

POL 632: Mass Communication and Attitude Change

Spring 2005

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Fridays, 1-4; SBS N705

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Politics hinges not just on whether citizens at any one moment in time tend to favor one side of an issue over another, but on the numbers of them that can be brought, when push comes to shove, from one side to the other (Mutz, Sniderman, and Brody, 1996, p. 1).

As this quote suggests, politics at its core is about persuasion. It is about argumentation and debate, and about bringing citizens to a particular way of thinking about an issue, candidacy, or event. Given its centrality in the political process, understanding the dynamics of political persuasion should be a high priority for the discipline. In a more theoretical vein, the concept of “attitude” is among the most indispensable in the social sciences. This course is intended to provide a survey of contemporary theory and research on attitude formation and change. It is *not* intended to be a general course on the mass media, but rather is concerned only with mass media research as it pertains to individual-level political attitude processes. The course is divided into the following three sections:

1. A consideration of basic concepts (e.g., what is an “attitude”), methodological challenges, and recent controversies (e.g., the distinction between implicit and explicit attitudes).
2. An overview of major psychological theories of persuasion that attempt to answer Harold Lasswell’s classic question: *Who says what, in which channel, to whom, with what effect?*
3. An examination of the major agents of *political* persuasion – the mass media, political elites, social context, and interpersonal processes.

Most weeks I will present a little background material via lecture. Then we will move to a discussion of the theoretical, methodological, and empirical aspects of the assigned readings.

Textbook and Readings:

Zaller, John R. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

There will also be additional readings, available either for purchase in the main office or on JSTOR.

Methods of Evaluation:

Grades will be determined by four factors. The first is class participation. The seminar is based on a discussion – rather than a lecture – format. The quality of the seminar is therefore determined largely by input from the participants. *It is absolutely essential that you participate in the discussions each week, and not simply allow others to do all of the talking.* This requires that you complete the readings prior to class and be ready to discuss them. The second factor is a midterm paper, 10 pages in length, based on a summary and critique of some aspect of the literature. The third factor is a final paper, a 20-page research proposal, where you will sketch out a hypothetical empirical project intended to fill a gap in the literature, challenge established findings, or present a new theory. Fourth, each student will summarize one or two articles pertinent to a given week's readings.

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| Class Participation: | 30% |
| Midterm Paper: | 25% (<i>due Friday, 3/31</i>) |
| Final Paper: | 35% (<i>due Friday, 5/12</i>) |
| Discussion Leader: | 10% |

PART I: BASIC CONCEPTS

Week 1 (1/27): CLASS CANCELLED, SPSP Conference

Week 2 (2/3): The Nature of Attitudes: Explicit Conceptualizations

Eagly, Alice, H., and Shelly Chaiken. 2005. Attitude Research in the 21st Century: The Current State of Knowledge. In Dolores Albarracin, Blair T. Johnson, and Mark P. Zanna (Eds.), *The Handbook of Attitudes*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Cacioppo, John. T., Wendy L. Gardner, and Gary G. Berntson, G. 1997. "Beyond Bipolar Conceptualizations and Measures: The Case of Attitudes and Evaluative Space." *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 1, 3-25.

Bartels, Larry. 2003. Democracy with Attitudes. In Michael B. MacKuen and George Rabinowitz (Eds.), *Electoral Democracy*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Wilson, Timothy, and Sara D. Hodges. 1992. Attitudes as Temporary Constructions. In Leonard L. Martin and Abraham Tesser (Eds.), *The Construction of Social Judgments* (pp. 37-65). Hillsdale NJ: Erlbaum.

Week 3 (2/10): The Nature of Attitudes: Implicit Conceptualizations

Fazio, R. H., & Olson, M. A. 2003. Implicit Measures in Social Cognition: *Annual Review of Psychology*, 54, 297-327.

Greenwald, A. G., McGhee, D.E., & Schwartz, J. L. K. 1998. Measuring Individual Differences in Implicit Cognition: The Implicit Association Test. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74, 1464-1480.

