**POL 413: THE HUMAN BASIS OF POLITICS**

**MW 10:30 – 11:20 a.m. BRNG 1245**

**F 10:30 – 11:20 a.m. KRAN 250**

**Spring 2014**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **PROF. ROSALEE CLAWSON** | **OFFICE HOURS** |
| E-MAIL: [clawsonr@purdue.edu](mailto:clawson@polsci.purdue.edu) | M 11:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. |
| OFFICE: BRNG 2242 | T 8 – 10:00 a.m. |
| PHONE: 494-4162 | W 3:30 – 5:00 p.m. and for an appointment, |
|  | contact Annie Cheever, [acheever@purdue.edu](mailto:acheever@purdue.edu) |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TA ZUZANA RINGLEROVA** | **OFFICE HOURS** |
| E-MAIL: zringler@purdue.edu | M and W 9 – 10:15 a.m. |
| OFFICE: BRNG 2237 | T 1 – 2:30 p.m. |
|  | F 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. and by appointment |

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Welcome to The Human Basis of Politics! In a democratic society, the public plays a fundamental role. My goal is to help you develop a sophisticated understanding of (a) the factors that shape public opinion, (b) the content and organization of public opinion, and (c) the consequences of public opinion. You will gain an understanding of the techniques social scientists use to determine how people think about politics, and you will learn how to analyze public opinion survey data during interactive lab sessions. You will draw upon course readings to participate actively in class discussions.

**COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Students will:

Describe the role of public opinion in a democratic society from four theoretical perspectives.

Understand and evaluate empirical research on public opinion.

Apply four theoretical perspectives to empirical research on public opinion.

Analyze and interpret public opinion data.

**REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS**

The books are available at campus bookstores and on reserve at the Humanities, Social Sciences, and Education (HSSE) library located in Stewart Center. The article is available on Blackboard Learn.

Clawson, Rosalee A., and Zoe M. Oxley. 2013. *Public Opinion: Democratic Ideals, Democratic Practice*. 2nd ed. Washington, DC: CQ Press. (Designated as C&O below.)

Clawson, Rosalee A., and Zoe M. Oxley. 2011. *Conducting Empirical Analysis: Public Opinion in Action*. Washington, DC: CQ Press. (Designated as Workbook below.)

Converse, Philip E. 2006. "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics (1964)." *Critical Review* 18: 1-74. Originally published in *Ideology and Discontent*, ed. David Apter. New York: Free Press.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Attendance. You will learn so much if you attend class every day, and I expect you to do so. If you miss a class, you are responsible for the material covered or announcements made that day. This class is driven by student discussion and interaction; thus, attendance is critical.

Class Participation (15%). Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the day’s readings. Thoughtful and careful assessment of the readings is expected. Informed and knowledgeable participation will make class time productive and enjoyable. In some cases, there is not a single “right” answer; rather, there are better and worse arguments. Thus, I value a range of perspectives and arguments. I will play devil’s advocate with you, and I encourage you to do the same. Students should bring the day’s readings and careful notes to class with them. Let me add one more point: active class participation also entails active listening. Class discussion does not work well if one or two students try to dominate the discussion or if students do not listen respectfully to their peers’ comments. Students will also be asked to participate in group work and in-class exercises and complete homework assignments.

Pop Quizzes (10%). The quizzes will test student understanding of course readings. Students should read for retention, not just read mindlessly. If a student has not yet developed this skill, I would be happy to make suggestions on how to master it. If students are struggling with a reading, they should see Zuzana or me *before* class to work through the material. Quiz questions will be along the lines of "What was the author's main argument in the reading for today?" or "Explain the key differences between Concept A and Concept B." (Students will be allowed to drop one quiz score.)

Workbook Exercises (20%). Students will complete workbook exercises designed to help them learn about public opinion by analyzing survey data. Students will work independently on these exercises unless instructed otherwise.

Exam 1 (10%) and Exam 2 (20%). The exams will consist of multiple choice and open-ended questions. The exams will test students’ mastery of theories, concepts, and research findings.

Final Exam (25%). The final will consist of multiple choice and open-ended questions. This cumulative exam will test students’ mastery of theories, concepts, and research findings covered throughout the entire term.

**GRADING SCALE**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| A 93-100  A- 90-92  B+ 87-89  B 83-86 | B- 80-82%  C+ 77-79  C 73-76  C- 70-72 | D+ 67-69%  D 63-66  D- 60-62  F 0-59 |

**LATE POLICY**

I will not accept late assignments or reschedule exams unless there are extenuating circumstances. In those instances, please contact me as soon as you know there is a problem. In most cases, you will be required to provide documentation of an emergency.

