

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

POLITICAL SCIENCE 201  
***INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL BEHAVIOR***  
SPRING QUARTER 2006  
Caldwell Lab, Room 220 -- Monday/Wednesday: 8:30-10:18 a.m.

Instructor: Dr. Barbara B. Lewis

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Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday: 10:30a.m.-11:30 a.m. or by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:**

This course explores the fundamentals of political behavior and public opinion. The first part of the course analyzes political behavior, e.g., voting and other types of political participation. We begin by looking at what political participation is and how people learn about politics. We continue our examination by studying several factors that influence the level and nature of political participation in the United States.

The second aspect of the course addresses public opinion and its political impact. We determine what public opinion is, how it is measured and how individual opinions are formed. We also discuss the role of the mass media and public opinion. We then explore the many ways in which public opinion influences decision-making in our representative form of government.

Upon successfully completing this course, you will have a fundamental understanding of political behavior and public opinion—along with a better appreciation of their importance in determining the quality and future of our representative form of government.

**REQUIRED TEXTS AND READINGS:**

Political Participation in the United States, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed, 2000, M. Conway, CQ Press  
American Public Opinion, 7<sup>th</sup> ed, 2005, Robert Erickson and Kent Tedin,  
Pearson/Longman

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:**

Participation (Pop Quizzes and Class Discussion)		10%
Midterm Exam	April 26	30%
Assigned Paper	May 24	25%
Final Midterm	May 31, 8:30-10:18 am	35%

**GRADING SCALE:**

A	94% and above
A-	90-93%
B+	87-89%
B	84-86%
B-	80-83%
C+	77-79%
C	74-76%
C-	70-73%
D+	67-69%
D	60-66
E	59% and below

**POLICY ON ATTENDANCE:** Students are expected to attend each class session and to be prepared to discuss the readings assigned for that day, as well as current political events. You can read about current events by accessing: [www.realclearpolitics.com](http://www.realclearpolitics.com).

**POP QUIZZES:** Pop quizzes may be given periodically. They will consist of two parts: A question that covers the subject matter/current events discussed during the previous class session and a question that covers the assigned reading material or current political events for the day of the pop quiz. The level of everyone's class attendance and participation will determine the number of quizzes your instructor pops.

**POLICY ON MISSED POP QUIZZES:** Students missing a pop quiz will receive a grade of zero. There will be no make-up pop quizzes and all grading/participation decisions are at my sole discretion.

**EXAMS:** There will be a midterm exam and a final midterm consisting of essay questions and term definitions. Questions for both will focus on class lectures, class discussion and readings.

**POLICY ON MISSED EXAMS:** Students missing an exam will receive a grade of zero. True emergency situations where appropriate documentation is provided are the only exceptions. If you must miss an exam (such as in cases of serious illness or family/personal emergencies), contact me as soon as possible PRIOR to the scheduled test time. You must promptly contact me upon your return to set the date, time and location of the make-up exam. Make-up exams are given at my sole discretion.

**PAPER ASSIGNMENT:** Because political scientists have demonstrated the importance of the media on both public opinion and political behavior, you will apply what you study and learn in this course by critically examining Time and Newsweek Magazines. You will begin your research by analyzing selected articles from both Time and Newsweek in 1965 and 1968. You will continue your research by choosing similar topics from at least five current issues of Newsweek. You will then compare your observations and analysis from these two different time periods and report them in a paper. The paper will focus on what Time and Newsweek report regarding the Presidency and current political events and how they report it, excluding editorials. Is there bias or prejudice in the reporting that might influence political behavior or public opinion? What is that bias or prejudice? How might it influence political behavior or public opinion? The paper will be typed, double spaced (12-point type), not to exceed five (5) pages in length. Quotations from Time and Newsweek in your text should be brief and all references to text should be annotated or footnoted (e.g., Newsweek, Jan. 19, 1965, p. 36). Each paper will be graded on substance and content (including analysis) and organization, and writing style. I will grade down for persistent grammatical and spelling errors. At least one class session will be devoted to an exposition of your findings. More detailed information on the paper will be provided later in the quarter.

**POLICY ON LATE PAPERS:** Late papers will be reduced by one-third of a grade for each day they are late (including weekend days). There will be no exceptions to this rule unless there is an EXTREME emergency, promptly supported by appropriate documentation. This rule will be applied at my sole discretion.

**POLICY ON CELLULAR PHONES, PAGERS ETC.:** Out of respect for others, please turn off all electronics before entering the classroom. No cell phones may be brought into class on exam days.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** All of the work you do in this course (including the assigned paper) is expected to be entirely your own. Cheating or plagiarism will not be tolerated. Cases of academic misconduct will be promptly reported to the university committee on academic misconduct and handled according to university policy. Penalties can include failing this class and/or expulsion from the university.

For further information about academic integrity issues, please visit <http://www.osu.edu/offices/oa/procedures/1.0.html>

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** If you have any condition, such as a physical, psychiatric/emotional, medical or learning disability, that will make it difficult for you to carry out the work as outlined in this syllabus, or will require extra time for quizzes or exams, please notify both the instructor and Wayne DeYoung in the Political Science Department (292-2880) as soon as possible so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

## **COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS**

### ***—POLITICAL PARTICIPATION—***

#### **WEEK 1**

March 27	Course Introduction
March 29	What Is Political Participation? Conway, Preface and Chapter 1

## WEEK 2

April 3 Why Do Some People Participate and Not Others?  
Conway, Chapter 2

April 5 Political Socialization and Learning  
Erikson and Tedin, Chapter 5

## WEEK 3

April 10 The Psychology of Political Participation  
Conway, Chapter 3

Your Political Socialization  
In-class Exercise

April 12 The Political Environment and Political Participation  
Conway, Chapter 4

## WEEK 4

April 17 The Law and Political Participation  
Conway, Chapter 5

April 19 Explanations of Patterns of Political Participation  
Conway, Chapter 7

## WEEK 5

April 24 Does Political Participation Make a Difference?  
Conway, Chapter 8

April 26 **MIDTERM EXAM**

### *—PUBLIC OPINION—*

## WEEK 6

May 1 What Is Public Opinion?  
Erikson and Tedin, Chapter 1

May 3 Polling: How to Accurately Measure Public Opinion  
Erikson and Tedin, Chapter 2

## WEEK 7

May 8	Microlevel Opinion Erikson and Tedin, Chapter 3, p. 66-83
	Macrolevel Opinion Erikson and Tedin, Chapter 4
	Public Opinion and Democratic Stability Erikson and Tedin, Chapter 6, pp. 162-169
May 10	Group Differences in Public Opinion Erikson and Tedin, Chapter 7
<b>WEEK 8</b>	
May 15	The Mass Media and Public Opinion Erikson and Tedin, Chapter 8
May 17	Elections Erikson and Tedin, Chapter 9
<b>WEEK 9</b>	
May 22	The Public and Its Elected Leaders Erikson and Tedin, Chapter 10
	Public Opinion and The Performance of Democracy Erikson and Tedin, Chapter 11
May 24	<b>PAPERS DUE</b> Panel Discussion on Findings in Papers Review for Final Midterm
<b>WEEK 10</b>	
May 29	Memorial Day-No Class
May 31	Final Midterm (Regular Class Time)