This course is about Americans’ views on political issues (“public opinion”) and the extent to which their views influence elected officials (“representation”). The first and larger part of the course takes up public opinion. The second part takes up representation.

Most people who follow politics get their information about public opinion from others—typically, journalists, pundits, and professors—who are in turn getting it from others or, in rare cases, from raw survey data. In a brief but important part of this course, I’ll show you how to download and analyze the raw data itself. My aim is to free you from dependence on information middlemen who often convey a highly selective view of public opinion. It’s good to be able to answer questions about public opinion for yourself.

This is not a course about statistics or computing. That said, background in statistics or econometrics is sure to help, as many of the assigned readings contain statistical analyses of data on public opinion or representation.
Assignments and Grades
Each student must write three reading responses, each 2-3 pages long and accounting for 10% of the overall grade. Discussion accounts for 30% of the final grade. A final paper, 10-15 pages long, accounts for 40% of the final grade.

Perfect attendance does not ensure that you will get a satisfactory discussion grade. If you always attend class but rarely speak, or if you speak regularly in ways that suggest that you haven’t thought about the readings, you will receive a low discussion grade—perhaps an F. In the past, most discussion grades have been in the B range, and C grades have sometimes been more common than A grades.

There is no formal penalty for missing a class. But you cannot contribute to class discussion if you do not attend, so it will be hard to get a high discussion grade if you miss more than a few classes.

MAPPING BETWEEN NUMBERS AND LETTER GRADES
All of the grades that you receive in this course will be letter grades, e.g., A, B+. To compute an average grade for the semester that I can report to the Registrar’s Office, I will translate those letter grades into numbers, average the numbers, and then translate the average back into a letter grade. This is the mapping between letter grades and numbers: below 60 = F, 60 to 63 = D−, 63 to 67 = D, 67 to 70 = D+, 70 to 73 = C−, 73 to 77 = C, 77 to 80 = C+, 80 to 83 = B−, 83 to 87 = B, 87 to 90 = B+, 90 to 93 = A−, 93 and above = A.

GRADES WILL NOT BE ROUNDED UP
Grades will not be rounded up. For example, a final grade of 92.9 will be reported to the Registrar as an A–.

READING RESPONSES
Each student must write three reading responses. These responses should be 2-3 pages long. They should critique—not summarize—at least one of the assigned readings. They must pertain chiefly to the current week’s reading, rather than to reading from previous or subsequent weeks. They may focus on a small part of the assigned reading. I encourage you to talk about the readings with each other, but each of you should write responses on your own.

Whenever you refer to a specific passage or claim in the assigned readings, be sure to mention the relevant page numbers. You can do this briefly and informally: “Smith says X (page 92).” You must cite the page numbers in the printed text, not the page numbers of the PDF file or any other page numbers.

Responses are due 24 hours before the beginning of Thursday’s class. (If class will not be held on Thursday, responses will be due 24 hours before the beginning of Tuesday’s class.)
They should be posted in the appropriate thread of the “Discussions” section of the course web site—not sent by e-mail.

No student may turn in more than one response per week. I will not grant deadline extensions for the reading responses. (Remember, you only need to write three of them.)

You must submit your first response by February 17th, your second response by March 23rd, and your third response by April 27th.

By early May, I expect that I will have graded and returned only those responses that you wrote by early April. If you will want to know your reading-response grades by early May, you should submit the responses by early April.

See the “Format of Assignments” section of this syllabus for further instructions. If you fail to follow those formatting instructions, I will automatically lower your grade: an A will become an A−, a B will become a B−, and so on.

DISCUSSION
Discussion will be based heavily on the readings.

Each student is required to lead the first part of discussion in two different classes. This student should come prepared to speak about the assigned reading for 15 minutes at the beginning of class. It may make sense to begin with a brief overview of the assigned reading, but as with the reading responses, the emphasis should be on critique rather than summary. (As a rule of thumb, spend no more than 90 seconds recapitulating any particular reading.) The discussion grade is based on discussion throughout the semester, but I will weight these presentations heavily as I determine the discussion grade.

In some weeks, more than one student may be assigned to discuss. In those cases, each student must be prepared to talk for 15 minutes. Students should also coordinate with each other to ensure that their comments don’t overlap much.

Students who are going to present in a given class must post at least one page of notes on their presentations to the “Discussions” section of the Canvas site. These notes will not be graded, but they must be posted at least 24 hours before the start of class.

FINAL PAPER
Due at 5:00pm on May 11th. Please meet me before April 1st to discuss potential topics: I don’t want you to take on topics that are too big for a 10-15 page paper. Upload the paper through the “Assignments” section of the Canvas site and slip hard copy under the door of my office. Do not send a copy by e-mail.

