

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

POLITICAL SCIENCE 201
INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL BEHAVIOR
FALL QUARTER 2005
Derby Hall, Room 80 -- Tuesday/Thursday: 4:30-6:18 p.m.

Instructor: Dr. Barbara B. Lewis

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Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday: 11:30a.m.-12:30p.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 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 participation 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, 3rd ed, 2000, M. Conway, CQ Press
American Public Opinion, 7th ed, 2005, Robert Erickson and Kent Tedin,
Pearson/Longman

Newsweek Magazine, weekly publications during Fall Quarter

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:

Participation (Pop Quizzes and Class Discussion)		10%
Midterm Exam	October 25	30%
Assigned Paper	November 22	25%
Final Midterm	December 1, 4:30-6:18 p.m.	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. (See discussion of pop quizzes below.)

POP QUIZZES: Pop quizzes may be given periodically. They will consist of two parts: A question that covers the subject matter discussed during the previous class session and a question that covers the assigned reading material 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 MUST be completed within FIVE days of the regularly scheduled examination. Make-up exams are given at my sole discretion.

PAPER ASSIGNMENT: You will apply what you study and learn in this course by critically examining at least five different weeks of Newsweek Magazine during the Quarter and reporting your observations and analysis in a paper. The paper will focus on what Newsweek reports regarding government and current political events and how Newsweek reports it, excluding editorials. Is there bias in the reporting that might influence political behavior or public opinion? What is that bias? 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 Newsweek in your text should be brief and all references to Newsweek text should be annotated or footnoted (e.g., Newsweek, Apr. 19, 2005, p. 36). In addition, you may attach to your paper highlighted photocopies of the relevant Newsweek text [not to exceed five (5) pages]. 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.

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—

September 22 Course Introduction

WEEK 1

September 27 What Is Political Participation?
Conway, Preface and Chapter 1

September 29 Why Do Some People Participate and Not Others?
Conway, Chapter 2

WEEK 2

- October 4 Political Socialization and Learning
Erikson and Tedin, Chapter 5
- October 6 The Psychology of Political Participation
Conway, Chapter 3
- Your Political Socialization
In-class Exercise

WEEK 3

- October 11 The Political Environment and Political Participation
Conway, Chapter 4
- October 13 The Law and Political Participation
Conway, Chapter 5

WEEK 4

- October 18 Explanations of Patterns of Political Participation
Conway, Chapter 7
- October 20 Does Political Participation Make a Difference?
Conway, Chapter 8

WEEK 5

- October 25 **MIDTERM EXAM**

—PUBLIC OPINION—

- October 27 What Is Public Opinion?
Erikson and Tedin, Chapter 1

WEEK 6

- November 1 Polling: How to Accurately Measure Public Opinion
Erikson and Tedin, Chapter 2

November 3 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

WEEK 7

November 8 Group Differences in Public Opinion
Erikson and Tedin, Chapter 7

November 10 The Mass Media and Public Opinion
Erikson and Tedin, Chapter 8

WEEK 8

November 15 Elections
Erikson and Tedin, Chapter 9

November 17 The Public and Its Elected Representatives
Erikson and Tedin, Chapter 10

 Parties and Interest Groups:
Linking the Public With Political Leaders
Erikson and Tedin, Chapter 11

 Public Opinion and Our Representative Form
of Government
Erikson and Tedin, Chapter 12

WEEK 9

November 22 PAPERS DUE

November 24 Thanksgiving-No class

WEEK 10

November 29

Panel Discussion on Findings in Papers
Review for Final Midterm

December 1

Final Midterm (Regular Class Time)