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>March 3, at the beginning of lecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm exam</td>
<td>15 percent</td>
<td>March 22, in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Paper</td>
<td>25 percent</td>
<td>May 3, at the beginning of lecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>25 percent</td>
<td>Tuesday, May 11, 9am-noon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Readings
There is one required book for this course, which is available at the UVa Bookstore:

Asher, Herbert. 2007. Polling and the Public (7th ed.). Washington: CQ Press. (Note: The sixth edition (2004) is also acceptable and may be less expensive.)

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. Your TA will explain the mechanics of turning in your IDs, as well as further details on expectations, and weekly due dates. 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.

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101 Wed 1200-1250 New Cabell B030 Blessing
102 Wed 1300-1350 New Cabell B028 Blessing
103 Thu 1600-1650 New Cabell 325 Rose
104 Thu 1800-1850 Clark G054 Rose
105 Thu 1900-1950 Clark G054 Blessing
106 Wed 1500-1550 New Cabell 338 Rose

Sections will not meet the first week; they will meet for the first time on January 27 and 28.

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/lnec.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).

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 20: Introduction to the course

II. MEANING AND MEASUREMENT

January 25: What is “public”? What is “opinion”? Is “public opinion” the intersection of the two?


January 27 and February 1: Measurement and analysis

III. DEMOCRATIC COMPETENCE

February 3: The public’s political information and sophistication


February 8: Political Tolerance


February 10: Ideology and the organization of opinion
Asher, *Polling and the Public*, chapter 2 (“The Problem of Nonattitudes”)


IV. INDIVIDUAL OPINION

February 15: In-Class Movie
*Boogie Man* (You will be responsible for finishing the movie; it will be available online)

February 17: Implicit and Explicit Attitudes

February 22: Guest Speaker
Claudia Deane, Associate Director of Public Opinion & Media Research at the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation; Former Assistant Polling Director at the Washington Post
(Reading TBA)

February 24: Groups I—political parties

March 1: Groups II—race and gender


March 3: Self interest


The first paper is due at the beginning of lecture.

March 8 & 10: No class (spring break)

March 15: Core values

March 17: Emotion

March 22: Midterm examination in class
V. OPINION IN POLITICAL CONTEXT

March 24: Guest Speaker
Admiral Joseph Prueher, Consulting Professor at the Center for International Security and Cooperation and Senior Adviser, Preventive Defense Project.
(Reading TBA)

March 29 & 31: A theory of opinion formation

April 5: The media

April 7: In-Class Movie
*Journeys with George*
(You will be responsible for finishing the movie; it will be available online)

April 12: Framing

April 14: Political campaigns
Asher, *Polling and the Public*, chapter 7 (“Polls and Elections”)

April 19: Guest Speaker
Joel Bradshaw, President of Joel Bradshaw Associates
(Reading TBA)

VII. CONCLUSIONS: PUBLIC OPINION IN POLITICS

April 21: In-Class Movie: Campaigns in practice
*“By the People: The Election of Barack Obama”*

April 26: Collective (and rational?) opinion

April 28: Representation—how does (does?) opinion affect policy?

May 3: Public opinion and American democracy
Asher, Polling and the Public, chapter 9 (“Polling and Democracy”).
The second paper is due at the beginning of lecture.

Tuesday, May 11: Final Examination (9:00am–noon)