

SOCIAL INFLUENCE IN POLITICAL BEHAVIOR

POS 5208 – SPRING 2020

Wednesdays 11:45AM-2:15PM in Bellamy 113

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1 COURSE INFORMATION

Course Objectives

This course examines *social* influence: how our political attitudes and actions are influenced by the people around us. Though the material will be most relevant for students of political behavior, the material will also be useful for people who wish to take interdependence seriously in their theories and analysis, regardless of the substantiate application. The course has three objectives:

1. The first goal of the course is to understand the distinct set of substantive questions that social influence helps explain and the theoretic approaches that scholars use to address these questions. We will see how these approaches are applied to a range of substantive topics including attitude formation, political participation, and the acquisition of political information—and misinformation.
2. In addition to these substantive considerations, a second goal of the course is to understand the methods that scholars use to study social influence. While we will consider readings that trace the development of the field over time, the emphasis will be on recent quantitative work. The material will emphasize the ways that methodological conventions inform both the questions researchers ask and the answers they receive. To accomplish this goal, students will learn about survey methods for collecting network data and network science methods of analysis.
3. The third goal of the course will be to increase students' overall level of professionalism. We will accomplish this goal, in part, by periodic discussions of a variety of relevant topics for carrying out and presenting political science research—in both written and oral form. The final paper and presentation, discussed below, is designed to compliment this emphasis.

Required Book

Duncan J. Watts. *Everything Is Obvious: *Once You Know the Answer*. Crown Publishing Group, March 2011

2 GRADES

Students' grades for the course are comprised of the following components:

PARTICIPATION (20%): Each weekly meeting will be spent discussing and critically evaluating the assigned readings. At the beginning of the meeting, I will ask each student to provide a brief comment or question that will serve to help orient our discussion of the week's material. After this open-ended discussion, the remainder of the class will be spent evaluating each assigned reading in greater depth. Students' participation grades hinge on their contribution to each discussion. Students will earn a B grade for the week if they demonstrate their familiarity with the readings, a B+/A- grade if they demonstrate an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of these readings, and an A if they demonstrate an understanding of how these readings build upon, reinforce, or contradict material from earlier in the course.

HOMEWORK (35%): Students will complete eight homework assignments based on the course material. Specific instructions for each assignment will be provided the week before it is due. Some assignments

will ask you to reflect on the readings. Others will ask you to conduct and report network analysis. All assignments are due by 4pm on the Tuesday before the relevant class and must be submitted to me by email in a single pdf document.

All assignments must be submitted via email as a pdf by 4pm on the Tuesday before the relevant class. The filename must use the 'lastname-#.pdf' format (e.g., my third assignment would be named "pietryka-3.pdf"). Late assignments will not be accepted except with a documented excuse. All assignments must be carefully proofread and properly formatted using the APSA guidelines. All graphics and tables should be approaching publication quality. Assignments that require statistical analysis must include an appendix with all relevant R code used to perform the analysis. All written discussion of statistics should strive to provide clear and accurate interpretations that a social scientist with no network analysis training could understand.

HOMEWORK PRESENTATION (5%): Each student must present a revised version of one of their homework assignments to the class. More details will be given in class.

FINAL PAPER (30%) Students must write a final paper that includes the introduction, theory, and research design of an original research project. Students do not need to collect nor analyze data for the project. Students should visit me during office hours early in the semester for guidance on picking a suitable topic. As the semester progresses, students should seek guidance from me and their peers about their theory and research design. More details will be available as the semester progresses.

FINAL PAPER PRESENTATION (10%): In one of the last two meetings of the course, each student will present their theory and research design from their final paper. Presentations should be 10-15 minutes and must include slides.

The final letter grade will be assigned according to the standard table:

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|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 93-100: A | 87-89 : B+ | 80-82 : B- | 73-76 : C | 67-69 : D+ | 60-62 : D- |
| 90-92 : A- | 83-86 : B | 77-79 : C+ | 70-72 : C- | 63-66 : D | 00-59 : F |

3 POLICIES

University Attendance Policy

Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.

