UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
GREEN BAY

Political Science 318: Political Behavior

Course Syllabus

Fall 2012

Instructor: Katia Levintova
Office: MAC A327
Office Hours: Mo/We/Fr 10:30-11:30am
and Mo/We 1:00-2:00pm
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Course Number: POL SCI 318
Course Title: Political Behavior

Time: MWF 11:40am-12:35pm
Place: Wood Hall 303
D2L: course materials and discussions
available
Prerequisites: Pol Sci 100 or 101
General Education: This course now has
WE Upper Division designation ((please
see your instructor, if this fact is not
reflected in your SIS account)

Required Readings:

1. Fiorina, Morris (2006 or 2010). *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*. New York: Pearson Longman (reaction paper)
2. Trippi, Joe (2008). *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised.* New York: HarperCollins (reaction paper)
3. Shea, Daniel and Morris Fiorina (2012). *Can We Talk? The Rise of Rude, Nasty, Stubborn Politics*. New York: Pearson Longman (reaction paper)
4. Kaufmann, Karen et al. (2008). *Unconventional Wisdom: Facts and Myths About American Voters*. Oxford University Press (reaction paper)
5. Additional required weekly readings areavailable at D2L (see Schedule of Classes section below for specific assignments).

Catalogue Description:
An introduction to political behavior that approaches the topics of elections, public opinion, voting behavior, mass media, and political socialization through the application of quantitative methods of analysis.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Since *The American Voter* (1960), perhaps the greatest puzzle to the field of political science is the decline of citizen participation. With greater education levels, greater mobility, and the flood of political information via improved technology, it was expected that citizens' knowledge, interest and activity in politics would increase. This was not the case.   But is that necessarily a bad thing? Beginning with an exploration of the history of public opinion and measurement issues, we will consider influences to attitude formation and the link to participation. We will

also study the theories of and research on political tolerance, trust in government and political knowledge. We will engage in a more in-depth look at political campaigning and the role of the media. In general, this class will expose students to some of the most thoughtful research on political behavior as well as some of the most recent thinking.

II. COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

It is expected that at the end of the semester students will….

1. Be able to explain how public opinion is measured and used by scholars.
2. Know how to construct survey questions, develop a survey instrument and implement survey to collect data.
3. Be able to perform most basic statistical analysis on survey data.
4. Understand the scholarly theories and research on attitude formation.
5. Be able to explain the influences on political participation.
6. Recognize how media effects influence political discourse and campaigns.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Final Exam: At the end of the semester (**December 17, 1-3pm**), we will have in-class comprehensive final, consisting of essay questions (questions will be distributed in class two weeks prior to the actual exam). Exam will be worth **15%** of your final grade.

2. In-class/take home exercise on research design: The first three weeks of class will be devoted to familiarizing students with political science research and methods. While this is not a statistics course, students do need to understand basic terms and approaches to studying political behavior. Together, in-class and take-home exercises (**September 10 and 12 respectively**) on research design are worth **5%** of your final grade (**2%** and **3%** respectively).

3. In-class/take home exercises on statistical techniques/tests of statistical significance: During the fourth week we will explore the relationship between research problem, available data, and appropriate statistical procedures. As part of this assignment, you will have to (1) take a short quiz on D2L for our class (ungraded) on **September 14-17**, (2) participate in class group exercises on **September 26**, (3) complete individual take-home assignment due on **September 28** and (4) take the same short quiz again (this time it will be graded) on **September 26-28**. Collectively, this assignment will count for **15%** of your final grade (**5%** each for in-class group exercise, individual take-home homework, and two quizzes; **you must complete all elements or you will receive 0 for this assignment**).

4. Survey project "Important Campus Issues": After going over survey questionnaire construction and appropriate ways to analyze survey results, we will practice these skills by devising and administering internet surveys of three important campus issues to prof. Schmidt's *Introduction to Public Policy* class(es). The three issues your group can select from are: (1) student attitudes towards daycare options on campus; (2) student perceptions of the most pressing parking issues on campus and possible solutions; and (3) student opinions about our school's environmental initiatives. During in-class workdays (**September 14 and 21**) each group will select a particular survey topic. Each of you are required to come up with 3 substantive questions for your group's survey plus have 5 social demographic questions (**due October 17 before class, on D2L/Dropbox**). This part of survey project is worth **3% of your final grade**.

