Public Opinion and Communication Syllabus

Comm 4820 Spring 2022

Course Information

- **Course times and location:** Tuesdays 9:10 a.m. to 11 a.m. Some classes will be held in person, others via Zoom.

- **Credit hours:** 3

- **Mode of delivery:** This is a hybrid class. It will be conducted 26% in person and about 74% via Zoom. Use this link to join the class via zoom:

  https://osu.zoom.us/j/96260696639?pwd=SjFaaFRRUzFYOWFQN0lrVFlnOUI0QT09

- **Instructor:** Gerald Kosicki

- **Email:** kosicki.1@osu.edu

- **Office location:** 3038 Derby Hall

  Office hours: Wednesdays from 10-11 a.m on Zoom, or by appointment. Use this link for Zoom:
  https://osu.zoom.us/j/99739223141?pwd=bThwNUdObXNhUmZ1bEgxckpOOTFJdz09

- **Preferred means of communication:**
    - My preferred method of communication for questions is **email. Please use the normal university email system to contact me, <u>NOT</u> the mail function in Carmen.**
    - My class-wide communications will be sent through the Announcements tool in CarmenCanvas. Please check your <u>notification preferences</u> (go.osu.edu/canvas-notifications) to be sure you receive these messages.

Course Description

This course covers the nature and history of public opinion, ways it is measured through survey research and other means, and its relationship to communication and governance. The theoretical meaning of public opinion is quite broad and diverse, but public opinion usually is measured and studied by representative population surveys.

Public opinion is closely related to various forms of communication such as mass communication, social media and interpersonal communication among family and friends networks. Of particular interest are newer forms of assessment of public preferences generated through public deliberation, often called "public consultation." This includes such innovations as Deliberative Polling and a variety of related ideas and technologies. Public consultation goes beyond public opinion – it attempts to measure informed opinion, or opinions that are formed after one has had an opportunity to learn about a topic and discuss it with others. Such consultation is now widely used in a range of situations in which the mature, informed opinions of people are needed to inform decision-making and public choice.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students should develop a clear understanding of the key issues involved in the study of public opinion, the strengths and weaknesses of the main methods used in measuring public opinion in populations. We also consider public consultation, and to appreciate the significant new opportunities that arise from new forms of assessment of quality opinion.

- Understand the key role of public opinion and public affairs communication within democratic society.

- Learn to use the Total Survey Error approach to evaluate surveys and learn the difference between good quality polls and surveys and others.

- Understand the major differences between the study of public opinion and "public consultation," and be able to judge when each approach is most appropriate.

- Learn to differentiate genuine expressions of grassroots (bottom up) public opinion from fake (top down) expressions purchased by corporations, SuperPacs or other special interest groups.

- Understand the contribution of social movements and political leaders to the ways that communication influences public perceptions and misperceptions of key social and political issues.

- Become familiar with at least one of the tools for finding survey results, using it to find some questions on a particular topic, and summarize your results.

How this hybrid course works

Mode of delivery:
This course is hybrid. We have required sessions each week on Tuesdays from 9:10-11 a.m. Some weeks will be conducted on Zoom. Other weeks we will meet in Room 216 of the Journalism Building. The remainder of your work will take place in Carmen throughout the week. I will announce the location of these meetings well in advance so you can plan accordingly.

Pace of online activities: This course is divided into **weekly modules** that are released one week ahead of time. Students are expected to keep pace with weekly deadlines but may schedule their efforts freely within that time frame.

Credit hours and work expectations: This is a 3 credit-hour course. According to Ohio State bylaws on instruction (go.osu.edu/credithours), students should expect around 3 hours per week of time spent on direct instruction (instructor content and Carmen activities, for example) in addition to 6 hours of homework (reading and assignment preparation, for example).

Attendance and participation
Research shows regular participation is one of the highest predictors of success. With that in mind, I have the following expectations for everyone's participation:

- Review the Reading Priorities and Comments memo for the week on Carmen.

- Read assigned materials or view any video materials before the class for which they are assigned

- Come prepared to discuss the materials and ask questions that occur to you.

- Complete the post-class quizzes by the weekly deadline.

- Students are expected to attend each class conducted by Zoom.

