INSTRUCTOR: Cameron D. Anderson  
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PHONE: 519-661-2111 ext.81163  
OFFICE LOCATION: SSC 4217  
OFFICE HOURS: Thursday 10:00am-11:00am (or by appointment) on Zoom (meeting id will be posted on OWL course site)  

COURSE DESCRIPTION:  
This course will explore the topic of public opinion. Through the analytical lens of a political behaviour approach, we will address definitional questions of public opinion and the relationship of public opinion and democracy. We then consider various sources of public opinion including the effects of biological and non-conscious factors, age and various group identities (such as gender, race, religion, class, partisanship and ideology). We next consider the relationship of traditional media and social media with public opinion. We close the course by exploring the topics of macro public opinion and the relationship of public opinion and public policy.  

COURSE READINGS:  
Selection of articles and book chapters available on OWL or online through the UWO Library system.  

GRADE DISTRIBUTION:  
25% Participation  
30% Weekly Reading Summaries (8)  
45% Analytic Papers (3 x 15%) or a research paper
DISCUSSION OF COURSEWORK:

a) Class Participation - As this is a graduate seminar course, there will be no lectures and students are expected to actively participate each week. The participation grade will be based on the quality of comment, evidence of preparation, willingness to challenge accepted ideas and concern for the views expressed by others. If unable to attend, please inform the instructor in advance. Students will be given a preliminary grade for participation in the seventh week of the course. The final participation grade may change based on whether performance improves, declines or stays the same.

b) Reading Summaries - All students will be required to complete eight reading summaries from weeks two through twelve. These summaries should be used as a means of preparing for each week’s class and are intended to provide you with an opportunity, in advance of class, to read, interact with and comment on the readings. The summary should be composed of three parts. The first part should state, in your view, the most important two or three themes arising from that week’s readings. The second part should outline two or three insights gained from these readings. This is to say, what did you learn that you didn’t previously know or understand? The final part of the summary should articulate questions that were generated from the readings. The summaries should not be longer than two double-spaced pages and will be due at the beginning of each class. Please submit summaries through the OWL course page. Each week two to three students will provide a very brief oral report of their reading summary at the beginning of each class. Late summaries will not be accepted. Summaries will be graded on a ‘check system’. Acceptable summaries will receive a ‘√’. Unacceptable or late summaries will receive a ‘√-‘. On occasion, an unusually perceptive summary may receive a ‘√+‘. For the term, an average of ‘√’ will be equivalent to an ‘A-’ grade of 82%.

c) Analytic Papers (or a research paper)– You are required to write 3 analytic papers: one from each of Weeks 2 and 3, Weeks 4 to 8 and Weeks 9 to 12. These papers should keep summary of the readings to a minimum and instead focus on articulating a coherent response to issues, arguments and ideas raised in the readings. You may choose to highlight how common themes are addressed throughout the readings; you might take issue with the central argument of certain authors; you might pose questions that deal with core issues of the readings or you might criticize one author based on the arguments of another and/or your own analysis. These papers will be graded on how well you interact with and develop your response to the readings. The papers should be 7-8 (double-spaced) pages long. These papers are due February 2 (Weeks 2 and 3), March 16 (Weeks 4 to 8) and April 20 (Weeks 9 to 12). This paper cannot be written on the same week’s material that you present your summary. Alternatively, in lieu of the 3 analytic papers, you may choose to write a substantive research paper of 20-25 pages on a topic related to the course content and agreed upon in consultation with the professor. The research paper will be due on the date of the third analytic paper. All papers should be submitted through the OWL course page.
IMPORTANT COURSE POLICIES

Conduct of Classes:
All classes will be conducted virtually through the Zoom platform. The link for the zoom meetings is located in the Zoom tab on the OWL page for this course. Please ensure that you have a good internet connection and are prepared to participate in the class discussion each week. Please review this document (https://www.schulich.uwo.ca/medicine/undergraduate/docs/policies__statements/statements/VC-Etiquette-in-UME---Aug-2020.pdf) for series of expectations and guidelines regarding proper etiquette and best practice for participation in this class through Zoom.

Submission of Assignments:
Assignments (both reading summaries and analytic papers) are due at the beginning of class and will be submitted through the OWL course page. The third analytic paper and research paper will be due at 12pm on April 20.

Academic Offences:
Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf. All papers must be submitted through the turnitin program portal on the OWL course page.

Late penalty:
Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 5% per day. Assignments that are more than 1 week late will not be accepted for grading.

Extensions:
Extensions are not given. However, when there are genuine and unavoidable family or medical circumstances an extension may be granted at the discretion of the professor.
Part I Introductory Topics

Week 1. January 12 – Course Introduction, Political Behaviour and studying politics


Suggested Readings:

Week 2. January 19 – Public Opinion and Democracy


Part II Sources of Public Opinion

Week 3. January 26 – Biology, Non-Conscious Factors and Public Opinion


**Week 4. February 2 – Age and Public Opinion**


**Week 5. February 9 – Gender and Public Opinion**


Week 6. February 16 – Race, Ethnicity and Public Opinion


********* February 23 - No Class - Reading Week *********

Week 7. March 2 – Religion/Class and Public Opinion

Religion


Class


Week 8. March 9 – Ideology and Partisanship and Public Opinion

Parties and Partisanship


Ideology


III Other topics in the Study of Public Opinion

Week 9. March 16 – Media and Public Opinion


**Week 10. March 23 – Social Media and Public Opinion**


**Week 11. March 30 - Macro Public Opinion**


**Week 12. April 6 – Public Opinion and Public Policy**


