

POLS 4740 Public Opinion and Political Behavior

Fall 2025

Course and Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Fatih Erol

Class Hours: TuTh 11:00AM - 12:15PM

Class Location: 317 Administration Building

Office Hours: TuTh 2:00PM - 3:00PM

Office Location: 334 Administration Building

Instructor Email: fatihherol@uidaho.edu

Course Description

This course examines how American citizens form political opinions and behave in the U.S. democratic system. We evaluate the biological, psychological, and social origins of political attitudes and behaviors, investigating how Americans develop views on politics and policy and translate these into action. The course covers foundational debates about citizen competence, from minimalist perspectives that question voters' knowledge to responses defending democratic capacity. Students learn how political opinions are shaped by American media, political parties, and other influential actors. We examine core political behaviors including voting patterns, issue-based and economic voting, and various forms of nonelectoral political participation in the U.S. A major component focuses on applied research methods employed to study public opinion and political behavior. Students gain practical experience designing and programming surveys and experiments (using [Qualtrics](#)), learning about sampling techniques, question wording effects, and measurement challenges. We work with survey and experimental data and conduct statistical analyses in [R](#) to understand how scholars analyze attitudes and behavior. The course covers methodological complications including non-attitudes, response biases, and the psychology of survey taking, providing students with both theoretical knowledge and practical research skills.

Course Objectives

This course provides students with both theoretical understanding and practical skills in public opinion research and political behavior analysis. Through lectures, hands-on activities, and voluntary original research project involvement, students will develop competencies in (1) core theories and empirical findings in public opinion and political behavior research, (2) survey and

experimental design, data collection, and statistical analysis, and (3) effective communication of research findings to academic and non-academic audiences. Upon completion, students will possess the foundational knowledge and technical skills necessary to work as undergraduate research assistants in political science and related social science laboratories, develop competitive research proposals for graduate school applications, and pursue data analyst positions in government, nonprofit organizations, polling firms, and other industry settings that require expertise in survey and experimental research and behavioral analysis.

Expected Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- explain the biological, psychological, and social origins of political attitudes and behaviors in American democracy,
- evaluate competing theories of citizen competence and democratic responsiveness,
- design and program surveys and experiments using [Qualtrics](#) to assess public opinion and political behavior,
- analyze survey and experimental data using [R](#) statistical software,
- identify and address methodological challenges including sampling issues, question wording effects, non-attitudes, and response biases,
- develop original research questions related to public opinion and political behavior,
- communicate research findings effectively to both academic and non-academic audiences, and
- demonstrate the foundational skills necessary for undergraduate research positions, graduate school applications, and data analyst roles in social science research.

Political Analysis and Methodology Undergraduate Academic Certificate

Please note that our class is one of the required courses (with a minimum grade of C) for the [Political Analysis and Methodology Undergraduate Academic Certificate](#).

Grading

Your final grade will be determined by a series of homework assignments, in-class activities, and attendance/participation – there are a total of 100 points possible over the course of the semester. Separate assignment guides for each task will be provided during the semester.

- Participation in class discussion: **10** points
- Submitting discussion questions based on weekly readings before class and justifying the questions during the same class session: **5** points (1 point per randomly assigned week)
- Pop-up quizzes: **12** points (2 point for each)
- Submitting [R](#) and [Qualtrics](#) session logs/outputs before the end of each respective class: **3** points (1 point per session)
- Midterm exam: **30** points
- Final exam: **40** points

The grading scale is as follows:

A=90-100; **B**=80-89; **C**=70-79; **D**=60-69; **E**=Below 60

* Requests for incomplete (I) or withdrawal (W) must be made in accordance with University policies, which are available [\[here\]](#) and [\[here\]](#), respectively.

