POLS 6013-280
Public Opinion
Tuesday 5:30pm-8:20pm
Spring Term 2012
209 Prothro-Yeager Hall

Dr. Jeremy F. Duff
211 O’Donohoe
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or by appointment; e-mail: jeremy.duff@mwsu.edu

COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Learning Objectives: This course will cover the research literature on American Public Opinion. We will address the dominant themes in the field, as well as several ideas that should probably receive more attention from scholars. We will read many of the major empirical works on the various topics described in this syllabus. We will scrutinize the methodological aspects of public opinion research, as well as the degree to which previous analyses have contributed to the development of substantive theories. Over the past fifty years, social scientists have come a long way in discerning the ways that ordinary citizens think about and react to the political world. Similarly, there has been quite a bit of recent research that seeks to explicate the various linkages between public opinion, the actions of political elites, and public policies. Nevertheless, there remains an enormous amount of work to be done. Hopefully, this seminar will point out some promising avenues for future explorations of American Political Behavior.

Required Texts: The following are the required texts for the course:


Along with these readings there will be a number of research articles from some of the top political science journals, as well as selected photocopied book chapters that will be made available.

Course Website: I maintain a course website that will keep you up to date on what is happening in your course. You can get to the website by visiting this link:

http://faculty.mwsu.edu/politicalscience/jeremy.duff/teaching.asp

Then click on the link that goes to your course.

Office Hours:
Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 10:00am-11:00am
Tuesday: 9:00am-11:00am, 2:00pm-5:00pm
Thursday: 9:00am-11:00am
Also, by appointment (send me an e-mail to schedule an appointment)
Student Responsibilities

**Attendance:** Graduate students **DO NOT** miss class.

**Readings:** Graduate students **COMPLETE ALL** the readings **PRIOR** to class.

**Wikipedia:** Graduate students **DO NOT EVEN THINK ABOUT** using Wikipedia as a source for an academic paper or project. If you do so, you will get a zero.

**Assessment:** Student grades will be based on three criteria. Classroom participation will make up 33% of your final grade. A midterm exam will make up another 33%. A research paper will make up the last 34%. Details on the exam and research paper will be given at a later date. But, be thinking about research paper topics now.

**Class Schedule and Reading Assignments**

The following is a list of lecture topics and their corresponding reading assignments. As stated before, please have the readings completed before the designated class period.

**Week 1-Basic Definitions and Historical Views of Public Opinion**  

**Week 2-Public Opinion and the American Political System**  


**Week 3-Public Opinion and the American Political System Cont.**  

**Week 4-Attitudes, Beliefs, and Information Processing**  


**Week 5-Core Values**  

**Week 6-Race**  


**Week 7-Culture War?**  

**Week 8-The Media**  


**Week 9-Values, Ambivalence, and Issue Attitudes**  


**Week 10-Values, Ambivalence, and Issue Attitudes**  

**Week 11-Ideology and the Levels of Conceptualization**  


**Weeks 12-14 Decided by Student Questionnaire.**