Academic Honor Policy

The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to "... be honest and truthful and ... [to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University." (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at <http://fda.fsu.edu/Academics/Academic-Honor-Policy>.)

Americans With Disabilities Act

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; and (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide

classroom accommodation to a student until appropriate verification from the Student Disability Resource Center has been provided. This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request. For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact: Student Disability Resource Center, 874 Traditions Way, 108 Student Services Building, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167, 850-644-9566 (voice), 850-644-8504 (TDD), sdrc@admin.fsu.edu, <http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/>

Syllabus Change Policy

Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.

4 SCHEDULE

WEEK 1: Introduction

- Chapter 7 from Bernard R. Berelson, Paul F. Lazarsfeld, and William N. McPhee. *Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1954
- Robert Huckfeldt, Jeffery J. Mondak, Matthew Hayes, Matthew T. Pietryka, and Jack Reilly. Networks, Interdependence, and Social Influence in Politics. In Leonie Huddy, David O. Sears, and Jack S. Levy, editors, *The Oxford handbook of political psychology*, pages 662–698. Oxford University Press, Oxford, England, second edition, September 2013
- Chapter 16 from Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *The Craft of Research*. University of Chicago Press.

WEEK 2: Overview and Applications of Social Network Analysis

- Stephen P. Borgatti, Ajay Mehra, Daniel J. Brass, and Giuseppe Labianca. Network Analysis in the Social Sciences. *Science*, 323(5916):892–895, February 2009
- Jennifer M. Larson and Janet I. Lewis. Ethnic Networks. *American Journal of Political Science*, 61(2):350–364, April 2017
- Cesi Cruz, Julien Labonne, and Pablo Querubín. Politician Family Networks and Electoral Outcomes: Evidence from the Philippines. *American Economic Review*, 107(10):3006–3037, October 2017
- David A. Siegel. Social Networks and Collective Action. *American Journal of Political Science*, 53(1):122–138, January 2009

WEEK 3: Everything is Obvious

- Duncan J. Watts. *Everything Is Obvious: *Once You Know the Answer*. Crown Publishing Group, March 2011

As you read, take notes summarizing the main arguments Watts makes in each chapter and the evidence he provides in support of those arguments. Come to class prepared to discuss the implications of his arguments for the study of research questions for your subfield (or sub-subfield).

WEEK 4: Diffusion

- James Coleman, Elihu Katz, and Herbert Menzel. The Diffusion of an Innovation Among Physicians. *Sociometry*, 20(4):253–270, 1957
- Mark S. Granovetter. The Strength of Weak Ties. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 78(6):1360–1380, 1973
- Damon Centola and Michael Macy. Complex Contagions and the Weakness of Long Ties. *American Journal of Sociology*, 113(3):702–734, November 2007
- Samara Klar and Yotam Shmargad. The Effect of Network Structure on Preference Formation. *The Journal of Politics*, 79(2):717–721, January 2017

WEEK 5: Collective action

- Mark Granovetter. Threshold Models of Collective Behavior. *American Journal of Sociology*, 83(6):1420–1443, 1978
- Robert Huckfeldt and John Sprague. Political Parties and Electoral Mobilization: Political Structure, Social Structure, and the Party Canvass. *The American Political Science Review*, 86(1):70, March 1992
- David W. Nickerson. Is Voting Contagious? Evidence from Two Field Experiments. *American Political Science Review*, 102(1):49–57, February 2008
- James H. Fowler and Nicholas A. Christakis. Cooperative behavior cascades in human social networks. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 107(12):5334–5338, March 2010
- Romain Ferrali, Guy Grossman, Melina R. Platas, and Jonathan Rodden. It Takes a Village: Peer Effects and Externalities in Technology Adoption. *American Journal of Political Science*, n/a(n/a)