Extra Credit #1 (1 point): For those who read this syllabus before the first week session, August 26, 11:00 AM (as strongly suggested in my first message), email me (fatiherol@uidaho.edu) your own original research question about a political attitude or behavior topic you would investigate if you already had the necessary know-how, grant money, and time. Include a brief explanation (2-3 sentences only) of why this question matters, considering personal connections, implications for the public, and scientific advancement. For example, you might ask: “Does exposure to fact-checking information reduce belief in political misinformation?” or “How does presidential election candidate’s gender affect voter support potential when all other qualifications are held constant?” or “To what extent does sleep deprivation affect civic participation?” or “Do variations in amygdala-medial prefrontal cortex connectivity relate to differences in political ideology?” Send your email by August 26, 11:00 AM to earn your extra credit. **Keep this question with you throughout the semester and consider how the theoretical frameworks and empirical methods we cover could help you advance this research agenda for future projects in academia, industry, government, or nonprofit sectors.**

Extra Credit #2 (3 points): I am seeking voluntary undergraduate research team members to collaborate on a peer-reviewed research article aimed for publication in a flagship political science journal ([American Political Science Review](#), [American Journal of Political Science](#), [Journal of Politics](#), [Political Behavior](#), [Political Psychology](#)). While you might think it is too early or that you are not qualified, the earlier you start the better, and your interest already indicates you will succeed, publications typically take 1-2 years from data collection. To be considered, email me by September 2, 11:00 AM (no other date) expressing your interest and rank ordering your project preferences (1-highest to 3-lowest) in your message (please check Macartan Humphreys’ short entry on causal inference [\[here\]](#) and Peder M. Isager’s blog post on the role of experiments for causal inference [\[here\]](#) before checking out the project options below). I will handle most of the

framing, writing, design, data collection, analysis, and reporting, but you will help by: writing 5-7 annotated bibliographies on cutting-edge publications in the literature, sharing original perspectives on experimental design, and ideally double-checking my *R* replication codes (and/or even suggesting various modeling strategies, based on the articles you reviewed). You must complete the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program) training by September 30 to be listed on my Institutional Review Board (IRB) application for data access (see the CITI Registration details [here](#)). After receiving IRB approval, the project will be pre-registered on the [Open Science Framework](#) before data collection begins.

Project options for the Fall 2025 term include:

- **Project 1.** *Feeling Political: Musical Mood Induction and Civic Participation*, examining how different emotion elicitation methods (scenarios alone vs. scenarios with music) affect discrete emotions (anger, fear, sadness, happiness, neutrality) and subsequent civic participation potential through a between-subjects survey experiment;
- **Project 2.** *Beyond Left and Right: How Populist-Technocratic Fusion Appeals Shape Presidential Candidate Preferences*, investigating whether presidential candidates who simultaneously embrace outsider status while claiming superior expertise create a novel electoral appeal that transcends traditional ideological categories, using a choice-based conjoint experimental design to test how voters respond to candidates who blend grassroots authenticity with credentialed competence, challenging conventional assumptions about the incompatibility of populist and technocratic messaging strategies;
- **Project 3.** *Democratic Dissonance: How Ideological Left-Right Polarization Congruence Between Citizens and Elites Shapes Democratic Attitudes*, using explicit as well as implicit association test (IAT) measures of participant polarization followed by randomized false feedback about Congressional polarization levels to examine how congruence/incongruence between mass and elite ideological polarization affects democratic satisfaction, support for democracy, and tolerance for political violence in a multi-arm experiment setting.

The majority vote among interested students will determine our focus. **To tie our hands for good, the first two items with tight deadlines on our agenda are submitting an IRB application and a paper abstract to the Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA) by September 30.** Given my other manuscripts, I might exceed presentation limits and so I may ask at least one of you to submit the paper proposal and, if desired, deliver it in Chicago at the MPSA next year (I will try my best to secure some travel grant money for at least one presenting student). This can also help you build your own professional networks there, no pressure though! In the event of multiple parties expressing interest in the presentation, a random drawing will be held to determine the presenter.

Throughout the semester (and possibly beyond), we will hold regular team meetings where comprehensive project details, methodological approaches, and research responsibilities will be discussed and developed collaboratively. **Keeping up with deadlines and making**

substantive contributions are key to successful collaboration. This involvement would definitely strengthen your future job applications and contribute meaningfully to the scientific understanding of our society.

