

## **PLSC 486T: Public Opinion & Foreign Policy (Spring 2022)**

Tuesday & Thursday 2:50pm-4:15pm in Rockefeller Center 159

Instructor: Prof. Katja Kleinberg

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Office hours (Zoom only): Wednesdays 10am-Noon and by appointment

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is an advanced undergraduate seminar designed for students who are interested in the dynamics of public opinion in international relations. The democratic ideal assumes and even requires an informed and opinionated public, whose members are expected to express their ideas and preferences on a wide range of policy issues, including foreign policy. Issues of perpetual concern include war and armed intervention, global trade and foreign investment, immigration and foreign aid. Policymakers, in turn, are assumed and expected to know and abide by the will of the people. How can we know that democratic governance lives up to this ideal? What the public thinks and wants—and why—and to what extent policy is shaped by public opinion are key questions this course will investigate through classic readings, contemporary research in political science, and direct experience with empirical data.

By the end of the semester, students will have acquired (1) an understanding of the role(s) of public opinion in democratic politics and international relations, (2) an overview of the drivers of public opinion on a range of foreign policy issues, (3) basic competence in reading and interpreting the results of public opinion polls, and (4) experience designing original research. In addition, the course is designed to engage and develop analytical, argumentation, and writing skills. The course assignments are also designed to train students to become clear-eyed consumers of polls and what is often (mis-)represented as the ‘majority opinion.’ A final goal of this course is to establish habits of keeping informed about current events and of engaging sources and materials critically.

This course is a 4-credit course, which means that in addition to the scheduled discussions, students are expected to do at least 9.5 hours of course-related work each week during the semester. This includes things like completing assigned readings, preparing written assignments, and other tasks that must be completed to earn credit in the course.

As a 400-level seminar, this course fulfils a requirement for the Political Science major. It also fulfils a General Education Requirement (N – Social Science). Students in N-courses will demonstrate: 1) knowledge of major concepts, models, and issues (and their interrelationships) of at least one of the social sciences: anthropology, economics, geography, history, political science, or sociology; and 2) an understanding of the methods used by social scientists to explore social phenomena, including, when appropriate to the discipline, observation, hypothesis development, measurement and data collection, experimentation, evaluation of evidence, and analysis by mathematics or other interpretive frameworks.

### **COURSE MATERIALS**

Required reading for this class will consist of scholarly articles and book chapters, available either through the Binghamton University library or on the course Brightspace site. Students are strongly encouraged to follow current events and pay particular attention to the discussion of public opinion and foreign policy. Examples of useful sources include major daily newspapers (New York Times,

Financial Times, Wall Street Journal) and weekly journals (e.g., The Economist), as well as other popular news outlets (Fox News, CNN, MSNBC etc.). Keeping up with current events will enrich class discussions. Most importantly, it will allow students to participate in public life as informed citizens.

## HOW TO GET & STAY IN TOUCH

**General communication.** Messages about the course, changes to the syllabus or deadlines etc. will be communicated through Brightspace ‘Announcements’ and your university email address. Make sure to check that email account and the Brightspace site daily.

**Email.** My email address is [kkleinbe@binghamton.edu](mailto:kkleinbe@binghamton.edu). I will respond to email during business hours (Monday through Friday 8am-6pm) and as soon as I can, but you should expect answers to take up to 24 hours even during business hours.

**Office hours.** These will be virtual (via Zoom) W 10am-Noon and **by appointment**. Email me to set up a time to talk. There will be a permanent Zoom link under the ‘Announcements’ tab on the Brightspace page. If the regular office hours do not fit your schedule, if you prefer not to use Zoom, or if you would like to discuss something that might take a bit longer to work out, you can email me to set up a separate appointment.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES

Binghamton University follows the recommendations of public health experts to protect the health of students, faculty, staff, and the community at large. Safeguarding public health depends on each of us strictly following requirements as they are instituted and for as long as they remain in force. Classroom safety requirements will continue to be based on guidance from public health authorities and will be uniformly applied across campus. If these requirements change, a campus-wide announcement will be made to inform the University.