- Note that the university expects each student to log into online class activities at least once per week. During most weeks you will probably log in many times. If you have a situation that might cause you to miss a class, discuss it with me as soon as possible. Zoom class meetings are required. If you must be absent because of illness, note that I will try to make a video recording of all Zoom sessions. I will also attempt to make a recording of in-person classes. This is much more challenging and the quality cannot be guaranteed. You should review videos if they exist for any classes that you miss.

- Office hours are optional. If the scheduled time is not convenient and you need to speak with me, please email me for an appointment.

Required course materials

Berinsky, Adam J. (2020). *New Directions in Public Opinion*. Third Edition. New York: Routledge.

Secured Media Library
- o **We will be using the university's Secured Media Library.**
- o The link will be posted on the class Carmen page and you will be automatically directed to the correct video.
- o Secured Media Library help guide

Required Equipment

- **Computer:** current Mac (MacOS) or PC (Windows 10) with high-speed internet connection
- **Webcam:** built-in or external webcam, fully installed and tested
- **Microphone:** built-in laptop or tablet mic or external microphone
- **Other:** a mobile device (smartphone or tablet) to use for BuckeyePass authentication

If you do not have access to the technology you need to succeed in this class, review options for technology and internet access at go.osu.edu/student-tech-access.

Required Software

Microsoft Office 365: All Ohio State students are now eligible for free Microsoft Office 365. Visit the installing Office 365 (go.osu.edu/office365help) help article for full instructions.

CarmenCanvas Access

You will need to use BuckeyePass (buckeyepass.osu.edu) multi-factor authentication to access your courses in Carmen. To ensure that you are able to connect to Carmen at all times, it is recommended that you do each of the following:
- Register multiple devices in case something happens to your primary device. Visit the BuckeyePass - Adding a Device (go.osu.edu/add-device) help article for step-by-step instructions.
- Request passcodes to keep as a backup authentication option. When you see the Duo login screen on your computer, click **Enter a Passcode** and then click the **Text me new codes** button that appears. This will text you ten passcodes good for 365 days that can each be used once.

- <u>Install the Duo Mobile application</u> (go.osu.edu/install-duo) on all of your registered devices for the ability to generate one-time codes in the event that you lose cell, data, or Wi-Fi service.

If none of these options will meet the needs of your situation, you can contact the IT Service Desk at <u>614-688-4357 (HELP)</u> and IT support staff will work out a solution with you.

Technology Skills Needed for This Course

- Basic computer and web-browsing skills
- <u>Navigating CarmenCanvas</u> (go.osu.edu/canvasstudent)
- <u>CarmenZoom virtual meetings</u> (go.osu.edu/zoom-meetings)
- <u>Recording a slide presentation with audio narration and recording, editing and uploading video</u> (go.osu.edu/video-assignment-guide)

Technology Support

For help with your password, university email, CarmenCanvas, or any other technology issues, questions or requests, contact the IT Service Desk, which offers 24-hour support, seven days a week.

- **Self Service and Chat**: <u>go.osu.edu/it</u>
- **Phone:** <u>614-688-4357 (HELP)</u>
- **Email:** <u>servicedesk@osu.edu</u>

Grading

How Your Grade is Calculated

Assignment Category	Points
Brief biographical essay with photo	2
Weekly post-class quizzes (14 x 3% each)	42
Data Assignment	6
Midterm Exam	25
Final Exam	25
Total	100

See Course Modules for due dates.

Descriptions of Major Course Assignments

Summary of Assignments
Brief autobiographical essay. Write a brief essay about yourself, include a picture of that looks like you. See the Assignment on Carmen for more detailed instructions of what to include.

Data Assignment: You will use the Roper Center data archive to research public opinion about some topic that interests you. Write up a brief paper that includes some of the results. See the Assignment on Carmen for more detailed instructions.

Midterm Exam: Exam will be in two parts: Part 1: Objective (Multiple choice/TF questions). Part 2 will be an essay of 600-800 words.

Final Exam: This exam will cover the semester's work. Part 1 will contain some objective questions, similar in format to the Midterm. Part 2 will be an essay of approximately 800 words.

Academic integrity and collaboration: Your written assignments, including discussion posts,

should be your own original work. In formal assignments, you should follow APA style to cite the ideas and words of your research sources. If you are not a communication/journalism major and you are not familiar with APA style, please talk to me about an alternative.

Contacting your instructor, feedback and response times

I am providing the following list to give you an idea of my intended availability throughout the course. Remember that you can call 614-688-4357 (HELP) at any time if you have a technical problem.