Academic Integrity and Late Assignment Policy

Academic dishonesty is taken extremely seriously in this course. Anyone found guilty of fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism will, at a minimum, receive an **F** for this course, and will be referred to university authorities (see [the Academic Honesty Policy](#)). Fabrication means altering information dishonestly, falsification means inventing information dishonestly, and plagiarism means presenting someone else's work as your own, either by not giving proper acknowledgment of the source or by presenting in whole or in part any work that has been prepared by or copied from another person.

Course incompletes will not be given except in extreme situations where all the appropriate documentation is provided. Late assignments will be docked one letter grade if not handed by the due date/time.

Learning Civility

In any environment in which people gather to learn, it is essential that all members feel as free and safe as possible in their participation. To this end, it is expected that everyone in this course will be treated with mutual respect and civility, with an understanding that all of us (students, instructors, professors, guests, and teaching assistants) will be respectful and civil to one another in discussion, in action, in teaching, and in learning. Should you feel our classroom interactions do not reflect an environment of civility and respect, you are encouraged to meet with me during office hours (Tuesday and Thursday from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. in room 334 of the Administration Building) to discuss your concern.

Disability Access and Resources

The University of Idaho is committed to ensuring an accessible learning environment where course or instructional content are usable by all students and faculty. If you believe that you require disability-related academic adjustments for this class (including pregnancy-related disabilities), please contact the Center for Disability Access and Resources (CDAR) to discuss eligibility. A current accommodation letter from CDAR is required before any modifications, above and beyond what is otherwise available for all other students in this class, will be provided. Please be advised that disability-related academic adjustments are not retroactive. CDAR is located at the Bruce Pitman Building, Suite 127. Phone is [208-885-6307](tel:208-885-6307) and email is cdar@uidaho.edu. For a listing of services and current business hours visit uidaho.edu/cdar.

Firearms

The University of Idaho bans firearms from its property with only limited exceptions. One exception applies to persons who hold a valid Idaho enhanced concealed carry license, provided those firearms remain concealed at all times. If an enhanced concealed carry license holder's firearm is displayed, other than in necessary self-defense, it is a violation of University policy. Please contact local law enforcement (call 911) to report firearms on University property. University of Idaho leadership remains committed to maintaining a safe work, living and learning environment on campus. We will not tolerate any threatening use of firearms or any other weapons. While authorized license holders may have familiarity and be at ease carrying a loaded firearm, we ask that they be aware that many people are not familiar with handguns and are uncomfortable in their presence.

Additional Information

Resources for Students:

- The University of Idaho civil rights and investigations policies (including those on nondiscrimination and harassment) are accessible [here](#). As an instructor, I am a mandatory reporter of events that would violate Title IX. All University of Idaho employees, including faculty, staff, administrators, resident advisors and coaches, are required to report any information they receive about possible sex-based misconduct occurring in a university program or activity. This means that if I become aware of certain incidents, I am obligated to report them to the Office of Civil Rights and Investigations. However, I also want you to know that the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC) is available to provide confidential support and resources (please check their website [here](#)). If you need immediate support, CMHC offers same-day services during CMHC business hours, both online and in person. For 24/7 crisis assistance, call 208-885-6716 (option 3) to connect with a professional. If you have experienced or witnessed any form of sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, or stalking, please consider reaching out to the Office of Civil Rights or a confidential advocate at the Counseling and Mental Health Center. You can also report incidents through filing a Vandal Care Report (through this [page](#)).
- The University of Idaho provides student support to ensure a successful learning experience.
 - [UofI Student Resources](#)
 - [SI-PASS \(Peer Assisted Study Sessions\)](#), providing regularly scheduled, peer-led study sessions for difficult courses.
- [MyUI](#) contains your official University of Idaho student records. [MyUI](#) is the site students use to access student account/billing information, verify enrollment, and grades.
- [VandalMail](#) is the official University of Idaho email service. Students should check their account on a regular basis or forward to your regular checked e-mail account.

