

Surveys, Public Opinion, and Public Policy

Instructor: Allyson L. Holbrook

Office: 627 CUPPA Hall

Phone: 312-996-0471

E-mail: allyson@uic.edu

Office Hours: By appointment

Time: Tuesdays 6-9 pm

Location: Room 100 SH

Course Credits: 4 hours

Course Overview and Objectives: The goals of this course are to understand the relations between surveys, public opinion, and public policy. The course will focus on these relations in a variety of ways. Issues to be addressed include: (1) the normative question of whether public opinion should influence public policy, (2) whether public opinion does influence public policy and the means by which this effect is likely to occur, and (3) whether policy leaders influence public opinion and the processes by which such influence is likely to occur. These questions will be addressed by examining historical examples of changes in public opinion and public policy and relevant scientific research.

Required Texts:

Noelle-Neumann, E. (1993). The Spiral of Silence. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Pratkanis, A. & Aronson, E. (1991). Age of Propaganda: The Everyday Use and Abuse of Persuasion. New York: Freeman.

Mueller, J. E. (1994). Policy and Opinion in the Gulf War. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Additional Suggested Texts:

Glasser, T. L., & Salmon, C. (1995). Public Opinion and the Communication of Consent. Guilford Press.

Assignments: There are five assignments due during the course. These assignments are designed for you to (1) demonstrate your understanding and mastery of the concepts discussed in class; (2) apply these concepts; and (3) prompt your discussion and questions. (Note: Due dates for both assignments are annotated in the course schedule.)

Leading Class Discussion: Each class will be divided so that some portion of the class is dedicated to lecture and some portion is dedicated to class discussion. Groups of you will be assigned to lead the discussion each week. For the week to which you are assigned, you will be responsible for generating discussion questions relevant to the assigned readings for the day and initiating and facilitating class discussion of these questions. The goal of this

assignment is NOT for you to summarize the readings for the week for the rest of the class. Everyone should complete the assigned readings on their own before class.

The Polls: Select two articles of interest from the “Polls” section of POQ (published before 1995). In 1-2 pages, summarize the findings of the paper and critique it. You will also be asked to give a 5-minute summary to class of the articles you choose.

Initial Idea Summary: In the fourth week of the course, you will be asked to submit a brief (2-3 pages) proposal describing the policy you will examine in your final paper as well as sources of information you plan to use in the final paper.

Final Paper. A final paper is due on the last day of class. This paper should provide an in-depth examination of the role of public opinion and surveys for a policy issue. For example, one might examine the role of public opinion during the policy debate about government-subsidized health care that occurred early in the Clinton administration. This paper should draw on information from a variety of sources relevant to both public opinion and policy. For example, you might use media reports of public opinion polls or books written by insiders about the policy decision process (20-25 pages).

Course Policies:

Deadlines: All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the day they are due. Students will lose 10% credit for each day that an assignment is late. In addition, do the assigned readings before they are discussed in class.

Extensions for assignments: Extensions for assignments are at the discretion of the instructors and should be requested *before* the deadline. Emergencies will be considered on a case-by-case basis. If you have a question about an extension, please *talk to the instructor*.

Plagiarism or cheating: Don't do it. It's not worth it. Guidelines regarding academic integrity at UIC are available online <<http://www.uic.edu/depts/sja/integrit.htm>>, and sanctions for academic dishonesty are also available <<http://www.uic.edu/depts/sja/chpt3.htm#3>>. Please don't put us in a position where we need to learn more about these policies.

Attendance: Fifteen points will be assigned based on attendance and participation. If you must miss a class, please let the instructors know in advance. Class attendance is strongly encouraged. Active involvement in class is also expected. If your final grade is on the border, a subjective assessment of your class participation may be used to make final adjustments.

Grades

Assignment	Points	Percent of Total Grade
Leading Class Discussion	10	10.0
“Polls” Report #1	15	15.0
“Polls” Report #2	15	15.0
Initial Idea Summary	20	20.0
Final Paper	30	30.0
Class Participation & Attendance	10	10.0
Total	100 points	100 %

Schedule and Reading Assignments

August 24 (Week 1): Introduction to Public Opinion and Possible Relations between Public Opinion and Public Policy

Readings

Required text: Chapters 1-4 of Noelle-Neumann, E. (1993). The Spiral of Silence. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Recommended: Chapters 1-4 of Glasser, T. L., & Salmon, C. (1995). Public Opinion and the Communication of Consent. Guilford Press.

August 31 (Week 2): Democracy and responsiveness to public opinion: Should public opinion influence public policy?

Readings

Required text: Chapters 5-8 of Noelle-Neumann, E. (1993). The Spiral of Silence. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Required (available online): Federalist Papers #10 and #51

Required (Handout): Chapters 1 and 2 or What Americans Know About Politics and Why it Matters, Delli Carpini and Keeter,

September 7 (Week 3): Does public opinion influence public policy?