Olson, M. A., & Fazio, R. H. 2004. Reducing the Influence of Extrapersonal Associations on the Implicit Association Test: Personalizing the IAT. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 86, 653-667.

Mendelberg, Tali. 2001. *The Race Card: Campaign Strategy, Implicit Messages, and the Norm of Equality*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press (Chapters 4-6).

Wilson, T. D., Lindsey, S., & Schooler, T. 2000. "A Model of Dual Attitudes." *Psychological Review*, 107, 101-126.

*Rudman, L. A. (2004). Sources of Implicit Attitudes. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 13, 80-83.

*Nosek, Brian A. 2005. Moderators of the Relationship between Implicit and Explicit Evaluation. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 134, 565-584.

*Nosek, Brian A., and Banaji, M. 2001. The Go/No Go Association Task. *Social Cognition*, 19, 625-664.

*Cunningham, W. A., Nezleck, J. B., and Banaji, M. R. 2004. Implicit and Explicit Ethnocentrism: Revising the Ideologies of Prejudice. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 30, 1332-1346.

Week 4 (2/17): The Nature of Attitudes III: Genetic, Neural, and Evolutionary Approaches

Tesser, A. 1993. The Importance of Heritability in Psychological Research: The Case of Attitudes. *Psychological Review*, 100, 129-142.

Alford, John R., Carolyn L. Funk and John R. Hibbing. 2005. Are Political Orientations Genetically Transmitted? *American Political Science Review*, 99, 153-167.

Cunningham, W. A., et al. 2003. Neural Components of Social Evaluation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 85, 639-649.

Lieberman, M. D., Schreiber, D., and Ochsner, K. N. 2003. Is Political Cognition Like Riding a Bicycle? How Cognitive Neuroscience can Inform Research on Political Thinking. *Political Psychology*, 24, 684-704.

PART II: PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES OF PERSUASION

Week 5 (2/24): Dual Process Models

Eagly, Alice, H., and Shelly Chaiken. 1993. *The Psychology of Attitudes*. New York: HBJ (Chapter 7: Process Theories of Attitude Formation and Change: The Elaboration Likelihood and Heuristic-Systematic Models).

Petty, Richard E., and Duane T. Wegener. 1999. The Elaboration Likelihood Model: Current Status and Controversies. In Shelly Chaiken and Yaacov Trope (Eds.), *Dual Process Theories in Social Psychology*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Chaiken, Shelly, and D. Maheswaran. 1994. Heuristic Processing can Bias Systematic Processing: Effects of Source Credibility, Argument Ambiguity, and Task Importance on Attitude Judgment. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 66, 460-473.

Kruglanski, Arie, W., and Erik P. Thompson. 1999. Persuasion by a Single Route: A View from the Unimodel. *Psychological Inquiry*, 2, 83-109.

Basinger, Scott, and Howard Lavine. 2005. Ambivalence, Information, and Electoral Choice. *American Political Science Review*, 99, 169-184.

Week 6 (3/3): Motivational Models of Attitude Change

Marsh, K. L., and Wallace, H. M. 2005. The Influence of Attitudes on Beliefs: Formation and Change. In Dolores Albarracín, Blair T. Johnson, and Mark P. Zanna (Eds.), *The Handbook of Attitudes*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Taber, C., and Lodge, M. Forthcoming. Motivated Skepticism in the Evaluation of Political Beliefs. Forthcoming. *American Journal of Political Science*.

Lavine, H., and Snyder, M. 2000. Cognitive Processes and the Functional Matching Effect in Persuasion: Studies of Personality and Political Behavior. In G. R. Maio & J. M. Olson (Eds.), *Why we evaluate: Functions of attitudes* (pp. 97-131). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Bizer et al. 2004. The Impact of Personality on Cognitive, Behavioral, and Affective Political Processes: The Effects of Need to Evaluate. *Journal of Personality*, 72, 995-1027.