I will not reply to email about the final paper that is sent after May 3rd unless the questions are about formatting or are otherwise purely procedural. Please plan accordingly.
FORMAT OF ASSIGNMENTS
All assignments must be double-spaced and set in a 12-to-13-point font. The font must be serifed; this rules out Arial, Calibri, Helvetica, and other sans-serif fonts. The font must not be monospaced; this rules out, e.g., Courier. Margins must be between 1” and 1.33” on each side.

Your name, the date of submission, and “GOV 370L: Public Opinion and Representation,” should appear in the upper right-hand corner of the first page of every assignment. For reading responses, also include the name of the unit as given in this syllabus (e.g., “Tolerance”). The upper right-hand corner of every subsequent page should bear your last name, the page number, and “GOV 370L: Reading Response.” For the final paper, substitute “Final Paper” for “Reading Response.”

Readings
Required readings are marked with an asterisk. The other readings in the syllabus are recommended but not required.

One book is required:


This book is available from the UT Co-op Bookstore.

FINDING THE READINGS
There is no packet of course readings. You should print or acquire them yourself. Most of them are available online, either from URLs that are given in this syllabus or from the course website. If there is no URL in the syllabus and the course website doesn’t have the article, please search for it online. You are responsible for locating every one of the assigned readings.

I find most of the course readings (except those available through Canvas) by searching Google Scholar via https://scholar-google-com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu. I recommend that you start your searches with that URL.

You may need to use an on-campus computer or to connect through the UT-Austin VPN to download the articles. If you don't know what a VPN is, see http://www.utexas.edu/its/vpn/.
RECOMMENDED READINGS
Almost all of my recommendations are topic-specific, and they therefore appear below, in the sections on specific topics. But I also recommend two general texts to you:


STATISTICS IN THE READINGS
There is no statistics prerequisite, but many of the assigned articles use simple statistics. If you want to better understand the statistical methods that you encounter in the articles, I recommend:

Freedman, David, Robert Pisani, and Roger Purves. 1998. Statistics. 3rd ed. New York: W. W. Norton. Presumes almost no background. A few chapters are assigned for the first class and are available from the class web site. There is now a fourth edition; I haven’t read it.

Freedman, David A. 2009. Statistical Models: Theory and Practice. Revised ed. New York: Cambridge University Press. This is better than Statistics but also more advanced. Chapters 1-5 are excellent for self-study if you do the exercises.

Angrist, Joshua D., and Jörn-Steffen Pischke. 2014. Mastering ’Metrics. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. The focus is on the application of quantitative methods to practical problems. I have not read it, but I know another book by the authors that covers the same material at a slightly more advanced level, and that book is very good.

WHAT’S LEFT OUT
In this course, I am doing three things that would ordinarily be done in three different courses: introducing you to ideas and findings in public opinion research; introducing you to ideas and findings in representation research; and teaching you a bit of R. Doing all of this in one course requires some tough compromises.

The toughest three compromises are the omissions of weeks on “nonattitudes,” media effects, and public opinion about war. I will bring these topics into our discussions when appropriate, and you shouldn’t hesitate to ask about them. But notice that we don’t have a full class devoted to any of these topics.
ICPSR Competition
The Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research is sponsoring an undergraduate research paper competition. To be considered, papers must be based on analysis of data in ICPSR’s vast archive, which we’ll explore a bit in our R classes. The competition is open to almost any student whose paper meets this requirement. The first-prize winner gets $1,000; the recognition is worth more.

The deadline will be in January 2017. More information is available from http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/prize/.

Office Hours
Office hours will take place on most Wednesdays from 115pm to 415pm. They will be held at my office: Batts Hall, Room 3.136. You do not need to make an appointment in advance, but I prefer that you do. Making an appointment also reduces the probability that you will need to wait while I’m meeting with other students.

You cannot sign up for my office hours through Canvas. Instead, please make appointments through https://www.slotted.co/2016spring. When you make an appointment, please add a comment indicating what you would like to talk about when we meet.

If all office-hours slots are full—you can tell by checking the slotted.co site—I generally will not be able to meet with you during or immediately after office hours.

Accommodation for Disabilities
If you are disabled, you may ask for accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities (512-471-6259, http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/).
January 19-21: Introduction


*Lee, Hermione. 1996. *Virginia Woolf*. New York: Knopf. Pages 286-87. Read from “At the time, in fact . . .” to “the specialist in abnormality.” There is a direct link between this reading and the Stimson reading. What is it? Come to class with an answer: I may put the question to you, and “I don’t know” will not be an acceptable response.

*This syllabus—please read all of it before coming to class.


January 26-28: Should We Care about Public Opinion?

Each reading required for this part of the class can be seen as offering a reason why we should not care about public opinion. For each reading, try to figure out what the reason is. And in light of these reasons, why should we care about public opinion?