Readings

Required (available online): Stimson, J. A., Mackuen, M. G., & Erikson, R. S. (1995). Dynamic Representation. The American Political Science Review, 89, 543-565.

Required (Handout): Chapters 13, 14, and 15 of Corbett, M. (1991). American Public Opinion.

September 14 (Week 4): The Role of Public Opinion Polls and the Media

Readings

Required text: Chapter 18 of Noelle-Neumann, E. (1993). The Spiral of Silence. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Recommended: Chapters 5, 6, 14, and 15 of Glasser, T. L., & Salmon, C. (1995). Public Opinion and the Communication of Consent. Guilford Press.

“Polls” Report #1 due.

September 21 (Week 5): The Role of Interest Groups and Lobbies

Readings

Required (available online): Danielian, L. H., & Page, B. I. (1994). The Heavenly Chorus: Interest Group Voices on TV News. American Journal of Political Science, 38, 1056-1078.

Required (available online): Wiggins, C. W., Hamm, K. E., & Bell, C. G. (1992). Interest-Group and Party Influence Agents in the Legislative Process: A Comparative State Analysis. The Journal of Politics, 54, 82-100.

Required (available online): Walker, J. L. (1983). The Origins and Maintenance of Interest Groups in America. The American Political Science Review, 77, 390-406.

September 28 (Week 6): The Role of "Direct Democracy": Initiatives and Referendums

Readings

Required (available online): Gamble, B. S. (1997). Putting Civil Rights to a Popular Vote. American Journal of Political Science, 41, 245-269.

Required (available online): Gerber, E. R. (1996). Legislative Response to the Threat of Popular Initiatives. American Journal of Political Science, 40, 99-128.

Initial Idea Summary Due

October 5 (Week 7): Persuasion and Propaganda: Can policy-makers influence public opinion?

Readings

Required (available online): McGraw, K. M., Best, S., and Timpone, R. (1995). What They Say or What They Do?" The Impact of Elite Explanation and Policy Outcomes on Public Opinion. American Journal of Political Science, 39(1), 53-74.

Required text: Chapter 17 of Noelle-Neumann, E. (1993). The Spiral of Silence. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

October 12 (Week 8): Theories of Persuasion

Readings

Required text: Age of Propaganda: The Everyday Use and Abuse of Persuasion, Pratkanis and Aronson, pp. 1-215

October 19 (Week 9): Difficulties in Influencing Public Opinion

Readings

Required text: Age of Propaganda: The Everyday Use and Abuse of Persuasion, Pratkanis and Aronson, pp. 215-265

Required (available online): Hyman, H., & Sheatsley, P. B. (1947). Some reasons why information campaigns fail. Public Opinion Quarterly, 11, 412-423.

Required (available online): Mendelsohn, H. (1973). Some reasons why information campaigns can succeed. Public Opinion Quarterly, 37, 50-61.

Required (available online): Page, B. I., Shapiro, R. Y., & Dempsey, G. R. (1987). What moves public opinion? The American Political Science Review, 81, 23-44.

October 26 and November 2 (Weeks 10 and 11): Alternate forms of Influence: Agenda-setting, Priming, and Framing Functions of the Media

Readings:

Required (handout): Chapters 30, 31, and 32 of Iyengar, S. & Reeves, R. (1997). Do the Media Govern? Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Recommended: Chapter 11 of Glasser, T. L., & Salmon, C. (1995). Public Opinion and the Communication of Consent. Guilford Press.

Required (available online): Cook, F. L, Tyler, T. R., Goetz, E. G., Gordon, M. T., Protes, D., Leff, D. R., Molotch, H. L. (1983). Media and Agenda Setting: Effects on the Public, Interest Group Leaders, Policy Makers, and Policy. Public Opinion Quarterly, 47, 16-35.

Required text: Chapter 19 of Noelle-Neumann, E. (1993). The Spiral of Silence. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Required (available online): Nelson, T. E., Clawson, R. A., & Oxley, Z. M. (1997). Media Framing of a Civil Liberties Conflict and Its Effect on Tolerance. The American Political Science Review, 91, 567-583.

Required (handout): Chapters 7, 8, and 11 of Graber, D. (2001). Media Power in Politics. Washington D. C.: CQ Press.

November 9 (Week 12): Other Influences on Public Opinion

Readings:

Required (handout): Downs A. (1972). Up and Down with Ecology – The ‘Issue Attention Cycle.’ Public Interest, 28, 38-50.

Required (handout): Chapters 1-3, 9, & 10 of Mueller, J. E. (1973). War, Presidents and Public Opinion. New York: John Wiley and Sons.

“Polls” Report #2 due

November 16 (Week 13): Guest lecture by John Nasko: Models of citizen input into the bureaucratic process (Readings TBA)

November 23 (Week 14): No class.

November 30 (Week 15): An in depth case study:

Readings:

Required text: Mueller, J. E. (1994). Policy and Opinion in the Gulf War. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Final Paper Due December 7 by 5 p.m.