MEDIA, THE PUBLIC, AND DEMOCRACY TODAY

Term

Summer 2024 Term

Course Meetings

Select Tuesdays, 13:00-15:15
Doctoral School, ul. Weteranów 18,
Room 4 (Prof. Ziętek's Office), 2nd floor

Professor's Information and Office Hours

Philip Habel
University Professor and U.S. Fulbright Distinguished Scholar, UMCS, 2023-2024
Professor and Department Chair, Univ. of South Alabama (Sabbatical 2023-24)

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Office: Room 15B, Faculty of Philology Building
Office Hours* on Wednesdays from 9:30-11:30 and 14:00-15:00
*Other times by appointment

Course Website

MS Teams: Media, the Public, and Democracy

Course Description

The course offers a scholarly approach to the relationship between the public and political actors, media, and institutions. The course draws from across the fields of public opinion research, political psychology, political communication, and political behavior and institutions more broadly. The intent is to offer students across the social sciences exposure to a rich and diverse literature that can then serve as a foundation and guide for students' own research. With this goal in mind, we will draw from core readings in the field, but intentionally read and discuss cutting edge research that utilizes a diverse set of methodological approaches. Thus students will finish the term with a strong theoretical understanding of a rich and broad field, but also an appreciation for how to conduct their own research that will contribute to our collective understanding.

Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course students should be able to…
- Evaluate the role the public, politicians, and media in democracy---with a focus on research from the United States, but also across political systems
- Draw from theoretical perspectives across the social sciences that inform the study of the public, media, and democracy, and apply these perspectives to one's own research project
- Compare and contrast methodological approaches to studying the relationship among the public, media, and political actors and institutions
- Evaluate the promises and challenges that democratic citizens, politicians, and political institutions face in today's heterogenous information environment

Expectations for Students

Students are expected to read and reflect on each week's readings in advance of each session, and then come prepared to evaluate and discuss the content together. The format of the course meetings will be seminar-style. Sessions will include student presentations of a research article. The course includes a final exam, and the course builds toward a final research paper that includes original research on a topic of relevance to our course.

Course Assessment

- Class Attendance and Participation (22.5%)
  - As the course meets every other week for 5 substantive sessions, attendance and active participation at each session is expected
- Article Presentation (2.5%)
- Research Paper, Complete Draft, 28 May (20%)
- Research Paper, Final Draft, 25 June (40%)
- Final Exam, 18 June (15%)

Grading Scale

- 0 to 2.74 = 2
- 2.75 to 3.24 = 3
- 3.25 to 3.74 = 3.5
- 3.75 to 4.24 = 4
- 4.25 to 4.74 = 4.5
- 4.74 to 5.00 = 5

Course Topical Overview

Session	Date	Topic
Intro.	26 MAR	Course Overview; Research Projects
--	*2 APR*	*No Course Meeting*
1	9 APR	Understanding Public Opinion
--	*16 APR*	*No Course Meeting*
2	23 APR	Approaches from Political Psychology
--	*30 APR*	*No Course Meeting*
3	7 MAY	Elite-Mass Linkages
--	*14 MAY*	*No Course Meeting*
4	21 MAY	Media and Politics
--	*28 MAY*	*No Course Meeting*
5	4 JUN	Contemporary Illustration: Studying Misinformation
--	*11 JUN*	*No Course Meeting*
Exam	18 JUN	Final Exam

Course Schedule and Readings

All readings are open access or accessible by being logged into Eduroam.

Introduction.   26 MARCH   Course Overview; Research Projects

Session 1.   9 APRIL   Understanding Public Opinion

Berinsky, Adam. 2017. "Measuring Public Opinion with Surveys" Annual Review of Political Science 20: 209-329.

Druckman, James N. 2014. "Pathologies of Studying Public Opinion, Political Communication, and Democratic Responsiveness" Political Communication 31(3):467–492.

Leeper. Thomas J. and Rune Slothuus. 2014. "Political Parties, Motivated Reasoning, and Public Opinion Formation." Political Psychology 35(51): 129-156.

Druckman, James N., Samara Klar, Yanna Krupnikov, and Matthew Levendusky, and John Barry Ryan. 2021. "Affective Polarization, Local Contexts, and Public Opinion in America." Nature Human Behavior 5: 28–38.

Claassen, Christopher. 2020. "Does Public Support Help Democracy Survive?" American Journal of Political Science 64(1): 118-134.

Session 2.   23 APRIL   Approaches from Political Psychology

Bakker, Bert. N., Schumacher, Gijs and Matthijs Rooduijn. 2021. "Hot Politics? Affective Responses to Political Rhetoric" American Political Science Review 115(1): 150-164

Arceneaux, Kevin and Ryan J. Vander Wielen. 2013. "The Effects of Need for Cognition and Need for Affect on Partisan Evaluations." Political Psychology 34(1): 23–42.