- [Canvas](#) is the University of Idaho's course management system. Please note our course requires you to login to [Canvas](#).
- [Student evaluation of teaching](#) has two purposes: To assist individual instructors in improving their own teaching; and to assist academic administrators in counseling instructors about their teaching. Student evaluations are carefully weighed as a factor in judging the teaching component in tenure, promotion, and salary determinations. Click [here](#) to access your student dashboard to see course evaluation status for any class you are enrolled in.
- The library website has many databases that will help you find relevant and reliable books, articles, images, and more. Do not hesitate to contact a librarian for research assistance.
 - [UIDAHO Library](#)
 - [UIDAHO Library \(Off Campus\)](#)
 - [Help – Reference Services](#)
- The U of I Student Technology Center provides many technology-related services to students.
 - PHONE: [208-885-HELP](#)
 - support@uidaho.edu
 - [Student Technology Center](#)
- The University of Idaho Writing Center provides one-on-one assistance to student writers and other members of the campus community.
 - PHONE: [208-885-6644](#)
 - [Writing Center Email](#)
 - [Writing Center Website](#)
- The [Student Success Program \(SSP\)](#) provides in-house resources specifically for students living in the residence halls. *Academic Peer Mentors* provide free tutoring and academic support Sundays–Thursdays from 2:00pm-10:00pm. SSP is located in the *Wallace Residence Center* basement. Students do not need to live in the *Wallace Residence Center* to use this resource.
- The [Vandal Food Pantry](#) is a free resource stocked weekly with food, grocery bags, and various hygiene items. Its eight locations across campus are accessible during building hours and open to all. Please take what you need.
- Vandal Green Dot is a program that helps students learn about the power of the bystander, how to recognize potentially risky situations, and realistic ways to intervene. Learn more and get involved by visiting [UI's Green Dot Safety Program](#) or emailing greendot@uidaho.edu.

Subject to Change Statement Information contained in this course syllabus, other than the grade and absence policies, may be subject to change with reasonable advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Electronic Devices Disruptions or interruptions in the classroom due to the improper use of cell phones or laptops (e.g., texting, chatting, browsing Facebook [Meta] / Twitter [X]) will not be tolerated. Students who are disrupting the class will be asked to stop using their electronic device and may be asked to leave. Any kind of **unauthorized recording is prohibited by law**.

Emailing If you have a question about the course or an assignment, I would encourage you to check the syllabus first to see if the answer to your question is there. You are also encouraged to discuss any questions or concerns about the course with me at office hours or after class. If you need to reach me outside of class or office hours, please send me an email and I will attempt to respond as quickly as I can within reason.

Academic Advising If you have questions about your academic progress this semester, please consult with the [Student Resources](#).

Life Challenges If you are experiencing unexpected barriers to your success in your courses, please note [the Dean of Students Office](#) is a central support resource for all students and may be helpful. The Dean of Students Office can be reached at [208-885-6757](tel:208-885-6757) or email to askjoe@uidaho.edu.

Physical and Mental-Health Challenges If you are facing physical or mental health challenges this semester, consider visiting the [Student Health Services](#).

- The [CMHC](#) is another resource to consider if you are facing mental and emotional challenges.
 - Email: cmhc@uidaho.edu
 - Phone: [208-885-6716](tel:208-885-6716)
 - * For 24/7 crisis assistance, call [208-885-6716](tel:208-885-6716) (option 3) to connect with a professional
 - Location: [Mary Forney Hall Room 306](#)

UofI Moscow Land Acknowledgement UofI Moscow is located on the homelands of the Nimiipuu (Nez Perce), Palus (Palouse) and Schitsu'umsh (Coeur d'Alene) tribes. We extend gratitude to the indigenous people that call this place home, since time immemorial. UofI recognizes that it is our academic responsibility to build relationships with the indigenous people to ensure integrity of tribal voices.

Course Materials

Required readings are available through the University of Idaho Library’s [digital collections](#) and also already made accessible to the students via the course’s [Canvas site](#). Pop-up quizzes, testing your understanding of the weekly materials and in-class discussions, will factor into your final grade. Students absent during quiz administration will receive zero points. Meaningful incorporation of course readings is expected in all assignments (discussion questions, quizzes, examinations) and classroom participation.

Please note that although there is no required textbook for this course, I have suggested two optional books (to the VandalStore Textbook Team) that could complement the materials covered each week.