**GRIEF ABSENCE POLICY FOR STUDENTS**

Purdue University recognizes that a time of bereavement is very difficult for a student. The University therefore provides the following rights to students facing the loss of a family member: Students will be excused for funeral leave and given the opportunity to earn equivalent credit and to demonstrate evidence of meeting the learning outcomes for missed assignments in the event of the death of a member of the student’s family. In cases of bereavement, the student or the student’s representative should contact the Office of the Dean of Students (765-494-1747).

**DISABILITY**

Students with disabilities must be registered with the Disability Resource Center in the Office of the Dean of Students before classroom accommodations can be provided. If you are eligible for academic accommodations because you have a documented disability that will affect your work in this class, please schedule an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss your needs.

**OPTIMAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

My goal is to create an optimal learning environment for all students. Therefore, please be sure all electronic devices are turned off and put away before class starts. Students may use laptops to access readings stored electronically or to take notes, but use for any other reason is not allowed. Also, please be conscious that even minor whispering or other distracting behaviors can be very disruptive in a classroom. Note that students' participation scores will be negatively affected if they disrupt the learning environment. Thank you in advance for helping me sustain an ideal learning environment.

**COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS CLASSROOM CIVILITY STATEMENT**

 Purdue University is committed to fostering diversity and inclusion and welcomes individuals of all ages, religions, sex, sexual orientations, races, nationalities, languages, military experience, disabilities, family statuses, gender identities and expressions, political views, and socioeconomic statuses. Please respect the different experiences, beliefs and values expressed by everyone in this course. Behaviors that threaten, harass, discriminate or that are disrespectful of others will not be tolerated. Inappropriate behaviors will be addressed with disciplinary action, which may include being referred to the Office of the Dean of Students. Please visit Purdue’s Nondiscrimination policy for more information:

<http://www.purdue.edu/purdue/ea_eou_statement.html>.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY**

Academic honesty and professional ethics are the foundations of university life. I take these issues very seriously and expect my students to uphold the highest standards of integrity. Purdue’s policy is “the commitment of the acts of cheating, lying, and deceit in any of their diverse forms (such as the use of ghost-written papers, the use of substitutes for taking examinations, the use of illegal cribs, plagiarism, and copying during examinations) is dishonest and must not be tolerated. Moreover, knowingly to aid and abet, directly or indirectly, other parties in committing dishonest acts is in itself dishonest” (University Senate Document 2-18, December 15, 1972). If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please consult the Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL): OWL Avoiding Plagiarism, <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/>.

**OFFICE HOURS**

We expect to see you during office hours. We are here to help you get the most out of this class. Don’t wait until after an exam or until the end of the semester to ask questions or seek assistance.

**COURSE CAVEAT**

I will do my best to stick with the plan outlined in this syllabus, but the schedule in this course is subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances. For example, in the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines, and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances. If a campus emergency arises, please consult the course website for information.

**COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS**

**INTRODUCTION**

Mon., Jan. 13 Expectations and Introduction: What is Public Opinion?

**WHAT SHOULD THE ROLE OF CITIZENS BE IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY?**

Wed., Jan. 15 What Role Should Public Opinion Play in a Democracy?

C&O, Ch. 1, “Public Opinion in a Democracy”

Fri., Jan. 17 Empirical Reality: Introduction to Public Opinion Data

Review C&O, Ch. 1, pages 20-26

Mon., Jan 20 NO CLASS – Martin Luther King Day

Wed., Jan. 22 Using Surveys to Measure Public Opinion

C&O, “Appendix,” pp. 27-32

Fri., Jan. 24 Workbook, Ch. 1, “Introduction to Conducting Empirical Analysis”

Mon., Jan. 27 More on Using Surveys to Measure Public Opinion

Review C&O, “Appendix,” pp. 27-32

Wed., Jan. 29 Alternative Ways to Measure Public Opinion and Review

C&O, “Appendix,” pp. 32-40

Fri., Jan. 31 **EXAM 1**

**ARE CITIZENS PLIABLE?**

Mon., Feb. 3 What are the Sources of Public Opinion?

