

Public Opinion and the Media
Time and Day: Tuesdays 11am-1pm, and Fridays 11am-1pm
6C03 / 1A33¹

Daniela Stockmann
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Fridays, 3:30-4:30 pm
Office: 5B23
Phone: (701) 527 3867
E-mail: dstockmann@fsw.leidenuniv.nl

This course is an introduction to the main issues in research about public opinion. The course covers two overlapping themes: First, we discuss the meaning and origins of public opinion. What is public opinion and how should we measure it? How do individuals form their opinions? Why should we care about public opinion? Second, we examine causes of public opinion, focusing on the role of the media. How do the media affect public opinion? How important is media influence compared to other factors? What is the relationship between new technologies, such as the internet, and public opinion? During the discussion we will critically examine the evidence and methods presented and generate new hypotheses and research topics. We mainly rely on literature developed in American politics, but students are welcome to bring up examples from other countries.

The course has two basic goals. The first is to introduce advanced undergraduate students to the major themes, debates, and puzzles in the study of public opinion. The second is to allow students to grow familiar with some of the methodological challenges of studying public opinion (through evaluation and critique of the text) and then to develop a research proposal of their own that sets out a research question and a research plan for answering that question. Students have a chance to apply what they learn when participating in the Bachelor project.

Books and Materials:

All readings on the syllabus are available electronically on blackboard (articles) or on the “studie shelf” in the FSW library (chapters of books). Additional material for papers should be retrieved through the library.

Written Assignments: Written assignments include two short literature reviews (4-5 double-spaced pages) on the readings in class. Students will have some degree of choice as to which sessions they want to write on, however, the first essay must cover readings on the nature of public opinion (part I), the second readings on the antecedents of public opinion (part II). Essays must be turned in before the class meeting and deal with the readings on that particular day. (30%)

Each student will also turn in a research proposal (8-10 double-spaced pages) consisting of a clearly stated research question, some discussion and critical analysis

¹ Except October 11 in 5A42.

of the existing literature, and finally a research design that will enable the student to answer the question or test various competing hypotheses. Research proposals should apply the theory of one author discussed in class to a different case, including, for example, another societal group, political system, or political culture. It is helpful if the core reading is discussed in a previously submitted literature review.

- A one-page research design paper, which sketches your research question, your tentative answer (or hypotheses), and what kind of evidence you would collect to evaluate your hypotheses, is due on Monday, October 10. You should also include a working bibliography of sources you will investigate. Papers should be dropped off at the secretariat in the Political Science Department.
- Students will prepare a poster presentation of their research design to be given at a research design workshop on Tuesday, October 11.
- Students will exchange a *full* draft of their research design on Monday, October 24. You will give each other comments during the workshop on October 25.
- The entire research proposal is due on October 28 *before* class. The research project as a whole will count for 40% of the course grade.

All papers (except one-page research design papers) need to be submitted **twice**: as a hardcopy in my mailbox at the department and via Ephorus (for instructions, see <http://helpdesk.fsw.leidenuniv.nl/index.php3?c=147>). Submission code is my email-address (dstockmann@fsw.leidenuniv.nl).

Discussion and participation: Students are also asked to prepare **one** question about the readings before each session. This question should be posted on the discussion board on Blackboard one hour before class (10 am on Tuesday and 10 am on Friday).

Generally speaking the instructor will begin the class with a lecture, followed by an open discussion. During the open discussion, students are asked to react to each other's discussion questions submitted before each session. During this period of the class the instructor will act more as moderator. Discussion can focus on general themes of that week, specific critiques of the substantive arguments of the authors, and finally comment and analysis of the research designs employed in different readings.

The entire discussion and participation grade will be based on the quality of the discussion questions and participation in class (30%).

Attendance: Regular attendance is required. Students are asked to contact the instructor by email or phone if they will miss a class. More than one missed absence will affect the final grade unless an agreement is reached with the instructor.

