

**Political Science 311-01: Public Opinion & Political Behavior**  
**University of Dayton**  
**Fall 2017**

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*Class:* MWF 10:10 – 11:00 AM, Zehler Hall 104  
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*Office Hours:* By appointment

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### **Course Description**

In this course, we will study what citizens think about politics (public opinion), and what actions they take to express their views (political behavior). In particular, this course will focus upon empirical methods of measuring and analyzing political opinion and behavior. Students will learn the relevant concepts first through study and in-class discussion; second, by designing and implementing original data collection efforts; third, by analyzing and interpreting empirical results.

### **Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- 1) understand how to systematically and empirically examine components of the political system;
- 2) know how to conduct research in the social sciences, and political science in particular;
- 3) have, and be able to demonstrate, the ability to critically assess political science research.

### **Course Expectations**

Class Participation & Attendance: Students are expected to attend class regularly, attentively, and on time. *Students who are absent from more than 10 class sessions will fail the course;* excused absences do count toward this total. Also, excessive tardiness may be counted toward this total, at the instructor's discretion. Students who behave in a distracting way – including sleeping or using a phone or computer when the instructor has not explicitly authorized doing so – may be asked to leave, and if so will be counted as absent.

Late Assignments: Course projects and assignments *must be submitted on time.* For any assignment submitted past the submission deadline, there will be a 10% grade penalty. An additional 10% (of all total points for the assignment) will be deducted for every subsequent 24-hour period prior to submission. Exceptions will be made only for excused absences, as documented by relevant university administrators and subject to the instructor's approval.

### **Required Textbooks**

1. Asher, Herb. 2017. *Polling and the Public: What Every Citizen Should Know*, 9<sup>th</sup> edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
2. Cramer, Katherine J. 2016. *The Politics of Resentment Rural Consciousness in Wisconsin and the Rise of Scott Walker*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
3. Marietta, Morgan. 2012. *A Citizen's Guide to American Ideology*. New York: Routledge.
4. Wattenberg, Martin P. *Is Voting For Young People?*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. New York: Pearson.

\*Additional readings are available on our Isidore course page, or via hyperlinks found in the course schedule below.

## **Honor Pledge, University Resources, and Policies**

### University of Dayton Honor Pledge

I understand that as a student at the University of the Dayton, I am a member of our academic and social community. I recognize the importance of my education and the value of experiencing life in such an integrated community. I believe that the value of my education and degree is critically dependent upon the academic integrity of the university community, and so in order to maintain our academic integrity, I pledge to:

- Complete all assignments and examinations by the guidelines given to me by my instructors;
- Avoid plagiarism and any other form of misrepresenting someone else's work as my own;
- Adhere to the Standards of Conduct as outlined in the Academic Honor Code.

In doing this, I hold myself and my community to a higher standard of excellence, and set an example for my peers to follow.

Students are expected to abide by the University of Dayton Honor Pledge.

### Cheating and Plagiarism

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any student suspected of either cheating or plagiarism will be referred to appropriate administrative proceedings at the University of Dayton. Additionally, the student will receive a zero for the assignment.

### Learning Support and Writing Resources

A wide range of support and resources are available to UD students, and I strongly encourage students to avail themselves of these opportunities. The LTC's Office of Learning Resources (OLR) is a learning resource for all students and it offers a wide variety of services to assist you in achieving academic success at the university, including study skills classes and workshops, tutoring and consultations, disability screenings, and a website with many resources (<http://learningsupport.udayton.edu>). Please contact OLR at 937-229-2066 or visit their office on the ground floor of Roesch Library (LTC 023) if you would like to talk about how you could be a more effective learner.

The Write Place is a free service available to all UD students that offers peer-to-peer writing support on any writing assignment and at any stage of the writing process. Students can drop-in to the Write Place without making an appointment. It is located in Roesch Library Room 502. Questions? Contact Christina Klimo (Write Place Coordinator) at [klimochm@notes.udayton.edu](mailto:klimochm@notes.udayton.edu) or 229-2066.

### Students with Disabilities

If you believe that you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, please contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Formal disability-related accommodations are determined through the Learning Teaching Center's Office of Learning Resources (OLR). It is very important that you be registered with OLR and notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations with a signed SLS Self-Identification Form. We can then plan how best to coordinate your accommodations. For more information, please contact OLR at 937-229-2066, by email at [disability.services@udayton.edu](mailto:disability.services@udayton.edu), or stop by the OLR office in LTC 023.