Examples of substantive questions:

- UWGB should have affordable daycare options for students
  A. Strongly Agree   B. Somewhat Agree   C. Neither Agree Nor Disagree
  D. Somewhat Disagree   E. Strongly Disagree
- Are you familiar with UWGB mission statement which defines our school as environmentally friendly?
  A. Yes   B. No
- What parking issue on campus do you believe to be the most pressing?
  A. Cost of parking decals   B. Availability of parking spaces
  C. Location of parking lots D. Parking fees   E. Attitudes of employees at the parking office   F. Other (please explain _____)

Social demographic questions ultimately measure reasons behind particular opinions on our three issues. Is it gender? Age? Political ideology? Major? Respondent's own experience? Think about possible explanations behind opinions expressed in your survey and come up with five questions based on these hypothesized explanations.

After each of you comes up with the questions and gets feedback from us and your teammates on **October 17**, the pollster of your group enters the questions into survey software and sends us a link to your group survey. **Important note**: you must enroll each member of your group in the survey shell (I will provide more details on or around October 17).

After the surveys are finalized, we will send the links to prof. Schmidt's class(es) on October 19 and the students in that class which will have 3 days to answer individual group's surveys. Next, each of you will have to analyze results by running appropriate statistical tests and writing a narrative describing statistically significant results as well as providing summaries of some descriptive statistics. You should also include graphs/charts and tables, presenting these results in a succinct way. This part of the survey project, worth **7%** of your final grade, is due on **October 29, before class on D2L/dropbox**.

The Survey Project is **worth 10%** of your final grade (**3% for questions+7% for analysis/narrative**).

5. Practice writing assignments(2): To facilitate better writing, we will complete the first writing assignment in the beginning of the semester (**September 28**), get VERY short (60 seconds) lessons on the most common grammatical problems in the next 8-9 weeks, and then you will complete an identical writing assignment again (**December 3**). The purpose of this assignment is to make you aware of the most typical writing problems and for you to avoid them in your own writing. As college graduates, you will be expected to be good writers and we, your professors, want to help you as much as possible, irrespective of the subject matter we teach. Each practice writing assignment is worth **2.5% of your final grade** (**5% total**) and is to be submitted in class on **September 28 and December 3** (no make-up opportunities, sorry).

6. **Reaction papers:** Students will be reading several books throughout the semester ranging from topics such as political polarization, to campaigns to political knowledge. Students will be required to write a 3-4 page reaction paper on each book (4 total). Due dates are noted in the schedule of classes section of thissyllabus (**October 3, October 22, October 31, November 19**). Reaction Papers are worth **20% of your final grade** (**5% each**).

In a reaction paper I am looking for three things: (1) good writing, (2) proof you read the book, and (3) your unique contribution/analysis/interpretation.

Note on Plagiarism (*especially for Trippi's reaction paper*): I noticed that every semester one or two students tried to plagiarize when writing Trippi's reaction paper. It is always VERY obvious and I definitely catch it. Disappointment (for me) and embracement and shame (for plagiarizer) invariably follow. Plus you will receive a zero on plagiarized assignment(s). So, DO NOT plagiarize. You will get caught and there will be consequences. Lets avoid this scenario!

7. **Group Project on political campaign portfolio and political advertisement**
During the course of the semester, you will work with 3-4 other people on devising electoral campaign to win WI Assembly seat. Each group will prepare a campaign strategy (portfolio) for a fictional candidate in one local race. You will be given the candidate and all of his/her personal characteristics and demographics. You will have a campaign account. You will also be given the information for all other candidates. It will be your groups' job to present the best campaign possible for the money. Your group will need to investigate what it "costs" for campaign staffing, materials, surveys, advertising, etc. You will also need to understand what the other candidates are doing and prepare strategies to "neutralize" your opponents!

On **September 14 and 21**, students will briefly meet in groups to distribute responsibilities, select roles, and start working on campaign portfolio. Use this opportunity to discuss what you each feel is important to the project, begin to discuss how the work will be divided. It is strongly recommended that you choose one person in the group to collect email addresses and coordinate any out-of-class communications ("campaign strategist").