Meetings:

| DATE | TOPIC |
|--|--|
| Tuesday, September 6 | <i>Introduction</i> |
| <i>Part I: The Nature of Public Opinion</i> | |
| Friday, September 9 | The Meaning of Public Opinion |
| Tuesday, September 13 | The Origins of Public Opinion (I) |
| Friday, September 16 | The Origins of Public Opinion (II) |
| Tuesday, September 20 | The Role of Political Information in Political Reasoning |
| <i>Part II: The Antecedents of Public Opinion</i> | |
| Friday, September 23 | Media Effects |
| Tuesday, September 27 | NO CLASS <i>(first draft of Research design paper due on September 29)</i> |
| Friday, September 30 | The Role of Self-Interest and Group-Interest in Public Opinion |
| Tuesday, October 4 | Political Principles and Values |
| Friday, October 7 | NO CLASS <i>(Research Design Paper due on Monday, October 10)</i> |
| Tuesday, October 11 (Room 5A42) | <i>Poster Presentations</i> |
| <i>Part III: Public Opinion and Political Behavior</i> | |
| Friday, October 14 | New Technologies and Public Opinion |
| Tuesday, October 18 | Campaigns and Elections |
| Friday, October 21 | NO CLASS <i>(Full Draft of the Research Proposal due on Monday, October 24)</i> |
| Tuesday, October 25 | <i>Workshop</i> |
| Friday, October 28 | <i>Final Discussion</i> Public Opinion, the Media, and Political Behavior |
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Session One Readings: Introduction

No reading assignments for the first meeting.

Session Two Readings: The Meaning of Public Opinion

Lippmann, Walter. [1922] 1997. *Public Opinion*. New York: Free Press Paperbacks.
Ch. 1. (CP)

Blumer, Herbert. 1948. Public Opinion and Public Opinion Polling. *American Sociological Review* 13:542-549.

Converse, Philip. 1987. "Changing Conceptions of Public Opinion in the Political Process." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 51: 12-24.

Recommended:

Lane, Robert. 1962. *Political Ideology*. New York: Free Press. pp. 1-11.

Lippmann, Walter. [1922] 1997. *Public Opinion*. New York: Free Press Paperbacks.
Chs. 3, 4.

Tilly, Charles. 1983. "Speaking Your Mind Without Elections, Surveys, or Social Movements." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 47: 461-489.

Lazarsfeld, Paul. 1957. Public Opinion and the Classical Tradition." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 21: 39-53.

Session Three Readings: The Origins of Public Opinion (I)

Carmines, Edward G., and James A. Stimson. 1989. *Issue Evolution: Race And The Transformation of American Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Chs. 1, 5. (CP)

Lee, Taeku. 2002. *Mobilizing Public Opinion: Black Insurgency and Racial Attitudes in the Civil Rights Era*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chs. 1, 2 and 5.
(CP)

Recommended:

Schumpeter, Joseph. 1942. *Capitalism, Socialism, Democracy*. New York: Harper & Row. pp. 250-268.

Session Four Readings: The Origins of Public Opinion (II)

Converse, Philip. 1964. "The Nature Of Belief Systems In Mass Publics," In *Ideology and Discontent* (pp. 206-261). New York: Free Press. (CP)

Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins Of Mass Opinion*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chs. 2, 3, 7, 8. (CP)

Recommended:

Lane, Robert. 1962. *Political Ideology*. New York: Free Press. pp. 1-25, 57-81, 346-63.

Zaller, John and Stanley Feldman. 1992. "A Simple Theory of the Survey Response." *American Journal of Political Science* 36: 579-616.

Session Five Readings: The Role of Political Information in Political Reasoning

Delli Carpini, Michael X and Scott Keeter. 1996. *What Americans know about Politics and Why it Matters*. Yale University Press: New Haven. Ch. 2. (CP)

Lodge, Milton and Marco Steenbergen. 1995. "The Responsive Voter: Campaign Information and the Dynamics of Candidate Evaluation." *American Political Science Review* 89: 309-36.

Lupia, Arthur. 1994. "Shortcuts versus Encyclopedias: Information and Voting Behavior in California Insurance Reform Elections." *American Political Science Review* 88: 63-76.

