

DARTMOUTH

Department of Government

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Government 83.19 American Political Behavior Winter 2022

Classes: Silsby 215
(3A) M W 3:30-5:20
x-hour M 5:30-6:20

Office Hours: Weds 1-2pm and by appt

Description

Do most people have real opinions on political issues, or are their opinions transient and determined by the media and political elites? How can we measure people's attitudes, preferences, and opinions? How and why are Democrats, Republicans, and Independents different? How do income, inequality, social class, and social values determine what people believe and how they vote? How do political organizations and parties mobilize and influence people?

We will explore these and other questions from a social science perspective. We will read answers to these questions from journalists, political practitioners, and academic researchers, formulate our own hypotheses, and test these hypotheses using data that are available or that we will uncover. Completion of Government 10 or its equivalent is highly recommended before taking this course.

Each time I teach this course, I include a two or three-week module focusing on a specific issue or set of issues in public opinion. This quarter, I want to focus for a few weeks on economic inequality and the federal budget. The rest of the syllabus covers mostly the 'classic' questions at the core of public opinion and voting behavior research: Do people have real opinions, do they have sufficient information to make decisions, do they think and act 'rationally?'

In 2006, 2008, 2012, and 2020, Dartmouth participated in a large, experimental public opinion survey conducted via the Internet. I will talk often about these surveys and other methods of survey research. The questions and data from the surveys are available to all of you (see blackboard) and may be valuable for your research papers.

Reading

Books for purchase

Lenz, Gabriel. 2013. *Follow the Leader? How Voters Respond to Politicians' Policies and Performance*

Lupia, Arthur. 2015. *Uninformed: Why People Know So Little About Politics and What We Can Do About it*. Oxford University Press.

Mintz, A., Valentino, N.A. and Wayne, C., 2021. *Beyond Rationality: Behavioral Political Science in the 21st Century*. Cambridge University Press.
[MVW on syllabus]

Other reading available on Canvas

Course Requirements and Grading

Participation	Regularly	20% of grade
(2) 5 page reaction papers	Due by 9am the day of class	25% each
Research Paper (10-20 pages)	Due TBA, exam week	30%

You should complete reading assignments before class, attend class, and participate actively in discussions. This is a seminar.

You will write two five-page (double-spaced) reaction papers for two classes of your choosing. These reaction papers should critique the reading or raise important issues not covered in the reading or adjudicate disputes in the reading. Reaction papers should not summarize the reading. You may briefly summarize points in the reading that are relevant to your argument. Assume your readers have not read the books or articles. Think of reaction papers as part of a long book review you might write for a magazine. Reaction papers should be emailed to everyone in the class by 9pm on the day before class. You will help lead class on the days you offer reaction papers. *See the last page of the syllabus for more details.*

You will also write a 10-20 page (double-spaced) research paper on a topic of your choice that I have approved. You may work with other students in the class on this project. We will discuss this assignment in more detail in class.

Prerequisites: Knowledge of Statistics

Completion of Gov 10 (statistics) or its equivalent in another department is a pre-requisite for this course. The book by Berry and Sanders is a nice summary of multivariate models. I will cover the necessary background material for the reading during class, using Berry and Sanders as a reference book. I do not expect you to know statistics at that level yet. The reading will get

more complex as the quarter progresses. You will be able to understand most of the arguments in the reading even without the ability to follow all of the math and statistics.

Class Format, Recording, and Discussion

You may not record class, whether in person or on Zoom. This class is an open forum for students to discuss ideas without concerns about being recorded. It is important that we put all ideas into discussion. At times I will ask you to brainstorm and to offer ideas that you may not endorse. I will also ask you to defend ideas that you might not hold. I will ask you to read material that does not reflect my own views. I will say things in class that I do not agree with to stimulate discussion and present all sides. Remember to debate ideas, not people. We are all here to learn.

Contacting Me

You should feel free to talk to me about the course or assignments. If you contact me by email, put “Gov 83” as the subject. I get so many emails that I usually do not reply to them. But, I will check my email almost every day, sort it by subject, and respond to all of those with “Gov 83” as the subject. If I do not reply within 2 days, either give me a call or resend the message. I may have missed your email. You may also call my direct line at 603-717-2944.

Dartmouth’s Academic Honor Principle.

Read Dartmouth’s Academic Honor Principle:

<http://www.dartmouth.edu/judicialaffairs/honor/index.html>

Also read this resource on properly citing sources:

<http://writing-speech.dartmouth.edu/learning/materials/sources-and-citations-dartmouth>).

Accessibility Needs

Students with disabilities who may need disability-related academic adjustments and services for this course are encouraged to see me privately as early in the term as possible. Students requiring disability-related academic adjustments and services must consult the [Student Accessibility Services office](#) (Carson Hall, Suite 125, 646-9900). Once SAS has authorized services, students must show the originally signed SAS Services and Consent Form and/or a letter on SAS letterhead to their professor. As a first step, if students have questions about whether they qualify to receive academic adjustments and services, they should contact the SAS office. All inquiries and discussions will remain confidential.

