

Department of Political Science
TR: 1:10-4:00
Olmsted Hall 1136

Erinn Lauterbach
Email:
Office:
Office Hours:

Political Science 146
Mass Media and Public Opinion
Summer 2015, Session 1¹

Description:

This course introduces students to the role of mass media and public opinion in American politics. The first part of the course examines why public opinion is important, theoretically—namely via the lens of democratic theory. How is public opinion measured? Is it stable, and how is it used to assess public attitudes about policy preferences and by candidates seeking public office? The second part of the course examines recent research on the role the mass media plays in American politics. While we will review traditional sources of media, we will also focus on the growth of modern technologies such as social media, and how we now exist in a highly fragmented media environment. Throughout, we will investigate how the media influences political campaigns and election politics more generally.

Teaching Philosophy

I begin with the premise that each student enrolled in this course is highly intelligent and capable therefore I have high expectations for both your academic commitment and personal behavior. You are responsible for your success in this course and the course is designed such that if you work hard you will do quite well. This course has all the ingredients necessary to engage and challenge you.

This course provides high value added. While I will discuss the readings in class to an extent, lectures are meant to compliment the reading not to simply go over them. Instead, the readings will serve as a point of departure for the lectures, most lectures will involve information not contained in the readings.

I expect students to refrain from engaging in any distracting or disruptive behavior such as, but not limited to, using cell phones, texting, surfing the web, taking pictures, and talking to classmates. I will not tolerate any disruptive behavior and will refer egregious cases to Student Judicial Affairs.

Required Texts²:

Clawson, Rosalee A. and Oxley, Zoe. M. *Public Opinion: Democratic Ideals: Democratic Practice, 2nd Edition*
Graber, Doris A. and Dunaway, Johanna. *Mass Media an American Politics, 9th Edition*

There will be a copy of each book on reserve in the library. Please be careful with them.

Grading and Course Requirements

First, students must attend lectures and come to class having completed the assigned readings. While attendance is not recorded, it is required. Please consult the course iLearn website for updates and additional information about assignments.

You are in charge of your own grade. Grades are earned, not given, based on the quality of the product that you turn in.

¹ **Disclaimer:** The instructor reserves the right to alter the contents, requirements, grading and/or scheduling as she sees fit in order to best fulfill the objectives of the course. Any changes in the syllabus will be announced in class.

² If you purchase a different edition of either of these books the responsibility is on you to make sure the information is the same and the chapters line up with what is assigned in the syllabus. Test questions will be taken from information in the assigned editions.

If you have any quick questions about the lecture or reading materials, or if scheduling, personal problems, or questions about grading arise, please contact me via email. If the question is more pressing and/or involves more than a brief response, please visit me in my office hours. Any student wishing to challenge a paper/exam grade is required to submit a written grievance which includes the reasons for their dissatisfaction with the grade, what grade they believed is merited and why. This should show that you have looked over any written comments that you received. This written grievance should be submitted at least 2 business days before meeting to discuss the assignment. Any discussions regarding grades can be scheduled via email, but should be addressed in person.

Readings:

All of the readings in this syllabus are required. You should read all the assigned material before the class period for which it is assigned and be prepared to discuss it in class. Please note that all information in the readings can appear on the test even if it is not discussed in class..

Midterm (25%) and Final (25%)

The exams will be given in class July 7th and July 23rd. You will answer multiple choice, true-false, identification, and/or short answer questions that cover course readings and lectures. Approximately one week prior to each exam, a review sheet will be distributed. The final exam is not cumulative. About half the material on the exam is drawn from course readings.

Reading Responses (15% each)

Students will be responsible for completing two short reading response papers throughout the course. One response paper should cover public opinion material discussed from 6/23-7/2, and the second should cover mass media material discussed from 7/9-7-21. For example, if you turn a paper in on 6/30 it would be discussing the chapters assigned for 6/30. A late penalty will be added for papers turned in discussing chapters from a previous day.

Every class students may hand in a short (4-5 page, double-spaced, 12 pt font, 1" margins) paper discussion critiquing one or more of the assigned readings for that day and at least one outside journal article that relates to the reading. Please do not simply summarize the readings in the response papers. Instead, critique, compare or contrast the readings you choose with the goal of identifying shortcomings or alternative interpretations. *No public opinion response papers will be accepted after 7/2, no mass media response papers will be accepted after 7/21.*

Journal articles can be found by searching through the UCR Library website and must be peer reviewed. Examples include but are not limited to: American Journal of Political Science, American Political Science Review, Journal of Politics, Politics Research Quarterly, etc.