- Berinsky, A. J. (Ed.). (2019). *New directions in public opinion*. Routledge.
- Asher, H. (2016). *Polling and the public: What every citizen should know*. CQ Press.

Software

R and RStudio

This course involves hands-on data analysis using *R* statistical software within the RStudio development platform. Previous experience with data management, statistical computing or programming is not necessary for success in this class. Students must bring personal laptops to the relevant sessions and ensure both *R* and RStudio are installed and functional prior to our meetings. Download *R* from <https://cran.wustl.edu> and RStudio from <https://posit.co/download/rstudio-desktop>.

To support hands-on learning, I have developed an interactive web application called **Experimental Research & Observational Learning (EROL) Application**. This platform simplifies the transition to *R* by providing clickable analysis options while displaying the corresponding native *R* code in a log window for student reference. Though currently experimental and limited to single dataset operations (unlike *R*’s full capabilities), **EROL Application** aims at removing programming barriers and making quantitative political science methods accessible regardless of technical background. Details are available at [my page](#). And, yes, the acronym conveniently matches my surname, sometimes research and personal branding align! ☺

Though it is not mandatory, for your free time, **perhaps an hour per day**, please try checking “Dauber, D. (2025). [R for non-programmers](#) [E-book].” Later, for a gentle introduction to data analysis and modeling in social sciences using *R*, I would highly suggest the book: “Llaudet, E., & Imai, K. (2023). *Data analysis for social science: A friendly and practical introduction*. Princeton

University Press.” For more advanced stages: “Imai, K. (2018). *Quantitative social science: An introduction*. Princeton University Press.”

Qualtrics

Students will actively learn to program surveys and experiments using [Qualtrics](#). To get started, visit [this page](#) to sign up for an account. Cover the basics through [Qualtrics’ official learning path](#), review the [Stanford Graduate School of Business tutorial](#), and explore the University of Idaho’s [extensive collection of survey resources](#). I will provide comprehensive instruction on survey and experimental programming in Qualtrics during class sessions.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Policy

There have been amazing developments in AI generative text tools and some are freely available on the web and some come with a cost. Though these applications are available, I do not want you to use them when working on your homework assignments (i.e., discussion question submission) for this class. The learning activities we will do in this class are foundational to the practices in this discipline and as such I want you to be fluent in those practices; turning the weekly readings over to an application will not help you to integrate them as your own. I will not fail you for trying to learn and develop; however, I will give you a failing grade on a discussion question assignment in which you use AI tools and will inform UI Academic Affairs per the UI Student Code of Conduct and Resolution Process. This policy is supported by the Student Code of Conduct and Resolution Process (as indicated [here](#)).

Miscellaneous

Mathematical Background

Again it is not mandatory, but in and outside this class, refreshing our memories about mathematical foundations strengthens our reasoning and capacity for data management, analysis, and visualization. So, it is highly suggested to check: “Moore, W. H., & Siegel, D. A. (2013). *A mathematics course for political and social research*. Princeton University Press.”

Brief Methodological Guides

Our job here is mainly causal inference on political attitudes and behavior, which we do by studying the data available to us and if possible running our own experimental and quasi-experimental studies. This requires some familiarity with key concepts and issues. For example, what is a hypothesis, and what is the fundamental problem of causal inference? What is random sampling and assignment? What types of effects might we observe in the population we are interested in when we implement or propose to implement policies? Do we have a sufficient

number of subjects to replicate what we observe or fail to observe? What are potential statistical fallacies we can fall into? And, of course, what are the ethical requirements for studying human subjects? We will cover these topics and several others in class. Yet, below are some succinct guides that may be updated by their curators even after our class ends. Please do not get intimidated by the terminology and notations; just try to grasp the main takeaway points as best you can.

- Evidence in Governance and Politics' (EGAP) [Methods Guides](#)
- The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab's [Research Resources for Randomized Evaluations](#)
- [Library of Statistical Techniques \(LOST\)](#)

Datasets

Erik Gahner Larsen et al. have compiled an excellent list of datasets (named [PolData](#)), including various cross-sectional and panel surveys multi-nationally, that will allow you to explore your ideas in new and exciting ways during our classes.