Wellness

The academic environment at Dartmouth is challenging, our terms are intensive, and classes are not the only demanding part of your life. There are a number of resources available to you on campus to support your wellness, including your undergraduate dean (<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~upperde/>), Counseling and Human Development (<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~chd/>), and the Student Wellness Center (<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~healthcd/>).

Religious Observances

Some students may wish to take part in religious observances that occur during this academic term. If you have a religious observance that conflicts with your participation in the course, please meet with me before the end of the second week of the term to discuss appropriate accommodations.

Additional Support

Academic Skills Center (<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~acskills/>)

The Academic Skills Center is open to the entire Dartmouth community.

Here are some common reasons why you might visit the ASC

- You're getting B's but you want to get A's
- You don't feel comfortable talking in class
- You're attending class regularly but you feel like you're missing important points
- You feel like you're a slow reader
- You're having trouble completing tests in the allotted time
- You're spending hours studying for foreign language but still not “getting it”
- You feel like you don't have enough time to get everything done
- You're not sure how to take notes
- You want to sign up for a tutor or study group
- You're not sure if you should get tested for a learning disability

The Research Center for Writing, and Information Technology (RWiT <http://writing-speech.dartmouth.edu/learning/support-writing-research-and-composing-technology/rwit>)

Located in [Berry 183](#), RWiT is a free service dedicated to helping members of the Dartmouth community develop more effective strategies for generating and organizing their ideas, finding and evaluating research sources, and presenting and revising compositions in a variety of media. Through informal dialogue, RWiT tutors assist writers in developing better compositions and more effective composing strategies. A collaboration between the Institute for Writing and Rhetoric, the Library, and Academic Computing, RWiT brings together faculty, administrators, staff, and students to focus on the art and science of composition.

Dartmouth College Library (<http://library.dartmouth.edu/>)

Dartmouth College Library A key to successful research is the use of reliable, high-quality information sources. While some information can be found on the open web, the best place to start your research is at the Library's Research Guides, researchguides.dartmouth.edu/guides. These research guides have categorized and organized the library's key resources - including books, databases, scholarly articles, and data sources - for your convenience. The Library's [website](#) also has information on useful research tools and services. In addition to the online information, a librarian has been assigned to this class to answer research questions, help you find appropriate resources, and assist with search techniques. Please contact your subject librarian (<http://researchguides.dartmouth.edu/subjectlibrarians>) for specialized help.

Class Schedule

- 1/5 Introduction
- 1/10 What Are Political Attitudes?
 Allport, Gordon, 1929. The Composition of Political Attitudes. *American Journal of Sociology* 35(2, Sep):220-38.
 Berinsky, Adam. 2017. Measuring Public Opinion with Surveys. *Annual Review of Political Science* 20:309-29.
 Grady, Christopher. [10 Things to Know About Survey Experiments](#).
 Evidence in Governance and Politics (EGAP)
 MVW, Ch. 1
- 1/12 Are Political Attitudes Real?
 Converse, Philip. E. 1964. The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics.
 In David E. Apter, *Ideology and Its Discontents*. New York: Free Press, pp. 206-261.
 Klein, Ezra. 2017. [For elites, politics is driven by ideology. For voters, it's not](#).
 Vox. Nov 9, 2017.
 van Zuylen-Wood, Simon. 2022. [The Radicalization of J. D. Vance](#).
 Washington Post Magazine. January 4, 2022
- Start reading: Berry, William, and Mitchell Sanders. Understanding Multivariate Research (not material for reaction papers)*
- 1/17 No Class – Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- 1/19 Are Political Attitudes Real? Part 2
 Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*, selected chs.
 Zaller, John. 1998 Monica Lewinsky's Contribution to Political Science.
PS: Political Science and Politics 31(2, June):182-189.
 Zaller, John. 2012. What 'Nature and Origins' Leaves Out. *Critical Review* 24(4):569-642.
- 1/24x Rational Choice Theories vs Behavioral Political Science
 Hinich, Melvin, and Michael Munger. *Analytical Politics*. Chs. 1, 2, 9
 Dixit and Nalebuff, *Thinking Strategically*, Ch. 10
 MVW, Chs. 2, 3, 6, 7, 8
- 1/26 Voter Turnout and Political Participation
 Aldrich, J.H., 1993. Rational choice and turnout. *American journal of political science*, pp.246-278.
 Brady, H.E., Verba, S. and Schlozman, K.L., 1995. Beyond SES: A resource model of political participation. *American political science review*, 89(2), pp.271-294.
 Gerber, A.S., Green, D.P. and Larimer, C.W., 2008. Social pressure and

voter turnout: Evidence from a large-scale field experiment. *American political Science review*, 102(1), pp.33-48.

1/31x Elite vs Mass Opinion
MV, Ch. 4

Lenz, Gabriel. 2013. *Follow the Leader? How Voters Respond to Politicians' Policies and Performance*
Mummolo, J., Peterson, E. and Westwood, S., 2019. The Limits of Partisan Loyalty. *Political Behavior*, pp.1-24.

