

Teaching Portfolio

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Overview

This document is organized into several discrete sections to give the reader an impression of the kind of instructor I am. First, I offer a summary and brief narrative of my teaching experience, giving some context to the course listings available on my CV. Next, I include summary information about the quantitative and qualitative evaluations collected from my students. After that, I provide syllabi from some courses I have taught as well as some sample assignments and other details. I have organized this document as such to allow for a quick skim to see the basics of my experience and evaluations with the more detailed information placed afterward.

To clarify some of the language used, I will say that I “designed the syllabus” for several courses. By this I mean that I had freedom to structure the course, its content, and so on in the same way that faculty instructors do. I say this here to make clear that I did not add completely new courses to the curriculum; others had taught these courses before me and those past instructors in many cases provided important ideas and guidance used in my own sections.

Teaching Experience

Timeline

Note: All courses below are in the School of Communication at The Ohio State University. Ohio State operates on the semester system.

- *Persuasive Communication* (COMM 2367) Autumn 2015
– 1 section, 28 students
- *Persuasive Communication* (COMM 2367) Spring 2016
– 2 sections, 28 students each
- *Public Opinion and Communication* (COMM 4820) Summer 2016
– 1 section, 12 students
- *Persuasive Communication* (COMM 2367) Autumn 2016
– 2 sections, 28 students each
- *Persuasive Communication* (COMM 2367) Spring 2017
– Online, 51 students¹
- *Social Implications of Communication Technology* (COMM 3554) Summer 2018
– Online, 72 students
- *Media and Terrorism* (COMM 3597.02) Autumn 2018
– 1 section, 37 students
- *Social Implications of Communication Technology* (COMM 3554) Summer 2019
– Online, 91 students

Narrative

Background

In my program at Ohio State, graduate associateships may entail being a research assistant, a teaching assistant, or independent instructor; although departmental needs are always paramount, students are given the opportunity to state their preference between these possibilities and it is usually possible to accommodate them. Once my time on fellowship concluded, I elected to begin independent instruction. To prepare, I attended a 3-day workshop at Ohio State’s University Center for the Advancement of Teaching².

Persuasion

Next, to get graduate students started with teaching without having to do a full-fledged course prep, my program has first-time instructors teach *Persuasive Communication* (or “persuasion” for short). Persuasion is both a required course for communication majors and satisfies a general education requirement for a writing-intensive course at the sophomore level. As such, the class tends to consist of about 50% communication majors and the rest from all over campus; most are sophomores and juniors. In a typical semester, the School of Communication offers dozens of

¹During this semester, I took on an *additional* 50 students in another online section after that section’s instructor abruptly resigned. Because I did not design the syllabus for that section nor did I receive evaluations for it, I omit it from this portfolio.

²This has since been renamed to University Institute for Teaching and Learning.

sections, each capped at 28 students. The schedule and structure are designed by a course coordinator, leaving the classroom instruction and assessment to the instructor.

I taught 1 section in my first semester teaching, then 2 sections each in subsequent semesters.

Persuasion (Online)

During my time at Ohio State, the university began expanding its online course offerings beyond a few, niche programs for distance learners. In the School of Communication, persuasion was one of the first courses for communication majors offered online. I was among the first instructors to teach this course online and, unlike the classroom iteration, I was able to independently create the syllabus to ensure it fit the new format. The student population in this course was in some ways similar to the classroom sections, in that it was composed of a mixture of communication and other majors, but nontraditional students, veterans, and students with disabilities were far better represented.

Social Implications of Communication Technology

This course, which I have now taught twice in the online format, is a junior-level course for communication majors. It is a required course for majors who specialize in “new media and communication technology” and students are required to have taken an introductory course in communication technology to enroll. I designed the syllabus for this course myself.

Media and Terrorism

Media and terrorism is a fairly unique course that is listed as a junior-level communication course but also fulfills two general education requirements, which draws majors from several other areas. Those general education requirements concern

1. Diversity within the United States and across countries
2. Cross-disciplinary perspectives

The course content draws on communication, political science, international relations, security studies, and beyond in exploring the relationship between terrorists and the press as well as more recent developments in which terrorists organize via social media. I devote considerable attention to the difficulties defining terrorism as well as the moral and legal implications of labeling people terrorists.