Edwards, Kari, and Edward E. Smith. 1996. A Disconfirmation Bias in the Evaluation of Arguments. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 71, 5-24.

Week 7 (3/10): Attitude Structure and Attitude Change

Alvarez, Michael R., and John Brehm. 1995. American Ambivalence Towards Abortion Policy: Development of a Heteroskedastic Probit Model of Competing Values. *American Journal of Political Science*, 39, 1055-1082.

Lavine, H. 2001. The Electoral Consequences of Ambivalence Toward Presidential Candidates. *American Journal of Political Science*, 45, 915-929.

Huskinson, T. L. H., and Haddock, G. 2004. Individual Differences in Attitude Structure: Variance in the Chronic Reliance on Affective and Cognitive Information. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 40, 82-90.

Lord, C.G., & Lepper, M.R. 1999. Attitude Representation Theory. In M. P. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* (Vol. 31, 265-343). San Diego: Academic Press.

Fabrigar, L., & Petty, R. E. 1999. The Role of the Affective and Cognitive Bases of Attitudes in Susceptibility to Affectively and Cognitively Based Persuasion. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 25, 363-381.

Week 8 (3/17): The Role of Affect in Attitude Change

Clore, G. L., and Schnall S. 2005. The Influence of Affect on Attitude. In Dolores Albarracin, Blair T. Johnson, and Mark P. Zanna (Eds.), *The Handbook of Attitudes*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Brader, Ted. 2005. Striking a Responsive Chord: How Political Ads Motivate and Persuade Voters by Appealing to Emotions. *American Journal of Political Science*, 49.

Storbeck, J., & Robinson, M. D. 2004. Preferences and Inferences in Encoding Visual Objects: A Systematic Comparison of Semantic and Affective Priming. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 30, 81-93.

DeSteno, D., Petty, R. E., Rucker, D. D., Wegener, D. T., & Braverman, J. 2004. Discrete Emotions and Persuasion: The Role of Emotion-Induced Expectancies. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 86, 43-56.

Cesario, J., Grant, H., & Higgins, E. T. 2004. Regulatory Fit and Persuasion: Transfer from "Feeling Right." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 86, 388-404.

Week 9 (3/24): Valence Asymmetries and Attitude Change

Bizer, G. Y., and Petty, R. E. 2005. How We Conceptualize our Attitudes Matters: The Effects of Valence Framing on the Resistance of Political Attitudes. *Political Psychology*, 26, 553-568.

Holbrook, A., Krosnick, J. A., Visser, P. S., Gardner, W. L., & Cacioppo, J. T. 2001. Attitudes Toward Presidential Candidates and Political Parties: Initial Optimism, Inertial First Impressions, and a Focus on Flaws. *American Journal of Political Science*, 45, 930-950.

Lau, Richard. 1985. Two Explanations for Negativity Effects in Political Behavior. *American Journal of Political Science*, 29, 119-138.

Goren, Paul. 2002. Character Weakness, Partisan Bias, and Presidential Evaluation. *American Journal of Political Science*, 46, 627-641.

Dijksterhuis, A., and Aarts, H. 2003. On Wildebeests and Humans: The Preferential Detection of Negative Simuli. *Psychological Science*, 14, 14-18.

*Ito, T., Larson, J. T., Smith, N. K., and Cacioppo, J. T. 1998. Negative Information Weighs More Heavily on the Brain: The Negativity Bias in Evaluative Categorizations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 75, 887-900.

PART III: PERSUASION BY THE MASS MEDIA, ELITES, THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT, AND THROUGH INTERPERSONAL INTERACTION

Week 10 (3/31): Priming and Framing

Druckman, James. 2004. Political Preference Formation: Competition, Deliberation, the (Ir)relevance of Framing Effects. *American Political Science Review*, 98, 671-686.

Huckfeldt, R., Levine, J., Morgan, W. & Sprague, J. 1999. Accessibility and the Political Utility of Partisan and Ideological Orientations. *American Journal of Political Science*, 43, 888-911.