Suggestions after Closing the Last POLS 4740 Class on December 18, 2025

After taking this class, you will be well-versed in the theoretical underpinnings of the political attitudes and behaviors we observe in and outside the U.S. You will also gain familiarity with computational social science tools, with a keen eye on research methodology. So, whenever possible, please consider finishing up these two books (publicly available) to keep yourself cutting-edge.

- Blair, G., Coppock, A., & Humphreys, M. (2023). *Research design in the social sciences: Declaration, diagnosis, and redesign*. Princeton University Press.
- Humphreys, M., & Jacobs, A. M. (2023). *Integrating inferences: Causal models for qualitative and mixed-method research*. Cambridge University Press.

It would also be good to have a public profile on a webpage that introduces you, your lines of research, and your experience to the outside world. Since you will be learning *R* and working directory logic, I believe you can start creating your own website using RMarkdown. Nick Strayer and Lucy D'Agostino McGowan have a very neat guide [here](#) that can serve as a great starting point.

Course Structure

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Week 1: The Scientific Study of Public Opinion and Political Behavior (08-26-25, 08-28-2025)

- Clawson, R. A., & Oxley, Z. M. (2021). [Public opinion: Democratic ideals, democratic practice](#). CQ Press.
 - Chapter 1 (“Public opinion in a democracy”), **pp. 14-24**

Week 2: Theoretical Underpinnings of Voting Behavior: Columbia, Michigan, and Rochester Schools of Thought (09-02-25, 09-04-25)

- Harrop, M., & Miller, W. L. (1987). *Elections and voters: A comparative introduction*. Macmillan.
 - Chapter 6 (“Psychological, economic and sociological models of voting”), pp. **130-134, 145-146, 157-159**
- Theiss-Morse, E. A., & Wagner, M. W. (2023). *Political behavior of the American electorate*. CQ Press.
 - Chapter 8 (“Vote choice and electoral decisions”), pp. **255-283**

Week 3: Nature of Public Opinion: Questions on Public Competence (09-09-25, 09-11-25)

- Gilens, M. (2019). *Citizen competence and democratic governance*. In A. J. Berinsky (Ed.), *New directions in public opinion* (pp. **41-62**). Routledge.

Week 4: Biological and Psychological Underpinnings (09-16-25, 09-18-25)

- Ksiazkiewicz, A., & Jung, S. (2020). *The biology of political decision making*. In David Redlawsk (Ed.), *The handbook of political decision making* (pp. **1-15**). Oxford University Press.

Week 5: Social Underpinnings (09-23-25, 09-25-25)

- Federico, C. M., & Malka, A. (2023). *The psychological and social foundations of ideological belief systems*. In L. Huddy, D. O. Sears, J. S. Levy, & J. Jerit (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of political psychology* (pp. **601-630**). Oxford University Press.

Week 6: Measurement (09-30-25, 10-02-25)

- Chapter 10 (“Survey research”), pp. **320-321, 326, 333, 341-342, 346, 360**
- Chapter 7 (“Qualitative and quantitative measurement”)

Note: On Thursday (10-02-2025), there will also be a crash course on measures of central tendency and dispersion and reliability and validity analyses using *R*. See the previous section on *R* ([here](#)) to have some baseline knowledge, and make sure you have the software. *R* codes will be shared ahead of our class.

Week 7: Sampling (10-07-25, 10-09-25)

- Hillygus, D. S. (2019). [The practice of survey research: Changes and challenges](#). In A. J. Berinsky (Ed.), *New directions in public opinion* (pp. 21-29). Routledge.
- Neuman, W. L. (2014). [Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches](#). Pearson.
 - Chapter 8 (“Qualitative and quantitative sampling”)

Note: On Thursday (10-09-2025), we will work with survey weights in *R*. See the previous section on *R* ([here](#)) to have some baseline knowledge, and make sure you have the software. *R* codes will be shared ahead of our class.

Week 8: Assessment Week - In-class Mid-term Examination (10-14-25, 10-16-25)

- 10-14-25: Checking in on Semester Progress, Covering the Structure of the Upcoming In-class Exam, Going over the Student Questions and any Unclear Aspects
- 10-16-25: The mid-term exam will be held on Thursday, **October 16, 2025**, from **11:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.** in our usual classroom, **317 Administration Building**.