WEEK 6: Socialization

- Shanto Iyengar, Tobias Konitzer, and Kent Tedin. The Home as a Political Fortress: Family Agreement in an Era of Polarization. *The Journal of Politics*, 80(4):1326–1338, September 2018
- Randall Akee, William Copeland, E. Jane Costello, John B Holbein, and Emilia Simeonova. Family Income and the Intergenerational Transmission of Voting Behavior: Evidence from an Income Intervention. Working Paper 24770, National Bureau of Economic Research, June 2018
- M. Kent Jennings and Gregory B. Markus. Partisan Orientations over the Long Haul: Results from the Three-Wave Political Socialization Panel Study. *American Political Science Review*, 78(4):1000–1018, December 1984
- Jennifer Fitzgerald and K. Amber Curtis. Partisan Discord in the Family and Political Engagement: A Comparative Behavioral Analysis. *The Journal of Politics*, 74(1):129–141, January 2012
- Noam Lupu and Leonid Peisakhin. The Legacy of Political Violence across Generations. *American Journal of Political Science*, 61(4):836–851, October 2017

WEEK 7: Opinion formation

- Paul Djupe, Scott Mcclurg, and Anand Edward Sokhey. The Political Consequences of Gender in Social Networks. *British Journal of Political Science*, 48(3):637–658, July 2018
- Ada W. Finifter. The Friendship Group as a Protective Environment for Political Deviants. *The American Political Science Review*, 68(2):607–625, 1974
- Samara Klar. Partisanship in a Social Setting. *American Journal of Political Science*, 58(3):687–704, July 2014
- James N. Druckman, Matthew S. Levendusky, and Audrey McLain. No Need to Watch: How the Effects of Partisan Media Can Spread via Interpersonal Discussions. *American Journal of Political Science*, 62(1):99–112, 2018
- Taylor N. Carlson. Through the Grapevine: Informational Consequences of Interpersonal Political Communication. *American Political Science Review*, 113(2):325–339, May 2019

WEEK 8: Homophily

- Gueorgi Kossinets and Duncan J. Watts. Origins of Homophily in an Evolving Social Network. *American Journal of Sociology*, 115(2):405–450, September 2009
- Sharad Goel, Winter Mason, and Duncan J. Watts. Real and perceived attitude agreement in social networks. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 99(4):611–621, October 2010
- Gregory A. Huber and Neil Malhotra. Political Homophily in Social Relationships: Evidence from Online Dating Behavior. *The Journal of Politics*, 79(1):269–283, October 2016

- William Minozzi, Hyunjin Song, David M. J. Lazer, Michael A. Neblo, and Katherine Ognyanova. The Incidental Pundit: Who Talks Politics with Whom, and Why? *American Journal of Political Science*, 64(1):135–151, 2020

WEEK 9: Exposure to difference

- Robert Huckfeldt, Jeanette Morehouse Mendez, and Tracy Osborn. Disagreement, Ambivalence, and Engagement: The Political Consequences of Heterogeneous Networks. *Political Psychology*, 25(1):65–95, February 2004
- Diana C. Mutz and Jeffery J. Mondak. The Workplace as a Context for Cross-Cutting Political Discourse. *The Journal of Politics*, 68(1):140–155, February 2006
- Casey A. Klofstad, Anand Edward Sokhey, and Scott D. McClurg. Disagreeing about Disagreement: How Conflict in Social Networks Affects Political Behavior. *American Journal of Political Science*, 57(1):120–134, January 2013
- Pablo Barberá, John T. Jost, Jonathan Nagler, Joshua A. Tucker, and Richard Bonneau. Tweeting From Left to Right: Is Online Political Communication More Than an Echo Chamber? *Psychological Science*, 26(10):1531–1542, October 2015

