



Course Syllabus: American Public Opinion

POLS 4463-201

Spring 2024

Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 10:00am-10:50am

PY 209

Contact Information

Dr. Jeremy F. Duff

Office: 211 O'Donohoe

Office hours: Monday: 11:00am-12:00pm

Tuesday/Thursday: 10:00am-12:00pm

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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*, 11th ed.

Asher: *Polling and the Public: What Every Citizen Should Know*, 9th 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.

I will use D2L for posting syllabi, course communication, course schedule, attendance, and the gradebook. You should regularly check D2L and the email hosted via D2L for important course information.

Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook-2023-24](#)

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is cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). If at any time, a student is found to have violated the University Academic Dishonesty Policy, they will be given a grade of 0 on the assignment for which the violation took place. If the student engages a second time in a violation of the University Academic Dishonesty Policy, they will be given a grade of F for the course. 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 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.

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. 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.

Project

There will be a project that students will work on throughout the semester. Information on the project will be given in an individual handout.

Required Examinations

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

Exam 1: February 16, 2024

Exam 2: March 25, 2024

Final Exam: December 8, 2024, 10:30am-12:30pm

If you miss an exam and do not have a university approved excuse you will be given a grade of 0 for the exam.

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.

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.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Since writing, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of this course, all writing assignments should be prepared by the student. Developing strong competencies in this area will prepare you for a competitive workplace. Therefore, AI-generated submissions are not permitted and will be treated as plagiarism. MSU Texas uses the Turnitin.com Artificial Intelligence detection tool. If Turnitin.com detects that your assignment was completed using AI, you will be given a grade of 0 for that assignment. This is also considered a violation of the University Academic Dishonesty Policy.

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 has violated the University Academic Dishonesty Policy, will be given a grade of 0, 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 0. If you miss an assignment because you arrive to class late, you will receive a grade of 0 on that assignment.

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 0 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

Date	Readings/Activities
January 17	Introduction and Overview of the Course No Readings
January 19-24	Erikson and Tedin Chapter 1
January 26-31	Asher Chapter 1
February 2-7	Asher Chapter 2
February 9-14	Asher Chapter 3

Date	Readings/Activities
February 16	Exam 1
February 19-23	Asher Chapter 4
February 26-March 1	Asher Chapter 5
March 4-8	Asher Chapter 6
March 11-15	Spring Break: No Class
March 18-22	Asher Chapter 7
March 25	Exam 2
March 27-April 3 (March 29 No Class)	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).
April 5-10	Erikson and Tedin Chapter 4
April 12-17	Erikson and Tedin Chapter 5 Jennings and Niemi, "The Transmission of Political Values from Parent to Child," 1968
April 19-24	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.
April 26-May 3	Erikson and Tedin Chapter 7 Erikson and Tedin Chapter 8
Wednesday, May 8, 2024 10:30am-12:30pm	Final Exam