The following health and safety standards will be enforced:

- Current rules require everyone to wear a face covering that **completely covers both the nose and mouth** while indoors. This applies to our classrooms. A face shield is not an acceptable substitute.
- Eating and drinking will NOT be permitted during class. If you need to eat or drink during class (for example for medical reasons), you will need to leave the classroom (but you may return afterwards). Plan accordingly.
- If you forget your face covering or it does not meet the requirements stated above, you will be asked to leave the classroom immediately. You may not return until you meet the requirement. If you miss a discussion because you forgot your face covering and cannot return with one in time, you will receive a grade of zero for this discussion.
- If a student does not comply with the requirements or the instructor’s direction, the instructor will immediately cancel the remainder of the class session and inform the dean’s office, which will work with the Student Records office to **issue a failing grade (“F”) for the course** regardless of when in the semester the incident occurs. The dean’s office will also inform the Office of Student Conduct.

If you think you have been exposed to COVID-19 and develop symptom of illness, such as cough or difficulty breathing, your top priorities should be getting medical treatment and avoiding further spread of the virus.

- Do NOT come to class if you feel ill. This applies even if you do not suspect Covid-19. If you feel unwell, stay home. Safety first (yours and others’)!
- Seek medical help RIGHT AWAY – an evaluation by medical staff can clarify what the problem is and what treatments can help you. If you are on campus, call the Student Health Service for instructions at 607-777-2221.
- As soon as you are able, let me know about your situation. I will take steps to help you make up the work you miss. I will do the same for other personal and family emergencies that may arise this semester.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Successful participation in this course requires active participation in discussion—both online and in-person—as well as a research design paper, several short assignments, and weekly contributions to a poll log. For purposes of assigning a final grade, the following weighting factors will be applied:

Discussion board posts	25%
Class discussions	25%
Research paper	25%
Research assignments	15%
Poll log	10%

**Discussion board (25%).** For each week, there will be a Brightspace discussion board devoted to that week’s readings. I will post several discussion questions on this board. Your responses will provide the inputs for our in-person discussions. The purpose of these questions is to get you thinking about the material; they are also an opportunity for you to demonstrate that you have spent some time thinking about the readings. In addition, you will be able to post your own questions and/or respond to (or elaborate on) other students’ questions. Your answers to the initial discussion questions for each week will be due on **Tuesday by 9am**.

**Class discussions (25%).** Learning in this course will take place primarily through discussions of the readings and of your experiences with the research assignments. Your **active** participation is essential to making this work. Keep in mind that **asking questions** is just as important (maybe more so) as answering questions, and thus counts toward your participation grade.

**Research paper (25%).** Each student will produce a 12 to 15-page paper (double-spaced, 12pt Times New Roman, exclusive of endnotes and bibliography). The paper will be a **research design**, outlining an original research question related to public opinion and foreign policy, considering either the sources attitudes/preferences toward a particular issue in foreign policy or the impact of public opinion on the conduct and/or outcomes of foreign policy. Detailed instructions will be provided by the third week of classes. A final draft of the research design will be due at midnight on **May 16, 2022**.

**Research assignments (15%).** Each student will complete several short assignments over the course of the semester. These are designed to familiarize students with survey methods and data. Instructions for each research assignment will be listed separately in each week’s To-Do List that is posted on the Brightspace page.

**Poll log (10%).** Each student will contribute weekly to a Poll Log. Your task—which will be explained in more detail during the first week of classes—is to keep a weekly log of 1-2 poll results that appear in the mass media during that week. You will note the topic, date, media source, polling firm (if known), question wording and result. In addition, you may be asked to answer specific questions for each week’s log entry. These questions will be noted in the week’s To-Do List that posted on the Brightspace page.

**Grading Scale.** Your semester grade for the course will be computed on a 100-point scale as follows:

95-100	A	84-87	B	74-77	C		
91-94	A-	81-83	B-	71-73	C-		
88-90	B+	78-80	C+	65-70	D	0-64	F

## COURSE POLICIES

**Missed classes, assignments, or deadlines.** In order to accommodate any classes or assignments you might miss due to religious observance, personal emergencies, or other unforeseen circumstances, the following rules apply:

You may miss TWO discussion meetings without penalty.

You may miss TWO discussion question responses without penalty.

You may miss TWO poll log entries without penalty.

At the end of the semester, if you have completed more than the required number of any of these, I will drop the lowest of your grade(s) for each. **Plan accordingly!** And see the comments on extraordinary circumstances (‘Dealing with...’) below.

**Grade appeals.** All grade appeals must be made in writing. If you believe that I grade I have assigned you is incorrect, you should write a brief note detailing your concerns and submit it to me along with the original graded assignment. I will review the materials and respond to you in writing.

