COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course introduces the student to the study of public opinion by focusing on both individual and aggregate-level analyses of survey data. It reviews the way in which public opinion data are collected and analyzed. The course then focuses on: (1) The source of political opinions—political socialization; (2) the meaningfulness and stability of political attitudes over time; (3) the level of political knowledge in the electorate; (4) realignment and dealignment theory; (5) explanations of voting behavior; and (6) trends in presidential popularity.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
1. Midterm Exam (25%)
2. Quizzes—Top 4 scores out of approximately 6 quiz and homework assignments (25%)
3. Book review (25%)
4. Final examination (25%)

REQUIRED BOOKS:

OTHER REQUIREMENTS:
A. READINGS: In addition to the required books, there are additional readings in JSTOR and on the class web page. These articles are also required. The articles will be discussed in class; therefore, it is required that the readings listed with each class period be read in preparation for that class period. Complete citations to the articles are provided below in the Syllabus.
B. QUIZZES: Approximately 6 quizzes/homework assignments will be given during the semester. These quizzes are designed to keep people abreast of the readings. Only the highest 4 quiz/homework scores will be counted at the end of the semester in determining the grade for quizzes. Makeup quizzes and homework will not be given, and LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.
C. ATTENDANCE: This is a 400 level course and attendance is mandatory unless you are ill or have some officially sanctioned excuse. I will take roll randomly; your attendance in class and participation in class discussion will be considered in determining your final grade.

IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY ON CAMPUS:
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. Here are ways to get information about changes in this course: The class web page, my email address: parker5@purdue.edu, and my office phone: 4963923.
Syllabus POL 429—Public Opinion and Electoral Behavior

WEEKS 1-2

I. **INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF PUBLIC OPINION**

What are attitudes?
How do we measure attitudes?
How do we collect information about them?
What do we need to watch for when collecting attitudes?
How do we analyze the data that we collect?

WEEKS 3-4 No class Sept. 7

II. **THE ACQUISITION OF POLITICAL ATTITUDES—POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION**

How important are parents?
Who or what else influences attitudes?
How long lasting are the attitudes that are acquired?


WEEKS 5-6

III. **MEANINGFULNESS AND STABILITY OF POLITICAL ATTITUDES—the ideology controversy (panel data)**

How stable are political attitudes over a period of time, such as a 2-year period?
Are some attitudes more stable than other attitudes?
Which attitudes are more stable and which are less stable?
Do people think ideologically about politics? Who thinks ideologically about politics?

*Abramson, Paul. 1983. Chapter 15—Change or continuity in conceptual levels, issue consistency, attitude stability, and issue voting in **POLITICAL ATTITUDES IN AMERICA: FORMATION AND CHANGE.** This chapter will be available on the class web page.


WEEKS 7-8
October 12-No class Fall break
MIDTERM EXAM WED. OCT. 16

IV.  POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE AND POLITICAL ATTITUDES

How informed are citizens about politics?
Have information levels grown with growing education levels?
What role does the press play in informing citizens?


WEEKS 9-10
BOOK REVIEW DUE: Fri. Oct. 30

VI.  REALIGNMENT THEORY AND PARTISAN DEALIGNMENT: AGGREGATE EXPLANATIONS OF POLITICAL CHANGE

A.  Realignment theory


B. Dealignment Theory

C. Generational Explanations of Change

D. Changes due to period forces

E. Responses to Realignment Theory

WEEKS 11-14
VII. VOTING BEHAVIOR: INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL EXPLANATIONS OF HOW PEOPLE VOTE
Why do people vote for the candidate they do?
What role does party identification play in determining how people vote?

A. Sociological And Social-Psychological Models Of Voting

B. Rational voter models DOWNS AND FIORINA
Healy, Andrew and Neil Malhotra. 2013. Retrospective Voting Reconsidered. ANNUAL REVIEW OF POLITICAL SCIENCE.
C. **Issue-based Models of Voting**

D. **Realigning electorate or dealigned electorates for the future?**

**WEEK 15**

**VIII. EXPLAINING TRENDS IN PRESIDENTIAL (AND CONGRESSIONAL) POPULARITY**

Why does presidential popularity change over time?
What factors cause changes in these evaluations?


**WEEK 16—Review**
BOOK REVIEW

The following is an outline that can be used for the book review. You should aim for a 3 to 5 page book review. Model your review after those contained in PUBLIC OPINION QUARTERLY.

I. Introduction to the research question
   A. Research question addressed by the book
   B. Review of the major literature in this area (from the book)—where does this book fit in the existing literature
   C. Why is the topic addressed by this book important to investigate

II. Data and Methods
   A. What data is the author using to investigate this question
   B. What research strategy is employed to investigate the question
   C. Is there anything particular that should be noted about the analysis

III. Analysis of the data and hypotheses
   A. Briefly review the each of the research arguments laid out in the book
   B. What are the MAJOR hypotheses investigated (in each chapter or section)
   C. What are the most important findings of each section or chapter or part of the analysis
   D. Are their theories born out? (Do they reject the null hypotheses?)

IV. Conclusions
   A. Discuss the major research findings for the book
   B. How do their findings fit with the previous work on the topic? (Do they tend to support previous work in the area, or do they contradict it?)
   C. What are the implications of the findings?
   D. What future research is suggested by the findings in this book?

V. Evaluation of the book
   A. Evaluate the questions investigated by the book—
      1. Are they important questions?
      2. Does this book contribute to current understanding of these problems?
      3. Does the book go beyond the previous research in important ways?
   B. Evaluation of the analysis presented in the book
      1. Was the data appropriate for testing the question?
      2. Are there any problems with the way the analysis was carried out?
      3. Was the analysis convincing?
      4. If they did something different from others studying the question, did this appear to contribute or was it unjustified, or inconsequential?
   C. Would you recommend the book to others—why or why not?

DO NOT USE DIRECT QUOTES IN YOUR BOOK REVIEW.

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Students with disabilities needing academic accommodations should inform the professor. This should be done within the first week of class. Your privacy will be respected.

THE ACADEMIC HONOR SYSTEM IS BASED ON THE PREMISE THAT EACH STUDENT HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY (1) TO UPHOLD THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY IN THE STUDENT’S OWN WORK; (2) TO REFUSE TO TOLERATE VIOLATIONS OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY IN THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY, AND (3) TO FOSTER A HIGH SENSE OF INTEGRITY AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ON THE PART OF THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY. IN THIS COURSE ACADEMIC DISHONESTY (CHEATING) WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.  
https://www.purdue.edu/odos/osrr/responding-to-academic-dishonesty-brochure/

ALL STUDENTS are encouraged to attend office hours if you are having difficulties with the course material. It is easier to remedy your problems if you come early rather than waiting until the end of the course.  **If you cannot make the office hours, please set up an appointment to meet with me.**