POS 6207
Seminar in Political Behavior
Fall 2023
Instructor: Jonathan Knuckey

Course Overview

This graduate seminar provides a scholarly examination of mass political behavior with an emphasis on political participation, elections, and voting behavior. The goal is to survey what the best and most visible scholarship in the field has to say about why the electorate behaves as it does. The purpose is to provide a foundation for students to conduct original research on mass political behavior, such as an MA thesis, non-thesis MA capstone paper or Ph.D. dissertation. Additionally, those wishing to teach American politics in high school or college will also find the material useful. Obviously this material will also have great relevance given we have a presidential election looming next year!

The readings for the semester emphasize topics that are of interest to researchers today, so the material, drawn from both books and journal articles, tends to be contemporary, considered within the last 20-25 years rather than classic works (usually anything before the 1980s). Many of the articles will be of interest for updating or replicating their findings -- which might be the source of a research topic for many of you. While our focus will primarily be political behavior in the United States, we will also make comparisons to other nations from time to time. This allows us to place American political behavior in a comparative perspective -- to help us understand both commonalities and differences -- as well to explore how theories of political behavior, many of which were originally developed in the U.S., “travel well” to other countries.

I look forward to the seminar and hope you find it enjoyable and informative. I look forward to learning a lot from you!

Class Location & Meeting Days & Time:

Room: Phillips Hall, Room 305G -- this is the Political Science Conference Room

Day/Time: Thursday, 6.00pm-8.50pm

About Me and How to Contact Me.

I joined UCF in 1999. I received my BA in Political Theory and Institutions from the University of Liverpool, my MA in U.S. History and Politics from the .and my Ph.D. in Political Science from the the University of New Orleans.

My main areas of research and teaching is on American politics with a particular focus on southern politics, race and racial attitudes, voting behavior and public opinion. Outside of my day job I am a huge football (soccer!) fan and an avid supporter of Liverpool!

Office: Political Science department, Phillips Hall 302L

Office hours. Face-to-face, **Tuesday, 1.30pm-2.30pm; Thursday, 4pm-6pm.** *As the front office closes around 5.00pm, I will hold the 5-6pm part of Thursday office hours in our seminar room Phillips Hall 305G -- so feel free to drop by there prior to the seminar.*

I am also happy to meet outside of these times if it conflicts with your schedule. If you want to use Zoom to meet, use the following Zoom link: **https://ucf.zoom.us/j/6720872288Links to an external site.**

Use office hours to not only ask anything about the course material, but also any research ideas you might have or if you just want to talk about future educational or career plans.

Email: Use email in Canvas. If you write me Monday through Friday I should get back to you within 24 hours.

Course Requirements, Expectations & Responsibilities

Reading and Participation.

I expect that students will do all of the required reading for each week, which are posted below. In all the weeks -- except for when read a single book -- you will have some freedom to choose an additional journal article that interests you on the topic for the week (see below under course schedule for complete details). Careful reading and participation in class discussion are the keys to making the class productive for everyone involved. So you always need to come to our seminar thoroughly prepared to discuss the readings, to evaluate each reading's contribution to the literature, to identify themes across readings, to analyze how the readings differ from each other (and how this poses a challenge for building knowledge in the field), and to propose areas of future research.

You might not immediately understand everything in the readings. In particular, the methodologies and other technical material employed in the readings will be difficult to grasp if you have not yet taken courses in research design and advanced data analysis. That is fine. All I ask is that you give it a serious try and then bring your insights as well as your questions to class.

Your seminar participation is evaluated with respect to listening, preparation, quality of contributions, impact on the seminar, and the frequency concerning the **quality** of your seminar participation. Providing anecdotes, personal testimony, opinions that are not informed by the readings, or making off-topic comments **do not** constitute quality participation.

My role in the seminar is to facilitate your input into the seminar -- not to give a lecture. So if you fail to read and reflect upon the assigned material we will likely spend nearly three hours each week staring at each other with very little to say, suffice to say not our idea of fun for a Thursday evening over the next 15 weeks!

Weekly Papers

Each week you will write a short-paper critical assessment of the five articles for the week, which includes the article you also selected, or the single book assigned. These papers will provide evidence that you have read and critically evaluated the readings.