## Grade Calculation

Ideology Essay	15%
Polling Project	
Survey Critique	5%
Survey Design	10%
Final Report	20%
Interview Project	
Protocol	5%
Interview/Transcript	10%
Final Report	20%
<u>Reading Responses</u>	<u>15%</u>
TOTAL	100%

### *Grading Scale:*

A: 93%-100%    A-: 90%-93%    B+: 87%-90%    B: 83%-87%    B-: 80%-83%

C+: 77%-80%    C: 73%-77%    C-: 70%-73%    D: 60%-70%    Fail: <60%

*Note: If your final course grade falls within 0.25% of the next highest letter grade, I will round it up (e.g. 86.75% = B+, 89.75 = A-, etc.).*

## Graded Assignments

### Ideology Essay

Your first assignment is to write a paper answering the question: What is my political ideology? The purpose of this assignment is to demonstrate that you understand, and can apply in a sophisticated manner, the concepts learned during our study of ideology, and the Marietta text in particular. The purpose of this assignment is not to convince anyone that your ideology is “correct,” or to demonstrate that you share your professor’s ideology and therefore deserve an A. Rather, you will be graded based upon how well you understand, apply, and explain the relevant concepts. Please see Isidore for detailed instructions.

### Polling Project

For this project, you will work in groups to design, administer, and analyze an original survey, focusing on the topic of political ideology or political participation. You will begin by critiquing existing survey questions on your topic. Then, you will design the questions and formatting for an original survey that you will administer to UD students. Finally, you will prepare a report describing the methods used to conduct your survey, and the empirical results derived from it. Further instructions will be posted to Isidore during the semester.

### Interview Project

For this project, you will continue your study of the topic from your polling project – but using an entirely different method of studying public opinion. Specifically, using Cramer’s *The Politics of Resentment* as our model, you will design and then analyze a “bottom-up study of public opinion” based upon in-depth, open-ended interviews with a small number of UD students. Then, for our final paper, you will prepare a report analyzing these results and evaluating this method of studying public opinion in relating to public opinion polling. Further instructions will be posted to Isidore during the semester.

## Reading Responses

Students will submit **15 reading responses** over the course of the semester, on days that a *new reading assignment* is due (there are 29 such days; you will submit responses on 15 of those days, and skip responding on 14 days). When multiple readings are assigned, you may respond to one or both of the readings. However, you cannot earn credit for multiple reading responses in the same day.

Reading responses must be typed or neatly hand-written, and at least one paragraph in length. You will submit them to the professor at the beginning of class, in hard copy format.

The purpose of the reading response is twofold: 1) To demonstrate that you have read, comprehended, and can thoughtfully apply the assigned reading material; 2) To contribute relevant thoughts or questions that can be used to meaningfully inform classroom discussion. Specifically, each reading response must:

1. **raise an insightful and well-informed question or point** demonstrating substantive engagement with the day's reading assignment, and conducive to generating useful points of discussion during class meetings;
2. **include a relevant in-text citation** (e.g. quote, fact, or argument – with page number) from the day's reading, to support or amplify the substance of your response;
3. **be well-written and properly edited.**

## **Perspective on Grading**

I welcome students to discuss grades with me at any point in the semester, if concerns arise. Often, this helps a student to understand the basis for his/her grade, or to clarify something that I misunderstood when first evaluating the work.

However, let me be clear about my expectations for such conversations: It is not appropriate for a student to come to me with a general objection, such as "I thought I did better on this paper" or "I need an A." I grade your performance on assignments. I do not grade your *expected* performance, or you as a *person*. Your grade on each assignment will be broken into parts. After grading each part, I simply calculate the sum total to derive your overall grade on the assignment. The same applies to your course grade: I grade each assignment, and then sum them (in accordance with the weighting formula detailed on our syllabus) to determine your final grade. This is a *mathematical* process, not a discretionary one.

Therefore, if you want to talk with me about the possibility of changing a grade, you need to be able to tell me which specific part of that grade might be in error, and why. If you cannot tell me which part you think I got wrong/misunderstood and why, you are not ready to discuss your grade.

Finally, I do not "fix" grades. I do not offer extra assignments at the end of the semester to help you reach the grade that you wanted; if I did so, I would have to extend the same opportunity to the entire class. We will talk a lot about measurement in this course, and I view your grade as a measure of your learning. If I add in other elements to your grade that do not measure actual *learning*, such as your desired GPA or your graduate school ambitions, I have corrupted the measurement (and acted unethically). Please know that I will not do so, and you shouldn't ask for that.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Please complete each assigned reading prior to class on the first date under which it is listed below. To access a reading assignment, click on the link provided below or visit our Isidore course page ([isidore.udayton.edu](http://isidore.udayton.edu)).