WEEK 10: Social and Physical Distance

- Edward O. Laumann. The Social Structure of Religious and Ethnoreligious Groups in a Metropolitan Community. *American Sociological Review*, 34(2):182–197, 1969
- Brady Baybeck and Robert Huckfeldt. Urban contexts, spatially dispersed networks, and the diffusion of political information. *Political Geography*, 21(2):195–220, February 2002
- Jonathan Mummolo and Clayton Nall. Why Partisans Do Not Sort: The Constraints on Political Segregation. *The Journal of Politics*, 79(1):45–59, October 2016
- Matthew T. Pietryka, Sarah John, and Donald A. DeBats. Social Proximity and ‘Friends-and-Neighbors’ Voting in Local Elections. 2020
- Jacob R. Brown and Ryan D. Enos. Partisan Segregation. Working paper: <https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/renos/> 2020

WEEK 11: Group Identity

- Henri Tajfel. Experiments in Intergroup Discrimination. *Scientific American*, 223(5):96–103, 1970
- Shanto Iyengar, Gaurav Sood, and Yphtach Lelkes. Affect, Not Ideology: A Social Identity Perspective on Polarization. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 76(3):405–431, January 2012
- Lilliana Mason. “I Disrespectfully Agree”: The Differential Effects of Partisan Sorting on Social and Issue Polarization. *American Journal of Political Science*, 59(1):128–145, January 2015
- Jeffrey Lyons and Anand E. Sokhey. Discussion Networks, Issues, and Perceptions of Polarization in the American Electorate. *Political Behavior*, 39(4):967–988, December 2017
- Katherine Cramer Walsh. Putting Inequality in Its Place: Rural Consciousness and the Power of Perspective. *American Political Science Review*, 106(3):517–532, August 2012

WEEK 12: Social Capital

- James S. Coleman. Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital. *American Journal of Sociology*, 94:S95–S120, 1988
- Ronald La Due Lake and Robert Huckfeldt. Social Capital, Social Networks, and Political Participation. *Political Psychology*, 19(3):567–584, September 1998
- Chapters 1-2, from Robert P. Putnam. *Bowling Alone*. Simon & Schuster, New York, 2000

- Ronald S. Burt. Structural Holes and Good Ideas. *American Journal of Sociology*, 110(2):349–399, 2004
- Nathan Eagle, Michael Macy, and Rob Claxton. Network Diversity and Economic Development. *Science*, 328(5981):1029–1031, May 2010

WEEK 13: Deliberation

- Lindsey Clark Levitan and Penny S. Visser. Social network composition and attitude strength: Exploring the dynamics within newly formed social networks. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 45(5):1057–1067, September 2009
- William Minozzi, Michael A. Neblo, Kevin M. Esterling, and David M. J. Lazer. Field experiment evidence of substantive, attributional, and behavioral persuasion by members of Congress in online town halls. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 112(13):3937–3942, March 2015
- T. K. Ahn, Robert Huckfeldt, Alexander K. Mayer, and John Barry Ryan. Expertise and Bias in Political Communication Networks. *American Journal of Political Science*, 57(2):357–373, April 2013
- Adam F. Simon and Tracy Sulkin. Discussion’s Impact on Political Allocations: An Experimental Approach. *Political Analysis*, 10(4):403–412, November 2002

WEEK 14: Nonlinear politics, chaos, and complexity

- Jake M. Hofman, Amit Sharma, and Duncan J. Watts. Prediction and explanation in social systems. *Science*, 355(6324):486–488, February 2017
- W. Brian Arthur. Positive Feedbacks in the Economy. *Scientific American*, 262(2):92–99, 1990
- Matthew J. Salganik and Duncan J. Watts. Leading the Herd Astray: An Experimental Study of Self-fulfilling Prophecies in an Artificial Cultural Market. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 71(4):338–355, December 2008
- Marlon Ramos, Jia Shao, Saulo D. S. Reis, Celia Anteneodo, José S. Andrade, Shlomo Havlin, and Hernán A. Makse. How does public opinion become extreme? *Scientific Reports*, 5(1):1–14, May 2015

WEEK 15: Presentations

Students will present their final projects. We will conclude by discussing the state of the field and promising questions for future research.