



## **Course Syllabus: Public Opinion**

POLS 4463-101

Fall 2019

Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 1:00pm-1:50pm

PY 209

### **Contact Information**

Dr. Jeremy F. Duff

Office: 211 O'Donohoe

Office hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 2:00pm-3:00pm

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### **Course Description**

The course will be organized around the following questions:

1. How do we know what public opinion is?
2. Where does public opinion come from and what does it look like?
3. What does public opinion affect?

Course Learning Objectives: The general goal of the course is to answer the three questions above. You should leave with a basic understanding of how public opinion is measured through surveys, polling, etc., how these different methods work, their importance and their flaws, and how they can be manipulated. You should also have an understanding of how individuals develop political attitudes/opinions, and how or if they change over time. This section will also focus on research that looks at current issues and how public opinion is formed around these issues and their importance. Finally, you should leave with an understanding of how public opinion affects the political process, specifically through Congress and the Presidency.

### **Textbooks**

Erikson and Tedin: *American Public Opinion*, 10<sup>th</sup> ed.

Asher: *Polling and the Public: What Every Citizen Should Know*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed.

### **Course Website**

The course will use a D2L page as a place to obtain copies of the syllabus, and any other course documents that may be posted. You will also use the dropbox in D2L to turn in some of your assignments.

### **Student Handbook**

Refer to: [Student Handbook-2018-19](#)

## **Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures**

Academic Dishonesty is cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct. [Office of Student Conduct](#)

### **Grading**

The three exams will count 60% (20% a piece) toward your final grade. The homework assignments will be averaged and make up 20% of your grade. The survey project will count for the last 20% of your grade.

**Table 1: Grade Scheme**

Cut Off	Grade
90-100%	A
80-89%	B
70-79%	C
60-69%	D
Less than 60%	F

## **Student Responsibilities**

### **Readings**

The readings serve as a point of departure for lectures and discussions. Therefore, it is imperative that each student completes the assigned reading before a topic is taken up in class. Remember, the readings are a point of departure from class lectures. You will be held accountable not only for my discussion in lecture, but also for anything in the textbooks that may not be covered in lecture or discussion.

### **Attendance**

Class attendance is strongly encouraged. It has been my experience that those who do not attend class tend to have a difficult time with the course and generally receive lower grades. During the simulation, I will take attendance, and attendance will be considered when evaluating your participation.

### **Participation**

Students should feel free to raise questions concerning the readings, the instructor's discussion, and the comments of other students. Participation enhances course quality.

### **Homework Assignments**

There will be a number of homework assignments. When these are due will be largely dependent on the type of assignment. Most will come from the chapter

Exercises in the Asher text. I will provide detailed handouts on each of these, along with the due dates for them. You will turn these into the appropriate drop box on the course D2L page.

### **Survey Project**

In this project, you will create your own public opinion survey. This will be done after we get through the Asher text on polling. Based on what you've learned from the lectures and readings in the Asher text, you will create a public opinion survey for students here at Midwestern State. You will then administer the survey, tabulate the results and then write-up the results as if you were reporting them for a newspaper. Additional directions and guidelines will be provided throughout the semester.

### **Required Examinations**

There will be three required examinations. The scheduled examination dates are as follows (these will not change):

Exam 1: September 30, 2019

Exam 2: October 30, 2019

Final Exam: December 9, 2019, 3:30pm-5:30pm

If you arrive more than 15 minutes late for any exam, you will not be allowed to take the exam. In these cases you will be given a grade of zero.

### **Basic Policies**

#### **Make-up Policy**

If a student has a University-approved excuse and if the instructor is notified in writing, prior to the examination or assignment, and the student can provide official documentation to validate the excuse, arrangements for a make-up may be made. If a student fails to do any of these things, the student will receive a zero for the exam or assignment. Official documentation does not include a letter from the Dean of Students Office. You must provide me with actual documentation that validates the excuse and clearly demonstrates that you were unable to complete the assignment (or exam) by the due date. If a student fails to notify the instructor, or provide the proper documentation, the student will receive a zero for the assignment (or exam).

#### **Exams, Assignments, and Grading**

I will only discuss a grade with you in my office. I will not discuss a grade with you before or after class in the classroom, in the hallway, outside by my car, via e-mail or over the phone. I want you to take time to look over your exam thoroughly before you make an argument for a different grade. Any discussion of exam grades should take place within my office hours or by appointment in my office if you are not able to attend the scheduled office hours. If you feel that you and another student provided similar or equal answers to an exam question and you received a lower grade on that question, then both students must come to the assigned office hours with their exams in order for me to evaluate the answers equally and fairly. Keep in mind that in some cases I may

lower the grade of the other student and not raise yours after reviewing both answers, if I feel that the situation deems it necessary.

### **Taking Exams Early**

Only under extraordinary circumstances will a student be allowed to take an exam early. Only university approved excuses, death in the family, illness, etc. will be considered for taking an exam early.

### **Wikipedia**

At no time will a student be allowed to use Wikipedia as a source for any project or paper in my class. If it is determined that Wikipedia was used as a source for a project or paper, the student will be given a grade of zero automatically.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism in any form is unacceptable. Any test, paper or report submitted by you and that bears your name is presumed to be your own original work that has not previously been submitted for credit in another course unless you obtain prior written approval to do so from your instructor.

In all of your assignments, including your homework or drafts of papers, you may use words or ideas written by other individuals in publications, web sites, or other sources, but only with proper attribution. "Proper attribution" means that you have fully identified the original source and extent of your use of the words or ideas of others that you reproduce in your work for this course, usually in the form of a footnote or parenthesis.