You will write **10** of these papers during the semester. As we have 12 weeks of substantive topics that means you get two "bye" weeks where a paper is not required.

A few further points about this policy:

- No paper is required for our first seminar on August 24th.
- A paper is required for the book on *Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit and Authoritarian Populism.* This is so everyone can get early feedback on the weekly paper;
- You can choose the weeks you don't write a paper, however, only one of the the other two books can be used as a bye week -- in other words you cannot have a bye week used for both the second and third books.
- For the weeks you don't write a paper, please let me know ahead of time that you are not writing for that week.
- You will still be expected to actively participate in our seminar discussions in the weeks you don't write a paper.

These papers should be uploaded in Canvas by **midnight on Tuesday** of each week.

For these type of papers what I **do not** want you to do is to only summarize or describe the reading(s) in your papers, i.e., avoid telling me simply what you read! Rather, the papers should offer a thoughtful response to the readings and may highlight their underappreciated contributions, oversights, limitations, alternative interpretations,

linkage to readings in prior weeks, unanswered questions and potential to inspire further research.

Papers should touch on **all** of the week's readings on their terms but may identify one theme, shortcoming, or question to address as a way to connect them.

Detached discussions and papers that are mostly personal opinion and anecdotal are not as helpful as analyses that wrestle with the arguments and evidence in the readings. Each paper should be approximately **1,200 words and double-spaced.** You can write more if you wish, but don't crazy. Your aim is to have a paper written by Tuesday of each week, and my aim is to read and return these to you as soon as possible -- hence the suggested word count.

Note: Papers should always be **in your own words.** Avoid direct quotes unless it is absolutely necessary for conveying a point. Papers that simply string together a series of quotes for the articles or books are both uninteresting for you to write and for me to read.

Papers for weeks reading a single book.

When we focus on a single book, your approach to writing your paper will be a bit different. Click **here** for some suggestions on how to go about writing a paper that focuses on a single book.

Grades

Your overall grade will be weighted as follows:

Seminar participation: 50%

Weekly papers: 50%

Overall course grade boundaries are as follows:

A: 93%+

A-: 90-92.9%

B+: 86-89.9%

B: 82-85.9%

B-: 80-81.9%

C: 70-79%

D: 60-69.9%

F: Below 60%

Each paper you write will earn one of the letter grades noted above.

To give you sense of how I have evaluated your seminar participation a letter grade will be posted at the mid-point of the semester. The final participation grade will be posted at the end of the semester.

Incomplete Grades.

Incompletes are discouraged in graduate school and are assigned only under extenuating circumstances. Since degrees will not be certified with an incomplete on the degree audit, "I" grades will be changed to "F" if not resolved by the stipulated deadlines. "I" grades are considered "unsatisfactory" grades until resolved for program of study purposes.

Note: Incomplete grades are not counted as completed courses or recognized as such by Financial Aid. Therefore, students on financial assistance must check with the Financial Aid office to see if the receipt of an incomplete grade will affect their financial award.

Other Considerations.

Your success in this class is important to me. All students are strongly encouraged to visit during office hours -- if only to introduce yourself and let me know how the course is working for you.

If you have a disability or circumstance that could affect your performance, please contact me early in the semester so that we can consider accommodations. Student Accessibility Services can provide official documentation of disabilities.

If you must miss class due to illness or another valid conflict, please contact me in advance.

Obviously, you should be ready for the start of the seminar at 6pm and should remain for the duration. Repeated tardiness and/or constantly coming and going during the seminar -- without explanation -- will potentially result in a reduction in the overall grade down to the next letter grade. Nearly 3 hours for our seminar is a long time -- so we will have a short break each week after about 1 hour.

Any student missing a written assignment or class because of observance of religious holidays shall be given an opportunity during that semester to make up missed work, provided that this does not create an undue burden on the university of instructor. The make-up will apply to the **religious holiday absence only.** It shall be the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor **no later than the end of the first week of**

class of his or her intention to participate in religious holidays which do not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess.

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. This includes using someone else's words or ideas without proper attribution. I will report any cases of academic dishonesty to the Office of Student Conduct for further sanctions.