- **Preferred contact method:** If you have a question, please contact me first through my Ohio State email address using Outlook or another email client, NOT Carmen mail. I will reply to emails as soon as I can **when class is in session at the university**.

- **Class announcements:** I will send all important class-wide messages through the Announcements tool in CarmenCanvas. Please check your notification preferences (go.osu.edu/canvas-notifications) to ensure you receive these messages.

- **Grading and feedback:** For assignments submitted before the due date, I will try to provide feedback and grades within **seven days**. Assignments submitted after the due date may have reduced feedback, and grades may take longer to be posted.

Grading Scale

93–100: A
90–92.9: A-
87–89.9: B+
83–86.9: B
80–82.9: B-
77–79.9: C+
73–76.9: C
70–72.9: C-
67–69.9: D+
60–66.9: D
Below 60: E

Other policies for discussion and communication

Example: The following are my expectations for how we should communicate as a class. Above all, please remember to be respectful and thoughtful.

- **Writing style**: While there is no need to participate in class discussions as if you were writing a research paper, you should remember to write using good grammar, spelling, and punctuation. A more conversational tone is fine for non-academic topics.

- **Tone and civility**: Let's maintain a supportive learning community where everyone feels safe and where people can disagree amicably. Remember that sarcasm doesn't always come across online. I will provide specific guidance for discussions on controversial or personal topics.

- **Citing your sources**: When we have academic discussions, please cite your sources to back up what you say. For the textbook or other course materials, list at least the title and page numbers. For online sources, include a link.

- **Backing up your work**: Consider composing your academic posts in a word processor, where you can save your work, and then copying into the Carmen discussion.

- **Synchronous sessions**: During our Zoom sessions I ask you to use your real name and a clear photo of your face in your Carmen profile or since our class is small, you are welcome to put on your video. It helps me to see some live faces when talking. During our full-group lecture time, you may turn your camera off if you choose. When in breakout rooms or other small-group discussions, having cameras and mics on as often as possible will help you get the most out of activities. You are always welcome to use the <u>free, Ohio State-themed virtual backgrounds</u> (go.osu.edu/zoom-backgrounds). Remember that Zoom and the Zoom chat are our classroom space where respectful interactions are expected.

Academic Integrity Policy

See <u>Descriptions of Major Course Assignments</u> for specific guidelines about collaboration and academic integrity in the context of this online class.

Ohio State's Academic Integrity Policy

Academic integrity is essential to maintaining an environment that fosters excellence in teaching, research, and other educational and scholarly activities. Thus, The Ohio State University and the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) expect that all students have read and understand the university's <u>Code of Student Conduct</u> (studentconduct.osu.edu), and that all students will complete all academic and scholarly assignments with fairness and honesty. Students must recognize that failure to follow the rules and guidelines established in

the university's *Code of Student Conduct* and this syllabus may constitute "Academic Misconduct."

The Ohio State University's *Code of Student Conduct* (Section 3335-23-04) defines academic misconduct as: "Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the university or subvert the educational process." Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination. Ignorance of the university's *Code of Student Conduct* is never considered an excuse for academic misconduct, so I recommend that you review the *Code of Student Conduct* and, specifically, the sections dealing with academic misconduct.

If I suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, I am obligated by university rules to report my suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. If COAM determines that you have violated the university's Code of Student Conduct (i.e., committed academic misconduct), the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the university.
If you have any questions about the above policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, please contact me.

Other sources of information on academic misconduct (integrity) to which you can refer include:

- Committee on Academic Misconduct (go.osu.edu/coam)
- Ten Suggestions for Preserving Academic Integrity (go.osu.edu/ten-suggestions)
- Eight Cardinal Rules of Academic Integrity (go.osu.edu/cardinal-rules)

Copyright for Instructional Materials

The materials used in connection with this course may be subject to copyright protection and are only for the use of students officially enrolled in the course for the educational purposes associated with the course. Copyright law must be considered before copying, retaining, or disseminating materials outside of the course.

Creating an Environment Free from Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct

The Ohio State University is committed to building and maintaining a community to reflect diversity and to improve opportunities for all. All Buckeyes have the right to be free from harassment, discrimination, and sexual misconduct. Ohio State does not discriminate on the

basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity or expression, genetic information, HIV/AIDS status, military status, national origin, pregnancy (childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or recovery therefrom), race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or protected veteran status, or any other bases under the law, in its activities, academic programs, admission, and employment. Members of the university community also have the right to be free from all forms of sexual misconduct: sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, and sexual exploitation.