**Academic dishonesty and plagiarism.** Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. You may not give or receive any unauthorized assistance for assignments or exams. *Instances of academic dishonesty will result in a failing grade for the course.* They will also be reported to the Harpur College Academic Honesty Committee for possible further disciplinary measures. You can find out more about the Honesty Code in the University Bulletin (click on Academic Policies and Procedures - All Students): <https://www.binghamton.edu:8443/exist/rest/bulletin/2021-2022/index.html>.

**Students with Additional Needs.** Athletes who expect to miss classes are required to inform the instructor at the beginning of the semester as well as in advance of classes and/or assignments that need to be rescheduled. Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) provides a wide range of assistance to enrolled students with physical, learning or other disabilities. If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact Services for Students with Disabilities: 607-777-2686 (voice/TTY).

**Classroom civility.** In order to create a productive learning environment in our virtual classroom, you will be asked to observe a few simple rules of behavior:

- Be on time (for discussion posts and live discussions).

- Be respectful and courteous.
- Disagree (or agree) with arguments, not people.
- **Before you type something, consider whether you would say it to another student's face.**

Students are strongly encouraged to contribute opinions and observations in ways that invite discussion. Please keep in mind that students in our classroom will have divergent perspectives, unique life experiences, and different strategies for defending their views. Please state your opinions constructively and respectfully. Just as importantly, listen carefully when your colleagues are speaking. If at any time you are offended by something that is said in the context of our class, please let me know.

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**A Note on Dealing With *\*EVERYTHING – AGAIN/STILL\****

Even as we are getting used to in-person instruction again, we all know that things are still not “normal.” All of us are dealing with additional stress and anxiety. **You are not alone.** You don’t have to deal with the stress and anxiety all by yourself. We will all need to help one another to navigate the difficulties we will face, as we have these past two years (and how has it been this long already?).

Please let me know about any issues **as soon as you can.** It is much easier for me to help you if I know about your situation before it critically affects your academic performance. I don’t need to know details. I will not ask questions any more than necessary to assist you. Letting me know sooner rather than later, though, is key. I’m in a much better position to help you and make accommodations if you tell me when the problem arises. It is MUCH harder to do this if you wait until the end of the term. You can email me or check during office hours.

## PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE OF TOPICS & READINGS

This reading list is a work in progress. I reserve the right to add/change readings.

Any changes will be announced at least one week in advance through Brightspace and noted in your To-Do List for the week.

### Week 1: January 25 & 27 – Introduction

Read the syllabus & take the Pew survey (Link on Brightspace)

Read NYT piece about Ukraine and respond to discussion prompt by Thursday, 9am

### Week 2: February 1 & 3 – Public Opinion, Polling, and Democratic Governance

Berelson, Bernard. 1952. "Democratic Theory and Public Opinion." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 16(3): 313-30.

Lippmann, Walter. 1955. *Essays in the Public Philosophy*. New York: Little, Brown & Co. Pages 1-27.

Optional: Schumpeter, Joseph A. 1950. *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*. New York: Harpur. Chapter 21, and Section I of 22.

*On Survey Methods:*

Asher, Herbert. 2017. *Polling and the Public*. Thousand Oaks: CQ Press. Chapter 1. **[BU Library Online]**

Weisberg, Herbert F. 2005. *The Total Survey Error Approach: A Guide to the New Science of Survey Research*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 1 & 2. **[BU Library Online]**

**\*\*Add/Drop Deadline February 7 11:59pm\*\***

### Week 3: February 8 & 10 – Sources of Public Opinion: Knowledge & Rationality

Delli Carpini, Michael X., and Scott Keeter. 1996. *What Americans Know about Politics and Why It Matters*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Chapter 2.

Converse, Philip. 1964. "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics." In *Ideology and Discontent*, edited David Apter. New York: Free Press. Pages 507-530. Reprinted (2006) in *Critical Review* 18: 1-74.

Page, Benjamin I., and Robert Shapiro. 1992. *The Rational Public: Fifty Years of Trends in Americans' Policy Preferences*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 1. **[BU Library Online]**

*On Survey Methods:*

Asher, Herbert. 2017. *Polling and the Public*. Thousand Oaks: CQ Press. Chapter 2. **[BU Library Online]**

#### **Week 4: February 15 & 17 – Sources of Public Opinion: Demographics, Values, and Predispositions**

Rathbun, Brian C., Joshua D. Kertzer, Jason Reifler, Paul Goren, Thomas J. Scotto. 2016. "Taking Foreign Policy Personally: Personal Values and Foreign Policy Attitudes." *International Studies Quarterly* 60(1): 124-137.