Public Opinion

Public opinion is a senior-level elective course for communication majors. It is about what it sounds like, but I will offer the additional context that there is also a senior-level course in political communication offered at the School of Communication and this course is meant to avoid significant overlap with it. I designed the syllabus for this course myself.

Student Evaluations

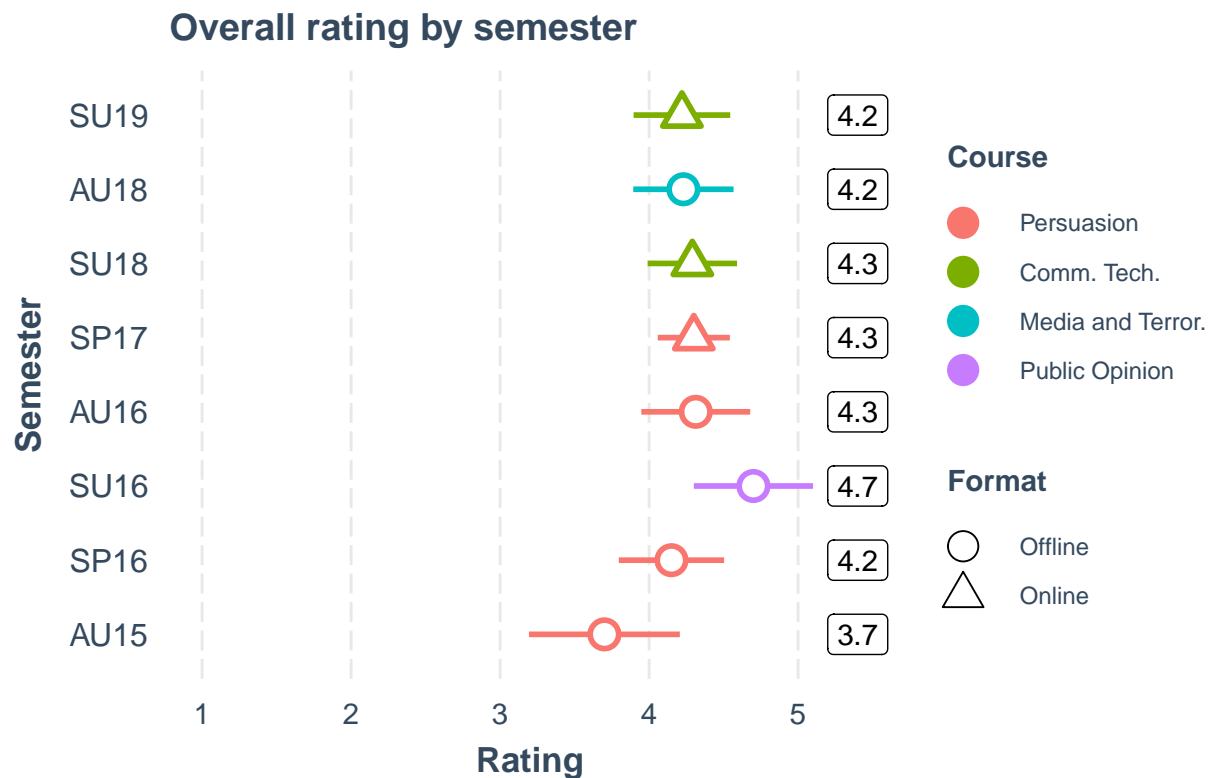
At Ohio State, students in all courses are invited to submit quantitative evaluations via a web-based form over a period of around 10 days before their final exams. Responses are anonymous and not compulsory. In some courses, open-ended comments are solicited separately and on paper while in others comments are an optional component of the online form.