C&O, Ch. 2, “Political Socialization”

Wed., Feb. 5 More on Political Socialization

Fri., Feb. 7 Workbook, Ch. 2, "Political Socialization," pp. 19-30

Mon., Feb. 10 Media Characteristics and News Norms

C&O, Ch. 3, “Mass Media,” pp. 69-84

Wed., Feb. 12 Do the Media Influence Public Opinion?

C&O, Ch. 3, “Mass Media,” pp. 85-100

Fri., Feb. 14 Workbook, Ch. 3, “Mass Media,” pp. 33-39

Mon., Feb. 17 Political Attitudes

C&O, Ch. 4, “Attitude Stability and Attitude Change”

Wed., Feb. 19 More on Political Attitudes

Fri., Feb. 21 Workbook, Ch. 4, “Attitude Stability and Attitude Change,” pp. 43-50

**DO CITIZENS ORGANIZE THEIR POLITICAL THINKING?**

Mon., Feb. 24 Do Americans Think Ideologically? A Top-down Approach

C&O, Ch. 5, “Ideological Innocence and Critiques,” pp. 133-141

Converse, “The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics,” pp. 1-38

Wed., Feb. 26 Converse, continued

Converse, “The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics,” pp. 38-74

Fri., Feb. 28 Workbook, Ch. 5, “Political Ideology,” pp. 53-64

Mon., Mar. 3 Critiques of Converse

C&O, Ch. 5, "Ideological Innocence and Critiques," pp. 141-161

Wed., Mar. 5 Challenges to Converse: A Bottom-up Approach

Fri., Mar. 7 **EXAM 2**

Mon., Mar. 10 If Not Ideology, Then What? Group Attitudes

C&O, Ch. 7, “Pluralistic Roots of Public Opinion: The Central Role of Groups”

Wed., Mar. 12 More about Group Attitudes

Fri., Mar. 14 Workbook, Ch. 6, “Pluralistic Roots of Public Opinion,” pp. 74-83

**SPRING BREAK**

Mon., Mar. 24 If Not Ideology, Then What? Personality, Self-Interest, Values, and History

C&O, Ch. 6, “Pluralistic Roots of Public Opinion: Personality, Self-

Interest, Values, and History”

Wed., Mar. 26 More about Personality, Self-Interest, Values, and History

Fri., Mar. 28 Workbook, Ch. 6, “Pluralistic Roots of Public Opinion,” pp. 69-74

**DO CITIZENS ENDORSE AND DEMONSTRATE DEMOCRATIC BASICS?**

Mon., Mar. 31 Political Knowledge

C&O, Ch. 8, “Knowledge, Interest, and Attention to Politics”

Wed., Apr. 2 More on Political Knowledge

Fri., Apr. 4 Workbook, Ch. 7, “Political Knowledge," pp. 87-96

Mon., Apr. 7 Do Citizens Support Civil Liberties?

C&O, Ch. 9, “Support for Civil Liberties”

Wed., Apr. 9 More on Support for Civil Liberties

Fri., Apr. 11 Workbook, Ch. 8, "Support for Civil Liberties," pp. 99-110

Mon., Apr. 14 Do Citizens Support Civil Rights?

C&O, Ch. 10, “Support for Civil Rights”

Wed., Apr. 16 More on Support for Civil Rights

Fri., Apr. 18 Workbook, Ch. 9, “Support for Civil Rights,” pp. 115-124

**WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CITIZENS & THEIR GOVERNMENT?**

Mon., Apr. 21 Do Citizens Trust and Support the Government?

C&O, Ch. 11, “Trust in Government, Support for Institutions, and Social Capital," pp. 303-325

Wed., Apr. 23 Has Social Capital Declined?

C&O, Ch. 11, “Trust in Government, Support for Institutions, and Social Capital," pp. 325-336

Fri., Apr. 25 Workbook, Ch. 10, "Trust in Government and Social Capital," pp. 129-137

Mon., Apr. 28 Does Public Opinion Shape Policy? Should It?

C&O, Ch. 12, "Impact of Public Opinion on Policy"

**WHAT DO WE MAKE OF PUBLIC OPINION IN A DEMOCRACY?**

Wed., Apr. 30 Are Citizens Capable of Functioning Effectively in a Democratic Society?

C&O, Ch. 13, “Conclusion”

Fri., May 2 Workbook, Ch. 11, "Impact of Public Opinion on Policy," pp. 141-151

**FINAL EXAM** as scheduled by the university. Please do not make your end-of-semester travel plans until after the final exam time is announced. A review session will be scheduled.