As a general rule, if you are citing from a published source or from a web site and the quotation is short (up to a sentence or two) place it in quotation marks; if you employ a longer passage from a publication or web site, please indent it and use single spacing. In both cases, be sure to cite the original source in a footnote or in parentheses.

This is not limited to direct quotations. Any time you use material from a published source, whether quoting directly, borrowing from it, or paraphrasing, you can only do so with proper attribution.

If you are not clear about the expectations for completing an assignment or taking a test or examination, be sure to seek clarification from me.

Finally, you should keep in mind that as a member of the campus community, you are expected to demonstrate integrity in all of your academic endeavors and will be evaluated on your own merits. So be proud of your academic accomplishments and help to protect and promote academic integrity at MSU. The consequences of cheating and academic dishonesty – including a formal discipline file, possible loss of future internship, scholarship, or employment opportunities, and denial of admission to graduate school – are simply not worth it.

Any paper or assignment that is found to be plagiarized will be given a grade of zero and will be reported through the proper channels according to the guidelines provided in the MSU Student Handbook.

### **Late Assignments**

I do not accept late assignments, papers, exams, quizzes, or anything else. If it is late, it will receive a grade of zero. If you miss an assignment because you arrive to class late, you will receive a grade of zero on that assignment.

### **Syllabus Test**

First, do not mention this to any other student in the class. Second, for five points extra credit on the first exam, email to me the funniest meme you have ever seen. It needs to be "clean." I will show these in class. Do not send anything inappropriate, explicit, or of a sexual nature. Email the meme to me by 5:00pm, Friday, September 6, 2019.

### **Cellphones**

These should be turned off when entering the classroom, unless prior arrangements have been made with me concerning a family emergency. At no time will you be allowed to look at your cellphone during an exam or quiz. If you are observed looking at your cellphone once an exam or quiz has been handed to you, you will automatically receive a grade of zero for that exam or quiz.

### **General Behavior**

Students are expected to act like responsible adults. There should be no talking while I am lecturing or while another student is answering a question or sharing their opinion on the subject matter of the class. If this occurs, students will be warned and if the disruptive behavior continues you will be removed from the class.

### **Student Honor Creed**

As an MSU Student, I pledge not to lie, cheat, steal, or help anyone else do so. As students at MSU, we recognize that any great society must be composed of empowered, responsible citizens. We also recognize universities play an important role in helping mold these responsible citizens. We believe students themselves play an important part in developing responsible citizenship by maintaining a community where integrity and honorable character are the norm, not the exception. Thus, we, the Students of Midwestern State University, resolve to uphold the honor of the University by affirming our commitment to complete academic honesty. We resolve not only to be honest but also to hold our peers accountable for complete honesty in all university matters. We consider it dishonest to ask for, give, or receive help in examinations or quizzes, to use any unauthorized material in examinations, or to present, as one's own, work or ideas which are not entirely one's own. We recognize that any instructor has the right to expect that all student work is honest, original work. We accept and acknowledge that responsibility for lying, cheating, stealing, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty fundamentally rests within each individual

student. We expect of ourselves academic integrity, personal professionalism, and ethical character. We appreciate steps taken by University officials to protect the honor of the University against any who would disgrace the MSU student body by violating the spirit of this creed.

Written and adopted by the 2002-2003 MSU Student Senate.

### **Students with Disabilities**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Disability Support Services in Room 168 of the Clark Student Center, 397-4140.

### **Campus Carry Statement**

Senate Bill 11 passed by the 84th Texas Legislature allows licensed handgun holders to carry concealed handguns on campus, effective August 1, 2016. Areas excluded from concealed carry are appropriately marked, in accordance with state law. For more information regarding campus carry, please refer to the University's webpage at [Campus Carry Policy Website](#).

### **Course Schedule**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Readings/Activities</b>
August 26	Introduction and Overview of the Course No Readings
August 28-September 4 September 2	Erikson and Tedin Chapter 1 No Class: Labor Day
September 6-9	Asher Chapter 1
September 11-13	Asher Chapter 2
September 16-20	Asher Chapter 3
September 23-27	Asher Chapter 4
<b>September 30</b>	<b>Exam 1</b>

<b>Date</b>	<b>Readings/Activities</b>
October 2-4	Asher Chapter 5
October 7-9	Asher Chapter 6
October 11-16	Asher Chapter 7
October 18-23	Asher Chapter 8
October 25-28	Asher Chapter 9
<b>October 30</b>	<b>Exam 2</b>
November 1-4	Erikson and Tedin Chapter 3 William Jacoby, "The Structure of Ideological Thinking in the American Electorate." American Journal of Political Science, Vol. 39, No. 2 (May, 1995).
November 6-11	Erikson and Tedin Chapter 4
November 13-18	Erikson and Tedin Chapter 5 Jennings and Niemi, "The Transmission of Political Values from Parent to Child," 1968
November 20-22	Erikson and Tedin Chapter 6 Davis and Silver, "Civil Liberties vs. Security: Public Opinion in the Context of the Terrorist Attacks on America," The American Journal of Political Science. 2004.
November 25-December 2 November 27-29	Erikson and Tedin Chapter 7 No Class: Thanksgiving Break
December 4-6	Erikson and Tedin Chapter 8
If for some reason we have time	Erikson and Tedin Chapter 10
<b>Monday, December 9, 3:30p-5:30pm</b>	<b>Final Exam</b>