Quantitative

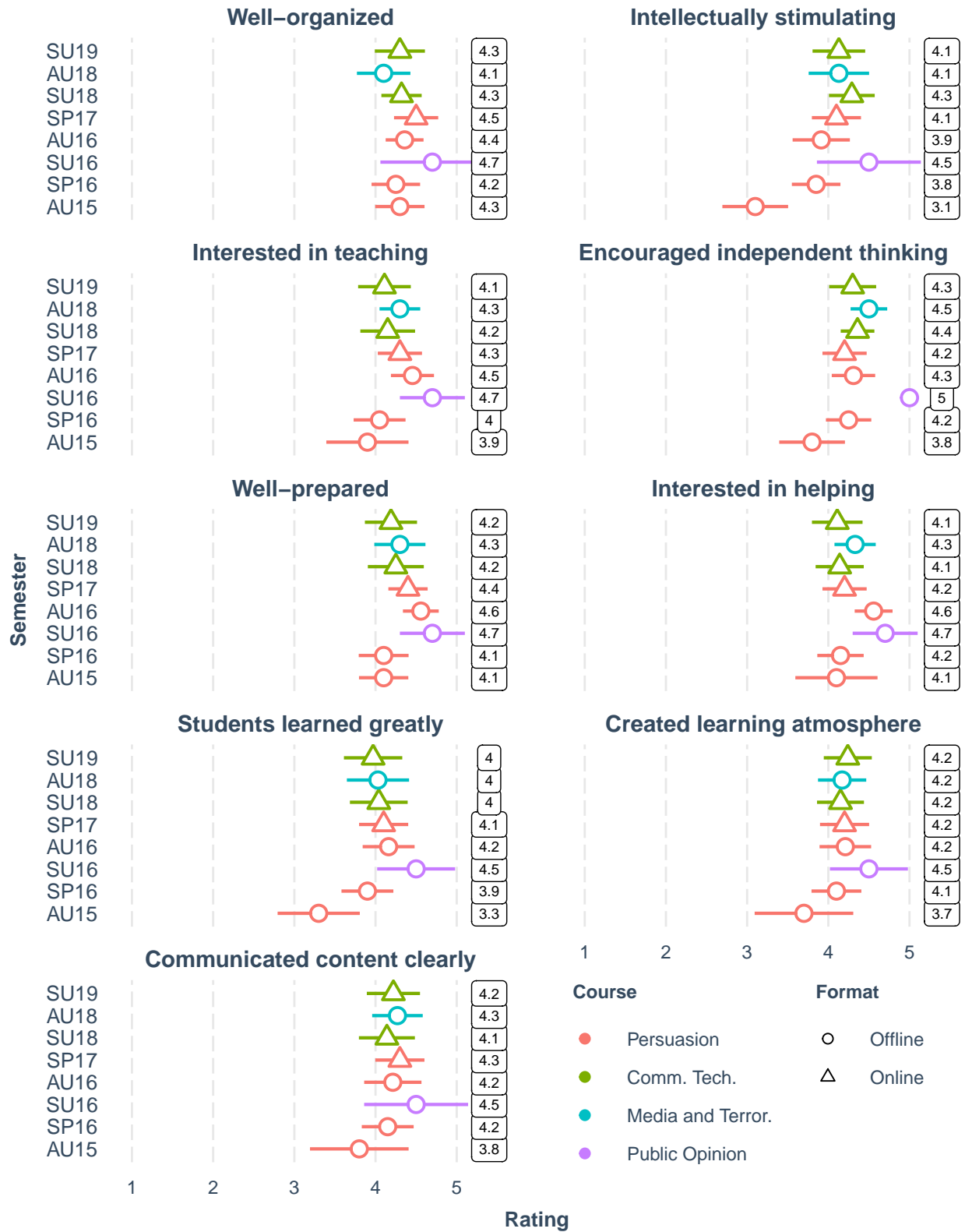
For 9 questions about the course and instructor, response choices are on a Likert-like scale ranging from “strongly disagree” (quantified as 1) to “strongly agree” (quantified as 5). For the final question, in which students are asked to complete the sentence, “Overall, I would rate this instructor as,” the 1 to 5 numeric range is retained but the response labels are: “poor” (1), “fair” (2), “neutral” (3), “good” (4), and “excellent” (5).

Thus far, approximately one half of my students who have completed evaluations have rated me as “excellent” overall and this figure has increased over time. The vast majority of the rest rated me as “good.” Speaking generally, my mean quantitative scores are very close to the mean scores within the College of Arts and Sciences at Ohio State University.

I have created two graphics to summarize these quantitative evaluations. They show my evaluation scores for each question in each semester I have taught, going from most recent (at the top) to furthest in the past (at the bottom). Since several classes are relatively small and the variance of responses differs across semesters, I have included 95% confidence intervals to visualize the uncertainty associated with each course and question’s mean response. First, I present my overall evaluations, then in a single graphic the results for the other 9 items in a similar format. In the [Appendix](#), I have included alternate graphics that include the college-level reference means. I will note here that the reference means make no distinction between online and offline classes.