On **September 21**, after or during class each group will turn in a brief report that outlines the responsibilities for each student in the group for campaign portfolio project. It is expected that the final report will reflect each student's contribution in his/her own area. In other words, each student will be responsible for his/her own research and contribution to the final report.

Each group will present their strategies to the class on **November 12 and 14**. The final campaign strategy portfolio will be due at the time of your group's presentation. The Group Portfolio and Presentation are worth **20%** of your total grade (**10%** for portfolio and **10%** for presentation).You will also have to present your campaign to prof. Schmidt's *Introduction to Public Policy class* on **November 16, during our regular class time (11:40am-12:35pm) in MAC 109** and get instant results of our mock elections. See additional handouts and instructions.

8. **Attendance and Participation**: The final **10 percent** of your grade will be based on attendance and **civil** participation in class discussions.

According to UW-Green Bay official policies, "students are expected to attend class. In the event of illness or death of a family member, the Dean of Students Office will assist with notification of instructors. The instructor **may drop** students who do not attend classes during the first week of the semester unless they notify the instructor in advance of the reason for nonattendance and indicate intentions to complete the class. **The instructor, prior to the drop deadline, may also drop students who attend classes the first week but not thereafter."**

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of the lecture periods. It will serve as a component in calculating your attendance grade. Students who attend every class and participate can count on **10 percentage** points for attendance and participation. I will allow each student 2 unexcused absences a semester. Students who miss class sessions will see a deduction in their

attendance grade. For every unexcused absence thereafter, I will deduct one and a half percentage points. In other words, if you miss 7 class sessions in excess of 2 allowable absences without a properly documented excuse (i.e., 9 unexcused absences), you will not have any attendance percentage points.**If you miss more than 11 class sessions without a legitimate excuse, you will receive an "F" in this class, irrespective of your actual performance.** If you come to every class meeting, but do not participate, you can only count on 7 percentage points out of 10.

IV.SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION

- **Final Exam due December 17 (15%)**
- **Reaction papers (4) October 3, October 22, October 31, and November 19 – 20% (5% each)**
- **In class/take home exercise on research design due September 10 and 12 – 5% (2% and 3% respectively)**
- **In class/take home exercise and two D2L quizzes (identical) on statistical techniques due September 14-17, September 26, September 26-28, and September 28 – 15%**
- **Practice writing assignments Part I and Part II (identical) due September 28 and December 3 – 5% (2.5% each)**
- **Group project on campaign portfolioand advertisement(s) due November 12, 14 and 16 – 20% (10% for individual contribution to the portfolio and 10% for your part of in-class presentation)**
- **Survey project about important campus issues, including questionnaire construction and analysis of results (October 17 and October 29) – 10% (3% and 7% respectively)**
- **Attendance and participation – 10%**

Grading Scale:
The following percentage points and corresponding letter grades will be used in this course (determined at the end of the semester):

92-100: A   89-91: AB   82-88: B   79-81: BC   72-78: C   69-71: CD
60-68: D   Below 60: F

V. MISCELLANEOUS POLICIES

Disability Accommodations: As required by federal law and university policy, students with documented disabilities who need accommodation must contact the Disability Services Office at 465-2841. Reasonable accommodations can be made unless they alter the essential components of the class. Contact the instructor and Disability Services Coordinator in a timely manner to formulate alternative arrangements*.*

Note on Writing: It is expected that **all** written assignments will be clear, concise, legible, and error-free (good grammar and no typos). Grades will be reduced for poorly written work. It is recommended that you have someone else read your paper to proof for clarity and errors. Also consider using the Writing Center located at CL109 (phone x2338).

Plagiarism: Students are responsible for reading and understanding the University's policy on plagiarism. Cheating on examinations, unauthorized collaboration, falsification of research data, plagiarism, and copying or undocumented use of materials from any source, including websites, constitute academic dishonesty, and may be grounds for a grade of "F" in the course and/or disciplinary action. See the Dean of Students' University Policies page on Academic

Misconduct:
http://www.uwgb.edu/deanofstudents/policies_procedures/students/pdfs/uws014.pdf.

Submission of Assignments: Written assignments cannot be submitted by email (except in emergencies) and will not be accepted after the deadline specified on the syllabus. Majority of writing assignments (reaction papers, your contributions to survey project) must be submitted electronically through D2L/Dropbox.