A typed hard-copy of the paper is due at the end of class. An electronic copy must also be simultaneously submitted through SafeAssign as well. The hard copy must have stapled to the back a copy of the rubric; it is available on iLearn under Course Materials.

iLearn Discussion Board (10%)

Before class each day, due at 1:00 pm, (starting 6/25, excluding 7/7 and 7/23), students should submit 1 multiple choice question per assigned chapter. That means if Chapters 1 and 2 are assigned, you will need to turn in 1 question from each chapter for a total of 2 questions due that day. More information will be given on day one. These questions should help prepare you for understanding the material in the manner you will be tested, can be compiled and used for studying, and I will pick a couple questions to be used on each test.

Pop Reading Quizzes (10%)

Throughout the 5 weeks I will give pop reading quizzes worth 10 points each. These will cover the reading for *that class period* and model the midterm exam format. These should help you prepare for the tests and

incentivize you to keep up with the course readings. No makeups will be available for the quizzes so attend class regularly and be on time. I may give the quiz at any point during the class meeting time. If you know at the start of the session that you will be missing a lecture for a particular reason please tell me at the start of the course. If you have a medical or personal emergency arise at any point, exceptions *may* be made so please contact me if problems arise.

Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct

This section is taken from the Academic Integrity Brochure for Students (<http://conduct.ucr.edu/>) “At the University of California, Riverside (UCR) honesty and integrity are fundamental values that guide and inform us as individuals and as a community. The academic culture requires that each student take responsibility for learning and for producing work that reflect their intellectual potential, curiosity, and capability. Students must represent themselves truthfully, claim only work that is their own, acknowledge their use of others’ words, research results, and ideas, using the methods accepted by the appropriate academic disciplines and engage honestly in all academic assignments. Misunderstanding of the appropriate academic conduct will not be accepted as an excuse for academic misconduct. If a student is in doubt about appropriate academic conduct in a particular situation, he or she should consult with the instructor in the course to avoid the serious charge of academic misconduct.”

Plagiarism is the “copying of language, structure, or ideas of another and attributing (explicitly or implicitly) the work to one’s own efforts. Plagiarism means using another’s work without giving credit. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Copying information from computer-based sources, i.e., the Internet
- Allowing another person to substantially alter or revise your work and submitting it entirely as your own.”

Other forms of academic dishonesty include cheating by “copying from another student’s examination, quiz,... or homework assignment.” Note that the definition of cheating also includes “submitting for academic advancement an item of academic work that you have previously submitted for academic advancement” without prior authorization from the faculty member supervising the work. “Unauthorized collaboration” is also considered inappropriate.

If I suspect you have committed an act of academic misconduct, I will discuss it with you and file a report with the Student Conduct & Academic Integrity Program (SCAIP). You may receive a zero on the assignment and an “F” for the course. Further disciplinary action may also be taken by SCAIP. If you ever have a question about plagiarism or other academic conduct, please ask me *before* you turn in any work that may be problematic.

Students with Disabilities:

If you have a physical, psychiatric, emotional, medical, or learning disability that may impact your ability to carry out assigned coursework, I urge you to contact the staff in Student Special Services (<http://specialservices.ucr.edu/>), who will review your concerns and determine, with you, what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation are confidential.

<u>Week</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Readings</u>
Week 1	6/23	Introduction, Role of citizens in Democratic societies, Political Knowledge	Clawson & Oxley Ch 1, 8
Week 1	6/25	Political Socialization & Attitude Stability	Clawson & Oxley Ch 2, 4
Week 2	6/30	Organization of Political Thinking	Clawson & Oxley Ch 5-6
Week 2	7/2	Public Policy & Conclusion	Clawson & Oxley Ch 7, 12-13
Week 3	7/7	Midterm	Bring scantron
Week 3	7/9	Mass Media and Government	Clawson & Oxley Ch 3 Graber & Dunaway Ch 1
Week 4	7/14	Media & Politics, Who and What Makes the News?	Graber & Dunaway Ch 4-6
Week 4	7/16	Institutions and Media Effects	Graber & Dunaway Ch 7, 10, 12
Week 5	7/21	Media Effects and Trends	Graber & Dunaway Ch 11, 13 iLearn, Iyengar Ch. 6
Week 5	7/23	Final Exam	Bring scantron