Student evaluations by semester



Horizontal lines are 95% confidence intervals calculated based on class size and standard deviation.

Student Comments

I have selected some comments and organized them along two common themes.

Active Learning

- “Strength of the course is the opportunity for dialogue and discussion ...the class was a good opportunity to grow” – COMM 4820 (Public Opinion), Summer 2016
- “He is [...] constantly challenging the class to expand our understanding” – COMM 4820 (Public Opinion), Summer 2016
- “My favorite type of professor, laid back but forces students to think on their own.” – COMM 3597 (Media and Terrorism), Autumn 2018
- “Focused on having us learn and understand the subject matter vs. memorize.” – COMM 3597 (Media and Terrorism), Autumn 2018
- “The best thing about [Jacob] is his understanding that for most of the class, this is merely a [general education requirement]. He has given us tools that I can use in my major classes. It’s this balance he strikes that makes him very different.” – COMM 2367 (Persuasion), Autumn 2016
- “He doesn’t make it seem like we are just writing a bunch of papers for no reason, there is an end goal.” – COMM 2367 (Persuasion), Autumn 2016

Inclusive Classroom

- “[H]e encouraged us to think for ourselves and form our own opinions [...] he cared what we thought and didn’t just force his views upon us.” – COMM 4820 (Public Opinion), Summer 2016
- “He is a very reasonable professor and is willing to work with students and he understands that sometimes life can get in the way.” – COMM 2367 (Persuasion), Autumn 2016
- “approachable and makes you feel comfortable about asking questions [...] willing to work with students like if something comes up in your personal life he understands.” – COMM 2367 (Persuasion), Autumn 2016
- “makes class a very comfortable place to speak and participate” – COMM 2367 (Persuasion), Autumn 2016
- “He is a great teacher and appeals to all types of learners” – COMM 2367 (Persuasion), Autumn 2016

Examples of Course Materials

Although a full accounting of assignments, handouts, and the like is well outside the scope of this document, I do think it will be instructive to share a few examples. In all cases, I have taken the content and pasted it into this document to make the formatting consistent.

Reading Memos

Almost invariably, I compose brief “memos” to accompany assigned readings. It is often the case that there are more and less essential parts of the articles or chapters that are assigned and I want to explain in advance to students what is important, what is not, and what should be skipped entirely. Moreover, it offers a chance to encourage students to see certain connections between different

readings. I also see it as a way of showing students that I value their time and have given careful consideration to the tasks I am requiring them to do. Needless to say, at times the advice is to simply read the entire assigned piece closely, but I've omitted all such cases here.

Example 1: Persuasion

What follows are two examples of reading memos from the in-person iteration of persuasion (COMM 2367) in the fall of 2016. The readings refer to chapters of the course's textbook, *The Dynamics of Persuasion: Communication and Attitudes in the Twenty-First Century* by Richard Perloff.

* * *

Attitude functions and consequences, Chapter 5

Today we will be focusing on the connection between attitudes and behavior. You can skim the "attitude dysfunction" section as well as the "historical background" section. Understand the terms "norms and roles" and "scripts." Both "Characteristics of the person" and "Characteristics of the attitude" are important sections. Don't get hung up on the "compatibility principle," we will talk that over in class.

The Theory of Reasoned Action is one of the important theories to know for this class. Read the section carefully, noting aspects you don't understand as well. Accessibility Theory is less important, read this section but don't be as detail-oriented. Pay attention to the "Implications for persuasion section," but you don't need to read through the "Judging consistency: Gray areas and ethical issues" section. It may benefit you to read the "Conclusions" section, but you don't need to out of consideration for the length of the readings.

Processing persuasive communications, Chapter 7

Familiarize yourself with the concepts of "forewarning," "distraction," and inoculation theory from the early part of the chapter.

If there is one persuasion theory to remember from this class, the Elaboration Likelihood Model is it (we'll refer to it as the ELM a lot in class). With that in mind, I want you to read through the entire section dealing with it carefully. Get yourself comfortable with the general idea of peripheral and central route processing. You can read about the classic experiment that demonstrates in practice how ELM works, but we will talk about it in detail in class so don't be discouraged if you aren't following along.

Also understand what the idea of Need for Cognition (NFC) means, but the latter portions of that section may not be so important for you to do that. You do not need to read the "Criticisms" section, I will talk about that in class.