This policy also extends to the use of **Artificial Intelligence (AI).** Any work **written, developed, created, or inspired** by AI is considered plagiarism and will not be tolerated. While the ever-changing (and exciting!) new developments with AI will find their place in our workforces and personal lives, in the realm of education and learning, this kind of technology does not belong. This is because the use of AI robs us all of the opportunity to learn from our experiences and from each other, to play with our creative freedoms, to problem-solve, and to contribute our ideas in authentic ways. In a nutshell, **college is a place for learning.** AI simply cannot do that learning for us.

Please use laptops in class **only** for referencing course materials, taking notes, and occasionally tracking down online items that are necessary for our discussions. Everything else -- including cell phones -- should be quieted and stowed away for later use. If, however, you know you must take an important call or text message during our seminar that is fine, but please let me know prior to the start of the seminar, as then I will know why you will need access to your cell phone.

Please familiarize yourself with the **UCF Golden Rule handbook,** which outlines expectation concerning both academic and non-academic student conduct.

I reserve the right to modify the syllabus timeline or specific readings as needed.

Course Schedule, Topics and Readings

All journal articles will have direct links to the articles.

The three books we read this semester can all be purchased from the UCF Bookstore. You almost certainly should be able to find the books at a cheaper price than the UCF Bookstore. Digital copies of books are fine. We will read the entire book in those weeks a book is assigned.

A note on "articles of your choice." You will notice than when we read journal articles in a week, there are four assigned articles. The **fifth article** you will read is one **chosen by you.** You can choose any article that hopefully addresses a research question related to the topic of the week that interests you. The following requirements apply to your chosen article:

- The article **must be on the topic of the week**, e.g., for the seminar on September 14th it must on the topic of political participation & civic engagement.

- The article can be on either American political behavior, the political behavior of another country or a comparative study of multiple countries.
- The article must be from a **peer-reviewed, academic political science/social science journal.** Journals to consider include, but are not limited to: A*merican Political Science Review, American Journal of Political Science, Journal of Politics, American Politics Research, Political Research Quarterly, Political Behavior, Journal of Elections Public Opinion and Parties, Electoral Studies, Political Psychology, Social Science Quarterly, British Journal of Political Science, Canadian Journal of Political Science, Public Opinion Quarterly.* You can certainly use other peer-reviewed journals -- but they must be political science or social science. If in doubt about the suitability of a journal then ask me.
- The article should have been ***published in the last 5 years*** -- so anything from **2018 onwards.**
- The article should ***not*** be one that you have previously read in another seminar, e.g., one I assigned in my American Politics seminar.
- In your weekly paper, please provide the full citation for your chosen article along with a URL -- you can do that at the end of your paper. If it is a week where you are <u>not</u> writing a paper please let me know no later than Tuesday via an email message the article you have chosen along with the URL. I will still ask you about the article in our seminar even if you have not written a paper for that week.

Most of you should already know how to locate journal articles on topics that interest you, as you have no doubt compiled literature reviews in other seminars. However, here is a chapter I assign to students in my undergraduate research methods class on reviewing literature that might be useful: **Reviewing the Literature** (from Carolyn Forestiere, *Beginning Political Research*, 2nd Edition).

Please be sure to always have access to all articles or the book for a specific week, as we will often make reference to them. It creates a poor impression -- which I will note -- when you have to look at your neighbor's articles or book!

August 24th: Seminar Overview/Introduction

Required reading:

- Mutz, Diane. 2010. "The Dog that Didn't Bark: The Role of Canines in the 2008 Campaign." *PS: Political Science & Politics,* 43(4), 707-712.

Please make sure this article is read prior to our seminar meeting. We will be discussing it in our first seminar meeting!

August 31st: *No Seminar -- UCF closing for a so-called "football" game*

Our seminar is pre-empted because of the "football" game. However, make a start on the first book of the semester-- *Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit, and Authoritarian Populism* -- that we discuss on September 7th (see below). It's a fairly lengthy book so dividing it up over 2 weeks is strongly advised!