Week 9: Party Identification (10-21-25, 10-23-25)

- Theiss-Morse, E. A., & Wagner, M. W. (2023). [Political behavior of the American electorate](#) (pp. 125-168). CQ Press.

Week 10: Polarization (10-28-25, 10-30-25)

- Brendan, N. (2023). [89. Facebook scores your politics with a number. Brendan Nyhan figured out what they do with it. \(Part 1 of 2\)](#) [Audio podcast]. Bright Line Watch.
- Brendan, N. (2023). [90. Are American politics more polarized than ever? Brendan Nyhan thinks social media just helps us see it more.](#) [Audio podcast]. Bright Line Watch.
- Lelkes, Y. (2016). [Mass polarization: Manifestations and measurements](#). *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 80(S1), 392-410.

Week 11: Race and Gender (11-04-25, 11-06-25)

- Czaja, E. & Medenica, V. E. (2019). [Race, ethnicity, and public opinion](#). In A. J. Berinsky (Ed.), *New directions in public opinion* (pp. 137-158). Routledge.
- Kinder, D., Reynolds, M. E., & Burns, N. (2019). [Categorical politics in action: Gender and the 2016 presidential election](#). In A. J. Berinsky (Ed.), *New directions in public opinion* (pp. 159-176). Routledge.

Week 12: Causal Inference: Experimental Methodology, Lab Experiments, Survey Experiments, Field Experiments, Natural Experiments, and Quasi-Experiments (11-11-25, 11-13-25)

- Druckman, J. N., Green, D. P., Kuklinski, J. H., & Lupia, A. (2011). [An introduction to core concepts](#). In J. N. Druckman, D. P. Green, J. H. Kuklinski, & A. Lupia (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of experimental political science* (pp. 15-26). Cambridge University Press.
- Mutz, D. C. & Kim, E. (2020). [The progress and pitfalls of using survey experiments in political science](#). In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics* (pp. 1-20).

Week 13: Survey and Experimental Programming and Analysis (11-18-25, 11-20-25)

Hands-on in-class programming of between-subjects and choice-based conjoint experimental designs, using Qualtrics. Qualtrics projects will be shared with students before class, and built-in functions and ad hoc JavaScript codes will be addressed in class. The simulated experimental data will be analyzed on *R*. See the previous section on Qualtrics ([here](#)) and *R* ([here](#)) to have some baseline knowledge.

Week 14: Fall Recess - No Classes (11-25-25, 11-27-25)

Week 15: Electoral and Non-electoral Participation (12-02-25, 12-04-25)

- Theiss-Morse, E. A., & Wagner, M. W. (2023). [Political behavior of the American electorate](#). CQ Press.
 - Chapter 3 (“Turnout and participation in elections”), pp. 63-87
 - Chapter 4 (“Unconventional participation and social identity”), pp. 96-118

Week 16: Wrap-up (12-09-25, 12-18-25)

- Final Overview of the Semester, Covering the Structure of the Upcoming In-class Exam, Going over the Student Questions and any Unclear Aspects

Week 17: Final Examination (12.19.25)

- The final exam will be held on Friday, **December 19, 2025**, from **10:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.** in our usual classroom, **317 Administration Building**.

Ghost Syllabus Disclaimer

This current syllabus you are reading only contains a manageable weekly reading load, deliberately capped at no more than 50 pages total per week to ensure accessibility and work-life balance. However, for students interested in pursuing deeper theoretical and methodological foundations, a supplementary “ghost syllabus” exists with extensive additional readings (available [here](#)).

Important notes about the ghost syllabus:

- It is entirely voluntary and optional.
- No extra credit is awarded for completing ghost syllabus readings.
- It will not be referenced in exams or assignments unless specifically noted.
- It serves purely as a resource for students who wish to develop a more comprehensive scholarly foundation in the field.

The ghost syllabus is designed for intellectual enrichment only. Students should feel no pressure to engage with it. Our main syllabus provides the necessary materials for successful course completion.