Readings marked by an asterisk (*) are required. All others are optional.


February 2-4: Partisanship and Polarization in the Mass Public

PARTISANSHIP


Hersh, Eitan D. 2015. \textit{Hacking the Electorate: How Campaigns Perceive Voters.} New York: Cambridge University Press. Especially Chapter 5. What can campaigns predict about you if they know your party registration, and how well can they predict it?


Readings marked by an asterisk (*) are required. All others are optional.
104 (November): 720-44. http://journals.cambridge.org/repo_A79mjyfg. Think about how to manipulate partisanship in an experiment. In this article, the authors show you how to do it rather simply.


Green, Donald, Bradley Palmquist, and Eric Schickler. 2002. *Partisan Hearts and Minds: Political Parties and the Social Identities of Voters*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. Chapters 1, 2, and 8. Available from the course web site. The authors’ main argument is that party identification is very stable over time.


**PARTISAN POLARIZATION IN THE MASS PUBLIC**

*Fiorina, Morris P. 2011. *Culture War?* 3rd ed. New York: Pearson Longman. Read the whole book, except for this: you can choose whether to read the abortion chapter or the gay rights chapter, and you should skip both Chapter 8 and the epilogue.


Readings marked by an asterisk (*) are required. All others are optional.


**February 9-11: Income and Voting I**

Of late, there has been a lot of interest in the link between income and representation: are rich citizens better represented than others? We will take up this question—but later in the course, when we take up representation. Our focus this week has more to do with the ways in which income may shape the attitudes and preferences of ordinary citizens.


Readings marked by an asterisk (*) are required. All others are optional.


**February 16-18: Education and Public Opinion**


*Alesina, Alberto, and Edward L. Glaeser. 2004. *Fighting Poverty in the US and Europe*. Oxford. Pages 204-206. You read the entire chapter for last week’s classes. But re-read these pages, which are especially about education. There is an important idea in these three pages, and I will be asking you about it.*


*Merelman, Richard M. 1980. “Democratic Politics and the Culture of American Education.” *American Political Science Review* 74 (June): 319-32. This article is a work of political theory. Some of the ideas in it are radical. Some are ridiculous. Some are profound. There are short follow-ups to this article in the same issue of the APSR, but I don’t find them edifying.*

Readings marked by an asterisk (*) are required. All others are optional.
February 23-March 3: Using R to Analyze Public Opinion Datasets

*On the Canvas website, please find my instructions on getting started with R. Follow those instructions before coming to class.

*Read the questions in the 2008 ANES codebook. (You will need to scroll down a little to get to the interesting stuff.) Also read http://www.electionstudies.org/studypages/2008prepost/2008prepost.htm and prowl around http://www.electionstudies.org for at least a bit.


March 8-10: Political Knowledge


Readings marked by an asterisk (*) are required. All others are optional.


March 22-24: Racial Attitudes

Many of the recommended readings in this unit are not about race; instead, they are about tolerance and about other kinds of intergroup attitudes.


Sniderman, Paul M., and Edward G. Carmines. 1997. *Reaching Beyond Race*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Chapter 2. The authors’ argument is built around several simple figures. Think about the simple and complex interpretations that could be assigned to each figure, and think about how defensible those interpretations are.


Readings marked by an asterisk (*) are required. All others are optional.


March 29-April 5: Income and Voting II: The 2001 Tax Cuts


Readings marked by an asterisk (*) are required. All others are optional.


April 12: Theoretic Foundations of Representation


Readings marked by an asterisk (*) are required. All others are optional.
April 14-19: Descriptive and Substantive Representation

The first two required readings for this unit are theoretical, not empirical.


Mansbridge, Jane. 2003. “Rethinking Representation.” American Political Science Review 97 (4): 515-528. http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0003055403000856. I prefer Mansbridge’s 1999 article; I find the thinking in this one to be somewhat muddled. But it does have some useful ideas. Read Table 1 (page 525) immediately after reading the introduction.


Readings marked by an asterisk (*) are required. All others are optional.
April 26-28: Who Gets Represented?


Gilens, Martin. 2012. Affluence and Influence. New York: Russell Sage. Impressive and the product of an enormous effort. Some people find the first chapter boring, but if you know the background—if you realize that Gilens is using the chapter to join a long debate about the importance of public opinion—you won’t be bored. Boston Review published a symposium on Gilens’ book. I recommend the contributions by Bartels, Yglesias, and Ferejohn. You can find links to those responses at http://goo.gl/Cywco3.


May 3: Reprise

By May, we will have covered a lot of ground. We’ll use the final week to review and synthesize the semester’s readings.

Readings marked by an asterisk (*) are required. All others are optional.