Shanto Iyengar, Shanto, Guarav Sood, and Yphtach Lelkes. 2012. "Affect, Not Ideology: A Social Identity Perspective on Polarization." Public Opinion Quarterly 76(3): 405–431.

Huddy, Leonie, Lilliana Mason, and Lene Aarøe. 2015. "Expressive Partisanship: Campaign Involvement, Political Emotion, and Partisan Identity. American Political Science Review 109(1): 1-17.

Slothuus, Rune and Martin Bisgaard. 2021. "How Political Parties Shape Public Opinion in the Real World" American Journal of Political Science 65(4): 896-911.

Session 3.   7 MAY   Elite-Mass Linkages

Fazekas, Zoltán, Sebastian Adrian Popa, Hermann Schmitt, Pablo Barberá, and Yannis Theocharis. 2021. "Elite-Public Interaction on Twitter: EU Issue Expansion in the Campaign" European Journal of Political Research 60(2): 375-396.

Habel, Philip. 2012. "Following the Opinion Leaders? The Dynamics of Influence Among Media Opinion, the Public, and Politicians" Political Communication 29(3): 257-277

Barberá, Pablo, Andreu Casas, Jonathan Nagler, Patrick Egan, Richard Bonneau, John T. Jost, and Joshua A. Tucker. 2019. "Who Leads? Who Follows? Measuring Issue Attention and Agenda Setting by Legislators and the Mass Public Using Social Media Data." American Political Science Review 113(4): 883-901.

Broockman, David E. and Christopher Skovron. 2018. "Bias in Perceptions of Public Opinion Among Political Elites." American Political Science Review 112(3): 542-563.

Druckman, James N. Eric Peterson, and Rune Slothuus. 2013. "How Elite Partisan Polarization Affects Public Opinion Formation." American Political Science Review 107(1): 57-79.

Session 4.   21 MAY   Media and Politics

Sides, John, Lynn Vavreck, and Christopher Warshaw. 2022. "The Effect of Television Advertising in United States Elections." American Political Science Review 116(2): 702-718.

Koc-Michalska, Karolina, Ulrike Klinger, and Uta Russman. 2023. "Are Campaigns Getting Uglier, and Who Is to Blame? Negativity, Dramatization and Populism on Facebook in the 2014 and 2019 EP Election Campaigns." Political Communication 40(3): 263-282.

Van der Pas, Daphne Joanna and Loes Aaldering. 2020. "Gender Differences in Political Media Coverage: A Meta-Analysis" Journal of Communication 70(1): 114–143.

Brown, Danielle K. and Summer Harlow. 2019. "Protests, Media Coverage, and a Hierarchy of Social Struggle." The International Journal of Press/Politics 24(4): 508-530.

Nyhan, Brendan, Jaime Settle, Emily Thorson, Magdalena Wojcieszak, Pablo Barberá, Annie Y. Chen, Hunt Allcott, Taylor Brown, Adriana Crespo-Tenorio, Drew Dimmery, Deen Freelon, Matthew Gentzkow, Sandra González-Bailón, Andrew M. Guess, Edward Kennedy, Young Mie Kim, David Lazer, Neil Malhotra, Devra Moehler, Jennifer Pan, Daniel Robert Thomas, Rebekah Tromble, Carlos Velasco Rivera, Arjun Wilkins, Beixian Xiong, Chad Kiewiet de Jonge, Annie Franco, Winter Mason, Natalie Jomini Stroud, and Joshua A. Tucker. 2023. "Like-Minded Sources on Facebook Are Prevalent but Not Polarizing." Nature 620: 137-144.

**Session 5.	4 JUNE	Contemporary Illustration: Studying Misinformation**

Pennycook, Gordon and David G. Rand. 2021. "The Psychology of Fake News" Trends in Cognitive Sciences 25(5): 388-402.

Osmundsen, Mathias, Alexander Bor, Peter Bjerrergaard Vahlstrup, Anja Bechmann, and Michael Bang Peterson. 2021. "Partisan Polarization is the Primary Pscyhological Motivation Behind Political Fake News Sharing on Twitter." American Political Science Review 115(3): 999-1015.

Freiling, Isabelle, Nicole M. Krause, Dietram A. Scheufele, and Dominque Brossard. 2023. "Believing and Sharing Misinformation, Fact-Checks, and Accurate Information on Social Media: The Role of Anxiety During COVID-19" New Media & Society 25(1): 141-162.

Badrinathan, Sumitra. 2021. "Educative Interventions to Combat Misinformation: Evidence from a Field Experiment in India" American Political Science Review 115(4): 1325-1341

Krakowski, Krzysztof, Bernhard Clemm von Hohenberg, and Davide Morisi. Working Paper. "Does School Debating Reduce Vulnerability to Misinformation? A Randomized Control Trial in Poland" (Accessed 1 March 2024)

**Final Exam.	18 JUNE	FINAL EXAM**