Recommended:

Rosenberg, Shawn. 1988. "The Structure of Political Thinking." *American Journal of Political Science* 32:539-66.

P.G.J. Hendriks Vettehen, C.P.M. Hagemann, and L.B. van Snippenburg (2004). "Political Knowledge and Media Use in the Netherlands." *European Sociological Review* 20:5: 415-424.

Lodge, Milton and Charles Taber. 2000. "Three Steps Toward a Theory of Motivated Political Reasoning." In Lupia, McCubbins, and Popkin. *Elements of Reason* (pp. 183-213). Cambridge University Press.

Hutchings, Vincent. 2003. *Public Opinion and Democratic Accountability: How Citizens Learn about Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chs. 1,3.

Session Six Readings: Media Effects

Iyengar, Shanto and Donald R. Kinder .1987. News That Matters. Chicago, University of Chicago Press. Chs. 1-3, 7. (CP)

Nelson, Thomas E., Zoe M. Oxley, and Rosalee A. Clawson. 1997. "Media Framing of a Civil Liberties Conflict and its Effects on Tolerance." *American Political Science Review* 91(3): 567-583.

Recommended:

Valentino, Nicholas A., Vincent L. Hutchings and Ismail K. White. 2002. "Cues That Matter: How Political Ads Prime Racial Attitudes During Campaigns." *American Political Science Review* 96(1): 75-90.

Druckman, James N. 2001. "On the Limits of Framing Effects: Who Can Frame?" *Journal of Politics* 63(4): 1041-1066.

Baum, Matthew A. 2002. "Sex, Lies, and War: How Soft News Brings Foreign Policy to the Inattentive Public." *American Political Science Review* 96(1): 91-109.

Mendelberg, Tali. 2001. *The Race Card*. Princeton, Princeton University Press.

Bartels, Larry (1993). "Messages Received: The Political Impact of Media Exposure." *American Political Science Review* 87: 267-285.

Nelson, Thomas E., Zoe M. Oxley, and Rosalee A. Clawson. 1997. "Toward a Psychology of Framing Effects." *Political Behavior* 19(3): 221-246.

Nelson, Thomas and Donald Kinder. 1996. Issue frames and Group-Centrism in American Public Opinion. *Journal of Politics* 58(4):1055-1078.

Sniderman, Paul N. and Sean M. Theriault. 2004. "The Structure of Political Argument and the Logic of Issue Framing." *Studies in Public Opinion: Attitudes, Non-Attitudes, Measurement Error, and Change*, edited by William E. Saris and Paul M. Sniderman. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Session Seven: The Role of Self-Interest vs. Group-Interest in Public Opinion

Markus, Gregory. 1988. "The Impact Of Personal and National Economic Conditions On Presidential Voting." *American Journal of Political Science* 32, 137-154.

Sears, David O., Lau, R.R., Tyler T. and Allen, A.M., Jr. 1980. "Self-Interest Versus Symbolic Politics in Policy Attitudes and Presidential Voting." *American Political Science Review* 74: 670-684.

Bobo, Lawrence. and Vincent L. Hutchings. 1996. "Perceptions Of Racial Group Competition: Extending Blumer's Theory Of Group Position To A Multiracial Social Context." *American Sociological Review* 61: 951-972.

Recommended:

Campbell, Angus, Philip Converse, Warren Miller, and Donald Stokes. 1960. *The American Voter*. New York: Wiley. Ch. 12.

Kinder Donald. R. and Roderick Kiewiet. 1981. "Sociotropic Voting: The American Case." *British Journal of Political Science* 11, 129-161.

Green, Donald and Jonathan Cowden. 1992. "Who Protests: Self-Interest and White Opposition to Busing" *Journal of Politics* 54: 471-496.

Dawson, Michael. 1994. *Behind The Mule: Race and Class in African American Politics*. Princeton University Press. Chs. 3 and 4.

Kinder, Donald R. and Lynn Sanders. 1996. *Divided by Color*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chs. 2, 4, 5, and 6.

