



Political Manipulation

Instructor: Jiyeon Kim

Classroom:

Office:

Office Hours:

Contact:

COURSE OVERVIEW

Course description

This course examines how various political actors manipulate the rules and availability of information to shift political outcomes in their favor. The course covers theories of public opinion and political psychology to help understand contemporary issues of political manipulation. We will examine how to identify political manipulation in our daily political lives and how to enact or block its effects.

Course goals

By the end of this course:

- Students will gain in-depth knowledge of the scholarly literature in public opinion and political psychology with a particular focus on its implications on political influence.
 - Expected Learning Outcome:
 - Be able to identify key forces and actors that shape public opinion and understand how it is formed.
 - Understand the various psychological concepts and mechanisms that can explain political manipulation.
 - Be able to apply general theories and models of public opinion and political psychology to contemporary issues of political manipulation.

- Students will develop analytic and critical thinking skills that will enable them to evaluate competing arguments and appraise value-based claims.
 - Expected Learning Outcome:
 - Make predictions about patterns of political manipulation based on knowledge of public opinion and political psychology.
 - Draw on empirical evidence to develop and implement effective strategies to influence the public and policymakers to enact (or block) political manipulation successfully.

GRADING

How your grade is calculated

Assessment for this course will be based on problem sets, a midterm exam, and a final exam. The final course grade will be determined based on the following breakdown and grading scale:

ASSIGNMENT CATEGORY	POINTS
Class Participation	15%
Daily Reading Quiz	20%
Midterm Exam	25%
Group Presentation	20%
Final Paper	20%
Extra Credit	3%
Total	103%

See the course schedule below for due dates.

Descriptions of major course assignments

Class Participation (15% of Overall Grade)

You should come to class prepared to make a constructive contribution. Please allow your peers to extract a benefit from your study and insight. This portion of your grade will be based on two requirements:

- Attending class.
- Being able to answer questions and participate in discussions via Top Hat.

(Almost) Daily Reading Quiz (20% of Overall Grade)

Students are required to complete the readings assigned for each day *before* the start of class. At the beginning of each class, students will use Top Hat to complete a short multiple-choice quiz covering basic comprehension and recall of major facts and ideas from the readings assigned for that day. There will be no trick questions, although students who do not do the readings carefully will not do well.

You are free to refer to your notes or readings when completing the quizzes. Quizzes missed due to absences (excused or otherwise) cannot be made up, but the lowest four quiz scores will be dropped automatically for all students prior to the calculation of the final grades.

Midterm Exam (25% of Overall Grade)

The midterm will consist of two parts: One part will be multiple choice questions, and the other part will be several longer questions. The multiple-choice questions will resemble the daily quizzes. Longer questions will ask basic questions of the topics dealt with in class and will require a few sentences of length.

Group Research Presentations (20% of Overall Grade)

Students will work in groups to research a current political controversy or puzzle in politics. Students will be able to pick their preferred research topic and will work in groups to carry out the necessary research. Each group will prepare a 25-30-minute presentation to share its findings with the class. The presentations will be done in class, and each student must participate in a major speaking role during the presentation. One presentation grade will “typically” be assigned to all group members.

Final Paper (20% of Overall Grade)

The final paper will be in essay format. It will ask you to reflect on the theories covered throughout the class and require creativity and critical thinking. Details of the essay will be provided later in the course as the content of the class may evolve according to student interests.

Extra Credit (3% of Overall Grade)

Students in this class have an opportunity to earn extra credit by participating in the “Extra credit: what did you learn from the Midterm?” discussion board. Detail about how extra credit is awarded for posting in this discussion board will be contained in the instructions for the discussion board. This discussion board will open once the midterm exam is graded and will close before finals and will not be reopened. Completion of an extra credit assignment will add up to 3% toward a student’s final grade. There may be other sources of extra credit for this class, but not upon personal requests.

COURSE SCHEDULE

- This schedule is subject to change. Any changes will be announced on Carmen.

Date	Topic
Week 1	Introductory class
	Introduction to Political Manipulation <i>Druckman, James N. "A framework for the study of persuasion." Annual Review of Political Science 25 (2022): 65-88.</i>
1. Methodology	
Week 2	Measuring minds <i>Political Science Research Methods. Janet Buttolph Johnson, H. T. Reynolds and Jason D. Mycoff. Chapter 4</i> <i>Public Opinion, Chapter 1 Appendix. Clawson & Oxley (2016)</i>
	Surveys and Experiments <i>How Surprising Was Trump's Victory? Evaluation of the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election and New Poll Aggregation Model. Wright & Wright (2018)</i>
2. Attitude Theory	
Week 3	What is being manipulated? <i>Chapter 7 of Smith, E.R., Mackie, D.M., & Claypool, H.M. (2014). Social Psychology: Fourth Edition (4th ed.). Psychology Press.</i> <i>Zaller, John. The nature and origins of mass opinion. (1992). (pp.6-29).</i>
	What is your <i>true</i> attitude? <i>Greenwald, Anthony G., et al. "Implicit race attitudes predicted vote in the 2008 US presidential election." Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy 9.1 (2009): 241-253.</i> <i>Pérez, Efrén O. "Explicit evidence on the import of implicit attitudes: The IAT and immigration policy judgments." Political Behavior 32.4 (2010): 517-545.</i> https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html