Note on Late Homework and Assignments: Late work will be accepted ONLY *for legitimate excuses*; however, grades will be reduced. There will be no make-ups for in-class exercises unless prior arrangements are made and approved. Absolutely NO late homework assignments will be accepted after 2 weeks have passed since the due date.

Schedule of Classes
(The instructor reserves the right to change and/or adapt the syllabus at any time.)

Week 1: (Sept. 5 and 7)
Introduction to Political Science Research: Design & Measurement
****Group assignment sign-up sheet distributed in class (entire week)****

Week 2 (Sept. 10, 12, 14)
Introduction to Political Science Research: Design & Measurement
****In-class exercise: group work on research design (Sept. 10)****
****Research design take home exercise due in class (Sept. 12)****
****Group meeting/Groups for campaigns and surveys formed and begin work (Sept. 14)****
**** First Short D2L Quiz (ungraded) (Sept. 14-17)****

Week 3 (Sept. 17, 19, 21)
Intro to Political Science Research: Methods & Data Types
Freedman & Goldstein article (D2L/Content)
Norrander & Wilcox: Appendix/Statistical Primer (D2L/Content)
Excerpts Explaining Tests of Statistical Significance for Different Types of Data (D2L/Content)
****Group Meeting (Sept. 21)****
****Group Outline due for campaign strategies portfolio (Sept. 21)****

Week 4 (Sept. 24, 26, 28)
Intro to Political Science Research: Statistical Tests
Public Opinion: History, Attitude Formation & Political Psychology
****In-class group exercise on statistical procedures (Sept. 26)****
****Second (identical) Short D2L Quiz (graded) (Sept. 26-28)****
****Take Home Exercise on statistical procedures due in class (Sept. 28)****
****Practice writing assignment Part I (September 28)****

Week 5 (Oct. 1, 3, 5)
Public Opinion: History, Attitude Formation & Political Psychology
Culture War?, entire book
****Fiorina Book reaction paper (October 3)****

Week 6 (Oct. 8, 10, 12)
Partisanship/Party ID

Bartels article (D2L/Content)

Week 7 (Oct. 15, 17, 19)
****Documentary on Survey Design – "Research Design: The Survey" (25 min) ****
in preparations for actual surveys (October 15)****
**** Group work on survey questionnaire (individual questions are due on D2L and
group survey instrument construction in class -- enter survey questions into
Qualtrics Survey Program available at:
https://sis.uwgb.edu/surveyservice/(October 17)****
****Send survey links to Intro to Public Policy class (October 19)****
Group work on political campaigns (October 19)*

Week 8 (Oct. 22, 24, 26)
Revolution Will Not Be Televised, entire book
****Trippi Reaction Paper (Oct. 22)****
****Group work on political campaigns (Oct. 24 and 26)****

Week 9 (Oct. 29, 31 and Nov. 2)
****Analysis of survey results is due on D2L (October 29)****
****In-class discussion of survey results (October 29)****
Can We Talk?, entire book
****Shea and Fiorina Reaction Paper (October 31)****

Week 10 (November 5, 7, 9)
Media Effects: Campaigns & Voter Turnout

Week 11 (Nov. 12, 14, 16)
****Group Campaign In-Class Presentations -- turn in campaign portfolios on day of
your group's presentation (Nov. 12 and 14)****
****Campaign Presentations in Introduction to Public Policy class (Nov. 16, regular
class time, MAC 109)****

Week 12 (Nov. 19, 21)
Unconventional Wisdom, entire book
**** Kaufmann et al. Reaction Paper (November 19)****

Week 13 (Nov. 26, 28, 30)
Participation, Engagement and Rational Choice
Putnam, Bowling Alone article (D2L/Content)
Hillygus, The Missing Link article (D2L/Content)

Week 14 (Dec. 3, 5, 7)
Race & Gender on Opinion and Participation
****Practice writing assignment Part II (December 3)****

Week 15 (Dec. 10 and 12)
Political Knowledge (Sophistication), Tolerance, and Trust
Sullivan et al. article on Sources of Political Tolerance (D2L/Content)
Epilogue

   Final Exam: Monday, December 17, 1-3PM, in regular classroom (Wood Hall 303)