Research Paper
May 7 (Tue)	Final Exam