2/7x Is the Public Informed?

Lupia, Arthur. 2015. *Uninformed: Why People Know So Little About Politics and What We Can Do About it*. Oxford University Press.
Jerit, Jennifer, Jason Barabas, and Toby Bolsen. 2006. Citizens, Knowledge, and the Information Environment. *American Journal of Political Science* 50(2):266-82.
Kertzer, Joshua D. 2020. Reassessing Elite-Public Gaps in Political Behavior. *American Journal of Political Science*

2/9 Discussion of research projects

2/14x Motivated Reasoning and Rationalizing
MW, Ch. 6, 8

Cacioppo, John T. and Richard E. Petty. 1984. The Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion. in NA - Advances in Consumer Research Volume 11, eds. Thomas C. Kinnear, Provo, UT : Association for Consumer Research, Pages: 673-675.
<http://acrwebsite.org/volumes/6329/volumes/v11/NA-11>
Lacy, Dean. and Christenson, Dino P., 2017. Who votes for the future? Information, expectations, and endogeneity in economic voting. *Political Behavior*, 39(2), pp.347-375.

2/16 Discussion of research projects

2/21 Partisanship and Polarization

Carsey, Thomas M. and Geoffrey C. Layman. 2006. Changing Sides or Changing Minds? Party Identification and Policy Preferences in the American Electorate. *American Journal of Political Science* 50(2, April):464-77.
Mason, L., 2015. "I disrespectfully agree": The differential effects of partisan sorting on social and issue polarization. *American Journal of Political Science*, 59(1), pp.128-145.

2/23 Race, Identity, and Polarization

Agadjanian, A. and Lacy, D., 2021. Changing Votes, Changing Identities?

Racial Fluidity and Vote Switching in the 2012–2016 US Presidential Elections. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 85(3), pp.737-752.

Egan, Patrick J., 2020. Identity as dependent variable: How Americans shift their identities to align with their politics. *American Journal of Political Science*, 64(3), pp.699-716.

Westwood, Sean J. and Peterson, Erik. 2020. The Inseparability of Race and Partisanship in the United States. *Political Behavior*, pp.1-23.

2/28x

Public Opinion on Taxes, Spending, and Redistribution

Appelbaum and Gebeloff. Even Critics of Safety Net Increasingly Depend on It. *New York Times*, February 11, 2012.

Lacy, Dean. 2014. Moochers and Makers in the Voting Booth. *Public Opinion Quarterly*

Mettler, S. (2010). Reconstituting the Submerged State: The Challenges of Social Policy Reform in the Obama Era. *Perspectives on Politics*, 8(3), 803-824. doi:10.1017/S1537592710002045

Rader, Kelly, and Katherine Krimmel. 2017. “Behind the Federal Spending Paradox: Economic Self Interest and Symbolic Racism in Contemporary Fiscal Politics,” *American Politics Research* 45: 727-754, 2017

3/2

Discussion of Research Projects

3/7

Lessons and Conclusions

MW, Ch. 9

Reaction Papers

Directions: Write a five-page paper about a topic that interests you in the reading for the day. Turn in your paper by 9pm on the day before the class during which we are covering your chosen topic. Blitz me and everyone on the class list an Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) version of your paper with your name and Gov 83 somewhere in the filename. You will turn in two of these reaction papers during the quarter.

Purpose: The purpose of writing these papers is to develop your ability to analyze a topic in a short, concise, insightful essay. Think of these an excerpt of a book review or a magazine or academic journal. You should state a clear position and defend it using the available evidence. You may pursue outside sources or do a bit of research for your topic, but do not merely summarize someone else's argument.

Possible Topics: Good topics for a paper include, but are not limited to:

- Adjudicating a dispute between authors
- Pointing out a contradiction, inconsistency, or weak evidence in an article or book
- Affirming an author's argument by analyzing its strongest evidence or providing additional evidence
- Asking and answering a question related to but omitted from the day's reading
- Offering a new theory or answer to a question in the day's reading
- Applying something in the reading to a case study not included in the reading

Format:

- Papers must be typed, double-spaced, with 1 or 1-1/2 inch margins on all sides. Use only 12 point font.
- Include a list of references, if necessary, after the last page of text.
- Appropriately cite the books or articles from which you take facts (other than common knowledge) or important conclusions. Do not cite my lectures. I prefer internal citations, e.g. (Smith 2001:10), which is (Author Year:Page). Avoid footnotes or endnotes.
- Follow normal conventions of style and grammar. I allow some leeway here. When in doubt, consult me or, better yet, Strunk and White, *Elements of Style*.

Suggestions: You do not need to follow my suggestions in order to write a good paper. Write an introduction of no more than one third of a page. Avoid lengthy summaries of events. Avoid long quotations. Focus on the significance of your topic. Once you have established your argument, consider and respond to criticisms.

Cautions: The following are prohibited:

1. Copying another student's paper.
2. Plagiarizing someone else's work, even if such work is not copyrighted. If you are unsure of the definition of plagiarism, consult with me.
3. Turning in, under pretense that it is your own work, a paper written by someone else.