### Introduction

- August 23 (Wed.) Syllabus  
August 25 (Fri.) Bishop, “The Psychology of the Tribe” (Isidore); & Farrell, “Most of what you think about human reasoning is wrong. Here’s why” ([click here](#))

### Political Ideology

- August 28 (Mon.) Marietta, Introduction & Ch. 1 (pp. 1-10)  
August 30 (Wed.) Marietta, Ch. 2-5 (pp. 11-40)  
September 1 (Fri.) Marietta, Ch. 6-9 (pp. 41-68)  
*September 4 (Mon.) No class – Labor Day*  
September 6 (Wed.) Marietta, Ch. 10-12 (pp. 69-101)  
September 8 (Fri.) Marietta, Ch. 13-14 (pp. 102-114) & Conclusion (pp. 115-119)  
September 11 (Mon.) Discussion: Ideology Essay

\*Ideology Essay due Sunday, September 10 @ 11:55 PM\*

- September 13 (Wed.) Gries, “Does Ideology Matter?” (Isidore)  
September 15 (Fri.) Issenberg, “Born This Way” ([click here](#))

### Political Participation

- September 18 (Mon.) Wattenberg, Ch. 3 (pp. 57-85) & Ch. 5 (pp. 119-130)  
September 20 (Wed.) Wattenberg, Ch. 4 (pp. 89-118) & Ch. 6 (pp. 131-150)  
September 22 (Fri.) Wattenberg, Ch. 7 (pp. 151-170)  
September 25 (Mon.) Wattenberg, Ch. 8 (pp. 171-197) & Ch. 9 (pp. 198-212)

### Public Opinion Polling

- September 27 (Wed.) Asher, Ch. 1 (pp. 1-40)  
September 29 (Fri.) Asher, Ch. 2 (pp. 43-72)  
October 2 (Mon.) Asher, Ch. 3 (pp. 75-106)  
October 4 (Wed.) Discussion: Survey Critiques

\*Survey Critiques due Wednesday, October 4 @ 9:30 AM\*

- October 6 (Fri.) No class – Mid-Term Break*  
October 9 (Mon.) Asher, Ch. 4 (pp. 107-136)  
October 11 (Wed.) Asher, Ch. 5 (pp. 139-160)  
October 13 (Fri.) Survey Workshop #1

## **Polling Project**

October 16 (Mon.) Survey Workshop #2  
October 18 (Wed.) Survey Workshop #3

\*Survey Design due Wednesday, October 18 @ end of class period\*

October 20 (Fri.) Survey Workshop #4  
  
October 23 (Mon.) Asher, Ch. 6 (pp. 161-188)  
October 25 (Wed.) Complete coding of survey data (Excel)  
October 27 (Fri.) Asher, Ch. 8 (pp. 237-277)  
October 30 (Mon.) Complete all data analysis  
November 1 (Wed.) Complete draft of polling report

\*Polling Report due Wednesday, November 1 @ end of class\*

November 3 (Fri.) Asher, Ch. 9 (pp. 219-230); **&** Cohn, “A 2016 Review: Why Key State Polls Were Wrong About Trump” ([click here](#))

## **“A Bottom-Up Study of Public Opinion”**

November 6 (Mon.) Cramer, Ch. 1 (pp. 1-18)  
November 8 (Wed.) Cramer, Ch. 1 (pp. 18-26)  
November 10 (Fri.) Cramer, Ch. 2 (pp. 26-44)  
November 13 (Mon.) Cramer, Ch. 3 (pp. 45-89)  
November 15 (Wed.) Cramer, Ch. 4 (pp. 90-110)  
November 17 (Fri.) Cramer, Ch. 6 (pp. 145-168)  
November 20 (Mon.) Cramer, Ch. 7 (pp. 169-207)

*November 22 (Wed.) No class – Thanksgiving Break*

*November 24 (Fri.) No class – Thanksgiving Break*

## **Interview Project**

November 27 (Mon.) Interview Workshop #1  
November 29 (Wed.) Interview Workshop #2

\*Interview Script due Wednesday, November 29 @ end of class period\*

December 1 (Fri.) Cramer, Ch. 8 (pp. 208-225)  
December 4 (Mon.) Interview Workshop #3  
December 6 (Wed.) Interview Workshop #4

\*Final Paper due Monday, December 11 @ 2:10 PM\*

\*Disclaimer: This course schedule is subject to change at the instructor’s discretion, including the addition, subtraction, or replacement of reading assignments listed above. I will notify you of any changes in class and/or via e-mail, and post an updated version of the syllabus to Isidore if any such changes are made.