September 7th: Cultural Backlash & Populism

Required Reading:

- Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit, and Authoritarian Populism.*

September 14th: Political Participation & Civic Engagement

Required Reading:

- Gerber, Alan S., Donald P. Green, and Christopher W. Larimer. 2008. "Social Pressure and Voter Turnout: Evidence from a Large-Scale Field Experiment." *American Political Science Review* 102 (1): 33-48.
- Mayer, Alexander Mayer. 2011. "Does Education Increase Political Participation?" *Journal of Politics* 73 (3): 633-645
- Burden, Barry C., et al. 2017. "How Different Forms of Health Matter to Political Participation." *Journal of Politics* 79 (1): 166-178.
- Plutzer, Eric. 2002. "Becoming a Habitual Voter: Inertia, Resources, and Growth in Young Adulthood." *American Political Science Review* 96 (1): 41-56.
- *A recent article on political participation and civic engagement of your choice.*

September 21st: Emotion

Required Readings:

- Healy, Andrew J. Neil Malhotra, and Cecilia Hyunjung Mo. 2010. "Irrelevant Events Affect Voters' Evaluations of Government Performance." PNAS 107 (29): 12804-12809

- Valentino, Nicholas A., et al. 2011. “Election Night’s Alright for Fighting: The Role of Emotions in Political Participation.” *Journal of Politics* 73: 156-70.
- Magni, Gabriele. 2017. “It’s the Emotions, Stupid! Anger About the Economic Crisis, Low Political Efficacy, and Support for Populist Parties.” *Electoral Studies* 50:91-102.
- Smith, Kevin B., et al. 2011. “Disgust Sensitivity and the Neurophysiology of Left-Right Political Orientations.” *PLoS One* 6 (10).
- *A recent article on emotion and political participation of your choice.*

September 28th: Partisans & Independents

Required Reading:

- Russell J. Dalton, *The Apartisan American: Dealignment and Changing Electoral Politics*

October 5th: Economic Voting

Required Readings:

- Healy, Andrew, and Gabriel S. Lenz. 2014. “Substituting the End for the Whole: Why Voters Respond Primarily to the Election-Year Economy.” *American Journal of Political Science.* 58 (1): 31-47.
- Rudolph, Thomas J. 2003. “Who’s Responsible for the Economy? The Formation and Consequences of Responsibility Attributions.” *American Journal of Political Science* 47 (4): 698-713.
- Norpoth, Helmut. 2001. "Divided Government and Economic Voting." *Journal of Politics* 63 (2): 414-435.
- Wright, John R. 2012. “Unemployment and the Democratic Electoral Advantage.” *American Political Science Review* 106 (4): 685-702.
- *A recent article on economic voting of your choice.*

October 12th: Political Information, Sophistication & Knowledge

Required Readings:

- McDermott, Monika L. 2005. "Candidate Occupations and Voter Information Shortcuts." *Journal of Politics* 2005 67 (1): 201-219
- Fowler, Anthony and Michele Margolis. 2014. "The Political Consequences of Uninformed Voters," *Electoral Studies* 34: 100-110.
- Boudreau, Cheryl. 2009. "Closing the Gap: When Do Cues Eliminate Differences between Sophisticated and Unsophisticated Citizens? *Journal of Politics* 71 (3): 964-976.
- Baum, Matthew. A., and Angela S. Jamison. 2006. "The Oprah Effect: How Soft News Helps Inattentive Citizens Vote Consistently." *Journal of Politics* 68 (4):946-959.
- *A recent article on political information, sophistication & knowledge of your choice.*

October 19th: Social Networks

Required Readings:

- Bond, Robert M., et al. 2012. "A 61-million-person Experiment in Social Influence and Political Mobilization." *Nature* 489: 295-298.
- Mutz, Diana C. 2002. "The Consequences of Cross-Cutting Networks for Political Participation." *American Journal of Political Scienc*e 46 (4): 838-855.
- Pattie, C.J., Johnston, R.J. "Conversation, Disagreement and Political Participation." *Political Behavior* 31 (2): 261–285
- Nickerson, David. 2008. "Is Voting Contagious? Evidence from Two Field Experiments." *American Political Science Review* 102 (1): 49-57.
- Sokhey, Anand Edward, and Scott D. McClurg. 2012. "Social Networks and Correct Voting." *Journal of Politics* 74 (3): 751-764.
- *A recent article on social networks of your choice.*

Note: This is the only article week with six articles, but that is because the first one from *Nature* -- which is one of the most esteemed scientific journals around -- is only 3 pages!