To report harassment, discrimination, sexual misconduct, or retaliation and/or seek confidential and non-confidential resources and supportive measures, contact the Office of Institutional Equity:

1. Online reporting form at equity.osu.edu,
2. Call 614-247-5838 or TTY 614-688-8605,
3. Or email equity@osu.edu

The university is committed to stopping sexual misconduct, preventing its recurrence, eliminating any hostile environment, and remedying its discriminatory effects. All university employees have reporting responsibilities to the Office of Institutional Equity to ensure the university can take appropriate action:

- All university employees, except those exempted by legal privilege of confidentiality or expressly identified as a confidential reporter, have an obligation to report incidents of sexual assault immediately.

- The following employees have an obligation to report all other forms of sexual misconduct as soon as practicable but at most within five workdays of becoming aware of such information: 1. Any human resource professional (HRP); 2. Anyone who supervises faculty, staff, students, or volunteers; 3. Chair/director; and 4. Faculty member.

Your Mental Health

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. No matter where you are engaged in distance learning, The Ohio State University's Student Life Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) is here to support you. If you find yourself feeling isolated, anxious or overwhelmed, on-demand mental health resources (go.osu.edu/ccsondemand) are available. You can reach an on-call counselor when CCS is closed at 614- 292-5766. **24-hour emergency help** is available through the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline website (suicidepreventionlifeline.org) or by calling 1-800-273-8255(TALK). The Ohio State Wellness app (go.osu.edu/wellnessapp) is also a great resource.

Accessibility Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The university strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions, please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services (SLDS). After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. In light of the current pandemic, students seeking to request COVID-related accommodations may do so through the university's request process, managed by Student Life Disability Services.

Disability Services Contact Information

- Phone: 614-292-3307

- Website: slds.osu.edu

- Email: slds@osu.edu

- In person: Baker Hall 098, 113 W. 12th Avenue

Accessibility of Course Technology

This online course requires use of CarmenCanvas (Ohio State's learning management system) and other online communication and multimedia tools. If you need additional services to use these technologies, please request accommodations as early as possible.

- CarmenCanvas accessibility (go.osu.edu/canvas-accessibility)

- Streaming audio and video

- CarmenZoom accessibility (go.osu.edu/zoom-accessibility)

Diversity

The School of Communication at The Ohio State University embraces and maintains an environment that respects diverse traditions, heritages, experiences, and people. Our commitment to diversity moves beyond mere tolerance to recognizing, understanding, and welcoming the contributions of diverse groups and the value group members possess as individuals. In our school, the faculty, students, and staff are dedicated to building a tradition of diversity with principles of equal opportunity, personal respect, and the intellectual interests of those who comprise diverse cultures. C

COVID-19 and Illness Policies

University COVID policies

The university strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. In light of the current pandemic, students seeking to request COVID-related accommodations may do so through the university's request process (Links to an external site.), managed by Student Life Disability Services. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic, or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; slds.osu.edu (Links to an external site.); 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

Student illness or absence

If *you* are too ill to participate in this course due to COVID-19 or another illness, please contact the instructor as soon as you are able. All materials will be made available on Carmen, including lecture recordings for sessions that will be conducted online, as well as slides. Alternate assignments or extensions may be arranged.

Instructor illness or absence

If I become too ill to teach the course for a period of time, the School of Communication will arrange a backup instructor. You will be notified via email from the School of Communication.

Course schedule (tentative)

Note that I may add some additional brief readings or videos to reinforce class lessons throughout the semester.

Due dates for post-class quizzes, exams and other requirements will be available on each Module.

Week	Points	Topics, Readings	Assignments
1 1/11	3	Course introductions; basic concepts and resources for studying public opinion. Berinsky: Introduction, pp. 1-17.	Complete post-class quiz.
2 1/18	3	Meaning of public opinion Herbst, S., History and meaning of public opinion, pp. 21-33. Carmen Module. Tilly, C. (1983). Speaking your mind without elections, surveys or social movements. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 47, 4612-478. (Carmen)	Complete post-class quiz.
3 1/25	3	Enduring problems of public opinion Berinsky, Chapter 3: Gilens, Citizen competence and democratic governance, pp. 41-71.	Complete post-class quiz.
4 2/1	3	Research methods of the study for public opinion: Survey Research and Total Survey Error Berinsky, Chapter 2: Hillygus, The practice of survey research, pp. 21-40.	Complete post-class quiz.
5 2/8	3	Other research methods for the study of public opinion: Big data, sentiment analysis of social media, focus groups, Mass Observation. Weisberg, H. (2016), Total Survey Error. *Oxford Handbook of Polling and Polling Methods,* pp. 1-18. (Carmen)	Complete post-class quiz.
6	3	Citizen competence and democracy. Issues in public judgment	Complete post-class quiz.