Lizotte, Mary-Kate. 2019. "Investigating the Origins of the Gender Gap in Support for War." *Political Studies Review* 17(2): 124-135.

*Optional:* Huddy, Leonie, and Erin Cassese. 2011. "The Complex and Varied Political Effects of Gender." In *The Oxford Handbook of American Public Opinion and the Media*, edited by Robert Y. Shapiro, Lawrence R. Jacobs, George C. Edwards III. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Schuman, Howard, and Amy D. Corning. 2006. "Comparing Iraq to Vietnam: Recognition, Recall, and the Nature of Cohort Effects." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 70(1): 78-87.

#### **Week 5: February 22 & 24 – Armed Conflict: Casualties**

Kriner, Douglas L., and Francis X. Shen. 2010. *The Casualty Gap*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapters 1 & 2 and 4 & 5 and either 6 (Vietnam) or 7 (Iraq). **[BU Library Online]**

*Optional readings (skim if interested):*

Johns, Robert, and Graeme M. Davies. 2019. "Civilian Casualties and Public Support for Military Action: Experimental Evidence." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 63(1): 251-281.

Fazal, Tanisha M. 2021. "Life and Limb: New Estimates of Casualty Aversion in the United States." *International Studies Quarterly* 65(1): 160-172.

Cohen, Dara Kay, Connor Huff, and Robert Schub. 2021. "At War and at Home: The Consequences of US Women Combat Casualties." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 65(4): 647-671.

*On Survey Methods:*

Asher, Herbert. 2017. *Polling and the Public*. Thousand Oaks: CQ Press. Chapter 3. **[BU Library Online]**

Weisberg, Herbert F. 2005. *The Total Survey Error Approach: A Guide to the New Science of Survey Research*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 5 & 6. **[BU Library Online]**

#### **Week 6: March 1 & 3 – Sources of Public Opinion: Elite Discourse (I)**

Berinsky, Adam J. 2007. "Assuming the Costs of War: Events, Elites, and American Public Support for Military Conflict." *Journal of Politics* 69(4): 975-997.

Hayes, Danny, and Matt Guardino. 2011. "The Influence of Foreign Voices on U.S. Public Opinion." *American Journal of Political Science* 55(4): 831-851.

Lazer, David M., et al. 2018. "The Science of Fake News." *Science* 359(6380): 1094-1096.

*On Survey Methods:*

Asher, Herbert. 2017. *Polling and the Public*. Thousand Oaks: CQ Press. Chapter 4. **[BU Library Online]**

Weisberg, Herbert F. 2005. *The Total Survey Error Approach: A Guide to the New Science of Survey Research*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 9 & 10. [BU Library Online]

### **Week 7: March 8 & 10 – Sources of Public Opinion: The Role of Dramatic Events**

Page, Benjamin I., and Robert Shapiro. 1992. *The Rational Public: Fifty Years of Trends in Americans' Policy Preferences*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 8. [BU Library Online]

Fordham, Benjamin O., and Katja B. Kleinberg. 2020. "Too Pacifist in Peace, Too Bellicose in War: Political Information and Foreign Policy Opinion." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 64(10): 1828-1856.

Huddy, Leonie, Stanley Feldman, Charles Taber, and Gallya Lahav. 2005. "Threat, Anxiety, and Support of Antiterrorism Policies." *American Journal of Political Science* 49(3): 593-608.

Bergquist, Parrish, and Christopher Warshaw. 2019. "Does Global Warming Increase Public Concern about Climate Change?" *Journal of Politics* 81(2): 686-691.

\*\*Spring Break March 12–20\*\*

### **Week 8: March 22 & 24 – Globalization 'Backlash': Interests & Information**

Mayda, Anna Maria, and Dani Rodrik. 2005. "Why Are Some People (and Countries) More Protectionist than Others?" *European Economic Review* 49(6): 1393-1430.

Mansfield, Edward D., and Diana C. Mutz. 2009. "Support for Free Trade: Self-Interest, Sociotropic Politics, and Out-Group Anxiety." *International Organization* 63(3): 425-457.