Week 4	Attitudes to behavior <i>Chapter 8 of Smith, E.R., Mackie, D.M., & Claypool, H.M. (2014). Social Psychology</i> <i>Aronson, Elliot and Carol Tavris. 2020. "The Role of Cognitive Dissonance in the Pandemic." The Atlantic.</i>
3. Persuasion	
Week 4	Theories of Persuasion <i>Petty, Richard E., Pablo Briñol, and Joseph R. Priester. "Mass media attitude change: Implications of the elaboration likelihood model of persuasion." Media effects. Routledge, 2009. 141-180.</i> <i>Introduction of Nelson, Thomas E. Political Persuasion: The Use of Values in Communication. Oxford University Press, 2024.</i>
Week 5	Persuasion in practice <i>Diehl, Trevor, Brian E. Weeks, and Homero Gil de Zúñiga. "Political persuasion on social media: Tracing direct and indirect effects of news use and social interaction." New media & society 18.9 (2016): 1875-1895.</i>
4. Media Practices	
	Is media persuasive? <i>Chapter 8, Iyengar, Shanto (2018). Media Politics: A Citizen's Guide</i> <i>Nelson, Thomas E., Rosalee A. Clawson, and Zoe M. Oxley. "Media framing of a civil liberties conflict and its effect on tolerance." American Political Science Review 91.3 (1997): 567-583.</i>
Week6	Social media <i>Boler, Megan, and Selena Nemorin. "Dissent, truthiness, and skepticism in the global media landscape: Twenty-first century propaganda in times of war." (2013).</i> <i>Prier, Jarred. "Commanding the trend: Social media as information warfare." Information warfare in the age of cyber conflict. Routledge, 2020. 88-113.</i>
	Misinformation

	<i>Guess, Andrew, et al. "Avoiding the echo chamber about echo chambers." Knight Foundation 2.1 (2018): 1-25.</i> <i>Barberá, Pablo, et al. "Tweeting from left to right: Is online political communication more than an echo chamber?." Psychological science 26.10 (2015): 1531-1542.</i>
Week7	Review Session
October 14	MIDTERM EXAM
	AUTUMN BREAK
5. Propaganda	
October 21	Selected Relevant Current Issue <i>TBD</i>
October 23	Benign manipulation? <i>Hawkins, Darren. "Explaining costly international institutions: Persuasion and enforceable human rights norms." International Studies Quarterly 48.4 (2004): 779-804.</i> <i>Shiffman, Jeremy, and Stephanie Smith. "Generation of political priority for global health initiatives: a framework and case study of maternal mortality." The lancet 370.9595 (2007): 1370-1379.</i>
October 28	Resisting manipulation <i>Lewandowsky, Stephan, and Sander Van Der Linden. "Countering misinformation and fake news through inoculation and prebunking." European review of social psychology 32.2 (2021): 348-384.</i> <i>Roozenbeek, Jon, Sander Van Der Linden, and Thomas Nygren. "Prebunking interventions based on "inoculation" theory can reduce susceptibility to misinformation across cultures." (2020).</i> • Misinformation Susceptibility Test: https://yourmist.streamlit.app/ • Fake news game: https://www.getbadnews.com/
6. Current Issues by theme	
October 30	Voting and elections

	Nyhan, Brendan, and Jason Reifler. "When corrections fail: The persistence of political misperceptions." <i>Political Behavior</i> 32.2 (2010): 303-330. Wood, Thomas, and Ethan Porter. "The elusive backfire effect: Mass attitudes' steadfast factual adherence" <i>Political Behavior</i> 41.1 (2019): 135-163.
November 4	Political campaigns Brader, T. (2005). <i>Striking a responsive chord: How political ads motivate and persuade voters by appealing to emotions.</i> <i>American journal of political science</i>, 49(2), 388-405. Gerber, Alan S., Donald P. Green, and Christopher W. Larimer. "Social pressure and voter turnout: Evidence from a large-scale field experiment." <i>American political Science review</i> 102.1 (2008): 33-48.
November 6	Race and Ethnicity Kinder, Donald R., and Nicholas Winter. "Exploring the racial divide: Blacks, whites, and opinion on national policy." <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> (2001): 439-456. Huddy, Leonie. 2013. "Group Identity and Political Cohesion." In David O. Sears, Leonie Huddy, and Robert Jervis (eds.) <i>Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology</i> (Chapter 15: 511-58).
November 11	VETERANS DAY
November 13	Foreign Policy Gries, Peter Hays. "Social psychology and the identity-conflict debate: Is a 'China threat' inevitable?" <i>European Journal of International Relations</i> 11.2 (2005): 235-265. Kertzer, Joshua D., and Thomas Zeitzoff. "A bottom-up theory of public opinion about foreign policy." <i>American journal of political science</i> 61.3 (2017): 543-558.
November 18	International Conflict/Terrorism McDermott, Rose. 1998. <i>Risk-Taking in International Politics: Prospect Theory in American Foreign Policy.</i> University of Michigan Press, pp. 45-75. Hall, Todd H., and Andrew AG Ross. "Affective politics after 9/11." <i>International Organization</i> 69.4 (2015): 847-879.
7. Group Presentations	

<i>* The group presentation schedule provided below is from the past semester, provided as an example. A new schedule with fresh topics will be updated for this semester.</i>	
November 20	Group 1) Donald Trump's Use of Social Media Group 2) THE WAR ON DRUGS: Race, Ethnicity, and Manipulation
November 25	Group 1) Gender Propaganda: Rosie the Riveter Group 2) Political Polarization over DEI
November 27	THANKSGIVING DAY
December 2	Group 1) Political Campaigns applied to OSU Campus Issues Group 2) International Conflict: Korean War Propaganda
December 4	Group 1) Japanese Anti-Immigration in America Group 2) Manipulation in the Cold War