2/15		Berinsky, Chapter 15: Campbell and Rigby, Public opinion and public policy, pp. 338-362.	
7 2/22	3	Public consultation; Deliberative Polls and related technologies for public engagement. Fishkin, J. (2018). Deliberative polling. In Bachtiger, A., Dryzek, J.S., Mansbridge, J. and Warren, M. (Eds.), The Oxford Handbook of Deliberative Democracy, pp. 1-15. America in One Room Project. Helena Foundation and Center for Deliberative Democracy at Stanford University. https://helena.org/projects/america-in-one-room Hammonds, K.H. (2018). Confronting the narrative of brokenness: How the news could reduce polarization and repair our social fabric. New York: Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement. Participatory Budgeting is Democratizing Fund Allocation in Brooklyn. Bric TV. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S2nhVXX3nVU Recommended: America in one room webinar, Dec. 1, 2021. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a0pDO1Qgzf8	Complete post-class quiz.
8 3/1	3	U.S. demographic changes and public opinion about immigration Berinsky, Chapter 14: Schildkraut, Ambivalence in American public opinion about immigration, pp. 315-337. Berinsky, Chapter 8: Hetherington, Worldview politics, pp. 177-201.	Complete post-class quiz.
9 3/8	28	Belief systems and ideologies	Complete Midterm Exam, Parts 1 and 2 on Carmen. Complete post-class quiz.

		Berinsky, Chapter 3, Federico, Ideology and public opinion, pp. 75-98. Parker, C. (2018). The radical right in the United States of America. In Rydgren, J. (Ed.), *Oxford Handbook of the Radical Right*, pp. 1-21. Midterm Exam in two parts.	
10 3/15	0	Spring Break. No class.	
11 3/22	3	Defining and framing public issues Goode, E. (1994). Moral Panics. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 20, 149-71. Bail, C.A. (2012). The Fringe Effect: Civil society organizations and the evolution of media discourse about Islam since the September 11 attacks. *American Sociological Review* 77, 6, 855-879. Video TBA	Complete post-class quiz.
12 3/29	3	Bringing issues to the attention of the public Huey, Aaron. America's native prisoners of war. TED Talk. https://www.ted.com/talks/aaron_huey#t-1594 Berinsky, Chapter 11, The Daily Them: Hybridity, political polarization and presidential leadership in the digital age, pp. 261-281. Berinsky, Chapter 12, Jerit, How people learn about politics: Navigating the information environment, pp. 282-296	Complete post-class quiz.

13 4/5	3	Fake public opinion expression: Astroturf vs. grassroots opinion and activism Hot Coffee. Video resource. Access from ODEE Secured Media Library. Go.osu.edu/SecuredMediaLibrary Lits, B. (2020). Detecting astrotuf lobby movements. *Communication and the Public*, 5, 3-4, 164-177. DOI: 10.1177.2067047320969435		Complete post-class quiz.
14 4/12	3	Campaigns, difference, and inequality: Knowledge Gap and Digital Divide Berinsky, Chapter 13, Sides & Haselswerdt, Campaigns and elections, pp. 297-314. Video TBA		Complete post-class quiz.
15 4/19	3	Gender, race, ethnicity and public opinion Berinsky, Chapter 5: Tesler, Racial attitudes and American politics, pp. 118-136. Berinsky, Chapter 6: Czaja and Medencia, Race, ethnicity and public opinion, pp. 137-158. Berinsky, Chapter 7: Kinder, Reynolds and Burns, Categorical politics in action: Gender and the 2016 presidential election, pp. 159-176.		Complete post-class quiz.
Final Exam Due by 5/2	25	Final exam will be in two parts. Part 1 will be objective format. Part 2 will be an essay. Both parts must be turned into Carmen by 8 a.m. on May 2.		