Rho, Sungmin, and Michael Tomz. 2017. "Why Don't Trade Preferences Reflect Economic Self-Interest?" *International Organization* 71(S1): S85-S108.

Fordham, Benjamin O., and Katja B. Kleinberg. 2011. "International Trade and US Relations with China." *Foreign Policy Analysis* 7(3): 217-236.

Optional: Johnston, Christopher D., and Andrew O. Ballard. 2016. "Economists and Public Opinion: Expert Consensus and Economic Policy Judgments." *Journal of Politics* 78(2): 443-456.

### **Week 9: March 29 & 31 – Special Topic (TBA)**

\*\*Course Withdrawal Deadline April 1\*\*

### **Week 10: April 5 & 7 – Sources of Public Opinion: Elite Discourse (II)**

Albertson, Bethany, Lindsay Dun, and Shana Kushner Gadarian. 2020. "The Emotional Aspects of Political Persuasion." In *The Oxford Handbook of Electoral Persuasion* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Branham, J. Alexander, and Christopher Wlezien. 2020. "Do Election Campaigns Matter?" In *The Oxford Handbook of Electoral Persuasion* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Arceneaux, Kevin. 2006. "Do Campaigns Help Voters Learn? A Cross-National Analysis." *British Journal of Political Science* 36(1): 159-173.

Bartels, Larry. 2003. "Democracy with Attitudes." In: *Electoral Democracy*, edited by Michael MacKuen and George Rabinowitz. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

### **Week 11: April 12 & 14 – Public Opinion & Policy: Representation**

Canes-Wrone, Brandice. 2015. "From Mass Preferences to Policy." *Annual Review of Political Science* 18: 147-165.

Risse-Kappen, Thomas. 1991. "Public Opinion, Domestic Structures and Foreign Policy in Liberal Democracies." *World Politics* 43: 479-512.

Jacobs, Lawrence R., and Benjamin I. Page. 2005. "Who Influences U.S. Foreign Policy?" *American Political Science Review* 99(1): 107-23.

Bartels, Larry M. 2016. *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapter 8 ("Economic Inequality and Political Representation").

### **Week 12: April 21 – Public Opinion & Policy: How Elites Use Information about Public Opinion (no class meeting April 19: Monday classes meet)**

Druckman, James N., and Lawrence R. Jacobs. 2006. "Lumpers and Splitters: The Public Opinion Information that Politicians Collect and Use." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 70(4): 453-476.

Sevenans, Julie. 2021. "How Public Opinion Information Changes Politicians' Opinions and Behavior." *Political Behavior* 43: 1801-1823.

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

### **Week 13: April 26 & 28 – Public Opinion & Policy: Issue Salience & Voting**

Aldrich, John H., John L. Sullivan, and Eugene Borgida. 1989. "Foreign Affairs and Issue Voting: Do Presidential Candidates 'Waltz Before a Blind Audience?'" *American Political Science Review* 83(1): 123-141.

Guisinger, Alexandra. 2009. "Determining Trade Policy: Do Voters Hold Politicians Accountable?" *International Organization* 63(3): 533-57.

Hellwig, Timothy T., Eve M. Ringsmuth, and John R. Freeman. 2008. "The American Public and the Room to Maneuver: Responsibility Attributions and Policy Efficacy in an Era of Globalization." *International Studies Quarterly* 52(4): 855-880.

### **Week 14: May 3 & 5 – Public Opinion & Policy Output**

Tomz, Michael, Jessica L.P. Weeks, and Keren Yarhi-Milo. 2020. "Public Opinion and Decisions About Military Force in Democracies." *International Organization* 74(1): 119-143.

Gelpi, Christopher, and Joseph M. Grieco. 2015. "Competency Costs in Foreign Affairs: Presidential Performance in International Conflicts and Domestic Legislative Success, 1953–2001." *American Journal of Political Science* 59(2): 440-456.

Barnhart, Joslyn N., Robert F. Trager, Elizabeth N. Saunders, and Allan Dafoe. 2020. "The Suffragist Peace." *International Organization* 74(4): 633-670.

Goldsmith, Benjamin E., and Yusaku Horiuchi. 2012. "In Search of Soft Power: Does Foreign Public Opinion Matter for US Foreign Policy?" *World Politics* 64(3): 555-585.

**Week 15: May 10 – Wrapping up**

**\*\*Final Research Design due May 16, 11:59pm\*\***