This course will examine public opinion and assess its place in the American political system. The course will emphasize both how citizens’ thinking about politics is shaped and the role of public opinion in political campaigns, elections, and government. While the course will focus on research on the current state of public opinion, throughout the course we will also discuss historical developments in opinion and its place in politics, including changes that arose with the development of polling and with the advent of television and other electronic media. We will also consider normative questions, including the role opinion should play in American democracy.

Course Requirements
Requirements for this course include attendance and participation in section, submission of weekly identification items, an in-class midterm examination, two papers, and a comprehensive final examination, during the allotted final exam time slot for this class. Your TA may assign additional short writing assignments, quizzes, and the like, as part of your section participation grade.

The assignments for the papers will be posted to Collab and announced in lecture.

Grades will be based on the following breakdown:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Section participation</td>
<td>15 percent</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly IDs</td>
<td>5 percent</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Paper</td>
<td>15 percent</td>
<td>February 25, at the beginning of lecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm exam</td>
<td>15 percent</td>
<td>March 16, in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Paper</td>
<td>25 percent</td>
<td>April 27, at the beginning of lecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>25 percent</td>
<td>Thursday, May 7, 9am-noon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Readings
There are five required books for this course, which are available at the UVa Bookstore. They are also all available from the usual online retailers.

Asher, Herbert. 2007. Polling and the Public (7th ed.). Washington: CQ Press. (The sixth edition is also fine.)


All other readings for the course are available through the Collab page for the course.

Sections
The section meetings will provide an opportunity for you to clarify material from the course, discuss the lectures, readings, and current events. Your TA may also assign periodic brief written work in or out of section.

Each week you will be required to submit an identification item (a term or concept) from the week's reading or lectures, along with a short paragraph defining the item. The midterm and final exams will include a section of identification items, drawn from among those you have submitted during the term. You will turn in your IDs via Collab; your TAs will discuss the details of expectations, weekly due dates, and submission procedures. (You will be allowed to miss one week with no penalty.)

Attendance at your weekly section meeting is required. This requirement is reflected, in part, in the 15% of your grade that comes from attendance and active participation in section. In addition, note that consistent section attendance is a requirement of this course, without which you will not receive a passing grade.

Section meeting times:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>1200-1250</td>
<td>CAB 236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>1300-1350</td>
<td>CAB 236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>1600-1650</td>
<td>CAB 323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>1800-1850</td>
<td>CAB 424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>1900-1950</td>
<td>CAB 132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>1100-1150</td>
<td>CAB 337</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sections will not meet the first week; they will meet for the first time the week of January 19.

Other Policies
We respect and uphold University policies and regulations pertaining to the observation of religious holidays; assistance available to the physically handicapped, visually, and/or hearing impaired students; plagiarism; racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, or religious discrimination; and all forms of harassment.

If you have (or suspect you have) a learning or other disability that requires academic accommodations, you must contact the Learning Needs and Evaluation Center (http://www.virginia.edu/studenthealth/l nec.html) as soon as possible, at least two to three weeks before any assignments are due. We take learning disabilities very seriously and we will make whatever accommodations you need to be successful in this class but they must be properly documented by the LNEC.
Plagiarism, or academic theft, is passing off someone else’s words or ideas as your own without giving proper credit to the source. You are responsible for not plagiarizing and are expected to abide by the University of Virginia Honor Code (see http://www.virginia.edu/honor/proc/fraud.html).

Participation in this class implies permission from students to submit their written work to services that check for plagiarism; you may be required to submit both hard and digital copies of your papers.

**Papers turned in late without prior arrangement with your TA will not be considered for a grade.**
Course Schedule and Outline

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

January 13: Introduction to the course

II. MEANING AND MEASUREMENT

January 14: What is “public”? What is “opinion”?  
Is “public opinion” the intersection of the two?  

January 19: No Lecture (MLK Day)

January 21 & 26: Measurement and analysis  
Asher, Herbert. 2007. Polling and the Public (7th ed.), chapters 4-5 (78-118)  
For more on the mechanics of polling, you may want to skim other chapters that interest you.

III. DEMOCRATIC COMPETENCE

January 28: The public's political information and sophistication  

February 2: Political Tolerance  

February 4: Ideology and the organization of opinion  

IV. INDIVIDUAL OPINION

February 9: Self interest  
February 11: Groups I—gender


February 16: Groups II—race


February 18: Core values

February 23: Emotion


February 25: In-Class Movie
Magic Town (abridged)
(You will finish the movie in section.)

The first paper is due at the beginning of lecture on February 25.

March 2 & 4: No class (spring break)

V. OPINION IN POLITICAL CONTEXT

March 9 & 11: A theory of opinion formation

March 16: Midterm examination in class

March 18: The media

March 23: Framing

March 25: Implicit and Explicit Attitudes

March 30 & April 1: Political campaigns

April 6: Guest Speaker
Reading TBA.

April 8 & 13: In-Class Movie: Campaigns in practice
“Journeys with George”

April 15: Collective opinion

April 20: What happened to political discourse?

April 22: Representation: Does opinion affect policy?

VII. CONCLUSIONS
April 27: Public opinion and American democracy

*The second paper is due at the beginning of lecture on April 27*

**Thursday, May 7: Final Examination (9:00am–noon)**