October 26th: Campaign Effects

Required readings

- Neiheisel, Jacob R., and Rich Horner. 2019. "Voter Identification Requirements and Aggregate Turnout in the U.S.: How Campaigns Offset the Costs of Turning Out When Voting Is Made More Difficult." *Election Law Journal* 18 (3): 227-242.
- Huber, Gregory A, and Kevin Arceneaux. 2007. "Identifying the Persuasive Effects of Presidential Advertising." *American Journal of Political Science* 51 (4) : 957-77.
- Gimpel, James G., Karen Kaufmann, and Shanna Pearson-Merkowitz. 2007. "Battleground States versus Blackout States: The Behavior Implications of Modern Presidential Campaigns." *Journal of Politics* 69 (3): 786-97.
- Valenzuela, A. A., and M. R. Michelson. 2016. "Turnout, Status, and Identity: Mobilizing Latinos to Vote with Group Appeals." *American Political Science Review* 110 (4): 615-30.
- *A recent article on campaign effects of your choice.*

November 2nd: Political Socialization

Required readings

- Jennings, M. Kent, Laura Stoker, and Jake Bowers. 2009. "Politics across Generations: Family Transmission Reexamined." *Journal of Politics* 71 (3): 782-799.
- Sharrow, Elizabeth A, Jesse H. Rhodes, Tatishe M. Nteta, and Jill S Greenlee. 2018. "The First-Daughter Effect: The Impact of Fathering Daughters on Men's Preferences for Gender-Equality Policies." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 82 (3): 493–523.
- Frymer, Paul, and Jacob M. Grumbach. 2021. "Labor Unions and White Racial Politics." *American Journal of Political Science* 65 (1): 225-40.
- Stanojevic, Antonia, Agnes Akkerman, and Katerina Manevska. 2020. "Good Workers and Crooked Bosses: The Effect of Voice Suppression by Supervisors on Employees' Populist Attitudes and Voting." *Political Psychology* 41 (2): 363-81.
- *A recent article on political socialization of your choice. Note: The articles here deal with* ***family and workplace*** *socialization, but you may find an article that interests you on other aspects of political socialization.*

November 9th: Media Influence

Required Readings:

- Arceneaux, Kevin, Martin Johnson, and Chad Murphy. 2012. “Polarized Political Communication, Oppositional Media Hostility, and Selective Exposure.” *Journal of Politics* 74 (1): 174-86.
- Hayes, Danny, and Jennifer L. Lawless. 2015. “As Local News Goes, So Goes Citizen Engagement: Media, Knowledge, and Participation in U.S. House Elections.” J*ournal of Politics* 77 (2): 447-462.
- Taylor, J. Benjamin. 2015. "The Educative Effects of Extreme Television Media." *American Politics Research* 45 (1): 3-32.
- Morris, Jonathan S. 2007. "Slanted Objectivity? Perceived Media Bias, Cable News Exposure, and Political Attitudes." *Social Science Quarterly* 88 (3): 707–728.
- *A recent article on media influence of your choice...and a big hint - notice that there's nothing here about the effects of* ***social media****, but surely a topic that interests many of you!*

November 16th: Personality

Required Readings:

- Gerber, Alan S., Gregory A. Huber, David Doherty, Conor M. Dowling, and Shang E. Ha. 2010. “Personality and Political Attitudes: Relationships across Issue Domains and Political Contexts.” *American Political Science Review* 104 (1): 111-33.
- Fatke, Matthias. 2017. “Personality Traits and Political Ideology: A First Global Assessment.” *Political Psychology* 38 (5) 881-899.
- Chen, Philip G. and Carl L. Palmer, 2018. “The Prejudiced Personality? Using the Big Five to Predict Susceptibility to Stereotyping Behavior.” *American Politics Research* 46 (2): 276-307.
- Glas, Jeffrey M. and J. Benjamin Taylor. 2018. “The Silver Screen and Authoritarianism: How Popular Films Activate Latent Personality Dispositions and Affect American Political Attitudes.” *American Politics Research* 46 (2): 246-275.
- *A recent article on personality of your choice.*

November 23rd: *Thanksgiving Holiday*

November 30th: Party Realignment

Required Reading:

- Angie Maxwell and Todd Shields. *The Long Southern Strategy: How Chasing White Voters in the South Changed American Politics.*