Krosnick, Jon. A., and Donald R. Kinder. 1990. Altering Popular Support for the President Through Priming: The Iran-Contra affair. *American Political Science Review*, 84, 497-512.

Nelson, Thomas E., and Donald R. Kinder. 1996. Issue Frames and Group-Centrism in American Public Opinion. *Journal of Politics*, 58, 1055-1078.

Valentino, N. A., Hutchings, V. L., & White, I. K. 2002. "Cues that Matter: How Political Ads Prime Racial Attitudes During Campaigns." *American Political Science Review*, 75-90.

Week 11 (4/7): Introduction to the Influence of the Mass Media

Miller, Joanne, M., and Jon A. Krosnick. 2000. News Media Impact on the Ingredients of Presidential Evaluations: Politically Knowledgeable Citizens are Guided by a Trusted Source." *American Journal of Political Science*, 44, 295-309.

Kellstedt, P. M. 2000. Media Framing and the Dynamics of Racial Policy Preferences. *American Journal of Political Science*, 44, 245-260.

Mutz, Diana and Paul S. Martin. 2001. Facilitating Communication Across Lines of Political Difference: The Role of the Mass Media. *American Political Science Review*, 95, 97-114.

Vallone, R., Ross, L., & Lepper, M. 1985. "The Hostile Media Phenomenon: Biased Perception and Perceptions of Media Bias in Coverage of the Beirut Massacre." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 49, 577-588.

Dalton, R. J., Beck, P. A., & Huckfeldt, R. 1998. "Partisan Cues and the Media: Information Flows in the 1992 Presidential Election. *American Political Science Review*, 92, 111-126.

Week 12 (4/14): SPRING BREAK

Week 13 (4/21): The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion

Zaller Chapters 1-6

Week 14 (4/28): The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion

Zaller, Chapters 7-12

Week 15 (5/5) Persuasion by Elites

Petrocik, J. R. 1996. "Issue Ownership in Presidential Elections, with a 1980 Case Study." *American Journal of Political Science*, 40, 825-850.

Kahn, K. F., & Kenny, P. J. 2002. The Slant of the News: How Editorial Endorsements Influence Campaign Coverage and Citizens' Views of Candidates. *American Political Science Review*, 96, 381-394.

Druckman, James and Michael Parkin. Forthcoming. How Editorial Slant Affects Voters. *Journal of Politics*.

Finkel, Steven E., and John G. Geer. 1998. Spot Check: Casting Doubt on the Demobilizing Effect of Attack Advertising. *American Journal of Political Science*, 42, 573-596.

Mendelberg, Tali. 1997. Executing Hortons: Racial Crime in the 1988 Presidential Campaign. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 61, 134-157.

Week 16 (5/12): Social Context and Interpersonal Processes

*****MAKE UP FROM WEEK 1*****

Kuklinski, J. H., Quirk, P. J., Jerit, J., & Rich, R. F. 2001. "The Political Environment and Citizen Competence." *American Journal of Political Science*, 45, 410-424.

Nowak, A., & Szamrej, J., & Latané, B. 1990. From Private Attitude to Public Opinion: A Dynamic Theory of Social Impact. *Psychological Review*, 97, 362-376.

Oliver, Eric, J., and Tali Mendelberg. 2000. Reconsidering the Environmental Determinants of White Racial Attitudes. *American Journal of Political Science*, 44, 574-589.

Visser, P. S., & Mirabile, R. R. (2004). Attitudes in the Social Context: The Impact of Social Network Composition on Individual-Level Attitude Strength. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 87, 779-795.

Cohen, G. L. (2003). Party over Policy: The Dominating Impact of Group Influence on Political Beliefs. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 85, 808-822.

*Mutz, Diana C. 1992. "Impersonal Influence: Effects of Representations of Public Opinion on Political Attitudes." *Political Behavior* 14: 89-122.

*Doty, R. M., Peterson, B. E., & Winter, D. G. 1991. Threat and authoritarianism in the United States, 1978-1987. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 61, 629-640.