Session Eight: Political Principles and Values

Feldman, Stanely. 1988. "Structure and Consistency in Public Opinion: The Role of Core Beliefs and Values." *American Journal of Political Science* 32: 416-440.

Inglehart, Ronald. 1971. "The Silent Revolution in Europe: Intergenerational Change in post-Industrial Societies." *American Political Science Review* 65: 991-1017.

Tessler, Mark. 2002. "Islam and Democracy in the Middle East: The Impact of Religious Orientations on Attitudes Toward Democracy in Four Arab Countries." *Comparative Politics* 34: 337-354.

Recommended:

Rokeach, Milton. 1973. *The Nature of Human Values*. New York: Free Press, Chs. 1 and 2.

Stoker, Laura. 1992. "Interests and Ethics in Politics." *APSR* 86: 369-80.

Sears, David. 1993. "Symbolic Politics: A Socio-Psychological Theory." In Iyengar and McGuire, eds. *Explorations in Political Psychology*. Duke University Press, pp. 113-49.

Tessler, Mark. 1997. "Further Tests of the Women and Peace Hypothesis: Evidence

from Cross-National Survey Research in the Middle East.” *International Studies Quarterly* 43: 519-531.

Session Nine: Poster Presentations

No reading assignments for this session. Prepare outlines, figures, tables, graphs, and / or questions to be presented at a poster session in class. This is a chance to get feedback on your research question, literature review, hypotheses, and research design.

Session Ten: New Technologies and Public Opinion

Norris, Pippa. 2001. *Digital Divide: Civic Engagement, Information Poverty, and the Internet Worldwide*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chs. 10, 11. (CP)

Price, Vincent, Lilach Nir, and Joseph Capella. 2006. “Normative and Informational Influences in Online Political Discussion.” *Communication Theory* 23: 47-74.

Recommended:

Delli Carpini, Michael X. 2004. “Mediating Democratic Engagement: The Impact of Communications on Citizens’ Involvement in Political Life and Civic Life.” *Handbook of Political Communication Research*, edited by Lynda Lee Kaid. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Tedesco, John. 2004. “Changing the Channel: Use of the Internet for Communicating About Politics.” *Handbook of Political Communication Research*, edited by Lynda Lee Kaid. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Session Twelve: The Role of the Media in Campaigns and Elections

View political ads used in American Presidential campaigns between 1952 and 2004:
<http://livingroomcandidate.movingimage.us/>

Ansolabehere, Stephen and Shanto Iyengar. 1997. *Going Negative: How Political Advertisements Shrink and Polarize the Electorate*. Chs. 4 and 5. (CP)
Treatments of the Experiments can be viewed at:
<http://pcl.stanford.edu/common/docs/research/iyengar/1996/goingneg.html>

Brader, Ted (2005). "Striking a Responsive Chord: How Political Ads Motivate and Persuade Voters by Appealing to Emotions." *American Journal of Political Science* 49(2): 388-405.

Recommended:

Campbell, Angus, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller and Donald E. Stokes (1960). *The American Voter*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press. Chapters 2, 6, 7, 12

Gelman, Andrew and Gary King. 1993. "Why are American Presidential Election Campaign Polls so Variable When Votes are so Predictable?" *British Journal of Political Science* 23(4): 409-51.

Flowers, Julianne F., Audrey A. Haynes and Michael H. Crespin (2003). "The Media, the Campaign, and the Message." *American Journal of Political Science* 47(2): 259-273.

Jackson, John E. (1983). "Election Night Reporting and Voter Turnout." *American Journal of Political Science* 27(4): 615-635.

Session Thirteen: Workshop on Research Proposals

A *full* draft of the research proposal is due on Monday, March 24. You will give feedback on another student's research paper during the workshop. You can ask the instructor questions about their research design.

Session Fourteen: Final Discussion: Public Opinion, the Media, and Political Behavior

Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry Brady. 1995. *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism In American Politics*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Ch. 12. (CP)

Bobo, Lawrence and Franklin D. Gilliam. 1990. "Race, Sociopolitical Participation, and Black Empowerment" *American Political Science Review* 84: 377-393.