Example 2: Public Opinion

What follows is the reading memo for a day in my summer 2016 course in public opinion. Bear in mind that this course was taught in a condensed time period (6 weeks vs. a typical 15 week semester), so the daily reading load was relatively heavy. The topic of the day was "knowledge and competence," referring to the extent to which democratic citizens know enough and are capable enough for self-government. The readings mentioned are the following:

Bishop, G. F. (2005). Illusory opinions on public affairs. In *The illusion of public opinion: Fact and artifact in American public opinion polls* (pp. 18–45). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Glynn, C. J., Herbst, S., O’Keefe, G. J., Shapiro, R. Y., & Lindeman, M. (2004). Public opinion and democratic competence. In *Public opinion* (2nd, pp. 283–354). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Kuklinski, J. H. & Quirk, P. J. (2000). Reconsidering the rational public: Cognition, heuristics, and mass opinion. In A. Lupia, M. D. McCubbins, & S. L. Popkin (Eds.), *Elements of reason: Cognition, choice, and the bounds of rationality* (pp. 153–82). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

* * *

Note: The readings are listed here in the suggested order that they be read.

Glynn et al. (2004)

Don’t be scared off by the amount of pages in the citation because as assigned it is much shorter. This chapter does a good job of reviewing some of the major findings and theories regarding citizen knowledge, primarily in the United States. You can skim the first pages, through 291, as they deal with philosophical ground that we have mostly covered. The content that comes afterward is what we want to focus on. Once you get to “Collective deliberation: The rational public?” you can skim. The “Making do: ‘Gut rationality,’ heuristics, and political judgments” isn’t required since it overlaps with the Kuklinski and Quirk piece. Revisit it if you have trouble with Kuklinski and Quirk.

Bishop (2005)

Bishop will be a little bit more alarmed than Glynn et al. about the possibility of an uninformed public. He will give some evidence of apparently deceiving survey results and further evidence that ignorance is a likely explanation for that. I suspect that by the time you get to “Opinions on Social Security: Fact or artifact?” you will get the idea. You can skim from there to the end.

Kuklinski and Quirk (2000)

We go in a different direction here. Rather than think about what low information does to cause harm, this looks at how much we can expect people to use information shortcuts to their own benefit. The most important portion is from the beginning to page 161, which covers some of the findings in the political heuristics literature.

It then transitions into psychological research that can shed light on some of the unanswered questions in public opinion heuristics. You can skim here if time is tight or you’re having trouble grasping it, but do pay closer attention to the sub-heading “Expectations for Citizen Competence” starting on page 167. Then read more closely through the “Bias in Political Judgment: Evidence from Experimental Survey Research” section and its subsections. You can skip the final portion, “Collective Bias: Further Evidence.”

Assignments

Example 1: Public Opinion Methods Critique

Here I share an assignment from the middle of the semester in my public opinion course. It is part of a scaffolded process wherein students complete assignments that build on one another and culminate in a final project: giving a comprehensive overview of public opinion on a topic of their choosing. This assignment is referred to as a “methods critique” and follows class sessions in which students learned about limitations and common pitfalls of survey research on public opinion.

Like other assignments in this course, it had two parts: one written, one oral.

* * *

Summary

To apply your knowledge about the way public opinion is measured in a real world context, you will find a published report about a survey and discuss its strengths and weaknesses. The exact topics addressed in the survey do not need to be just like ones discussed in class, but must be related to public opinion in some way. Concerns about whether a survey is applicable should be addressed to the instructor before turning in the assignment.

The assignment consists of two parts: a paper and a presentation.

Paper

Length and Format The paper should be between 500 and 1,000 words and written in APA format. This means 12 point, Times New Roman font with double-spaced lines. Each page should have a condensed version of the title in the header as well as the page number—use the web for more details on APA format. [Purdue OWL](#) is a great resource if you are looking for a starting point. One exception to typical APA style is that I do **not** require a title page. It should be submitted on Carmen in PDF or any other common document format; no hard copy is needed.

Content Requirements The paper should be written in a formal, academic style and use citations where appropriate. You are not required to use a particular number of references, but typical standards apply in terms of your need to cite information that is not common knowledge. You are not required to do additional research beyond finding the article and using the articles assigned for class, but you may feel free to find additional sources to bolster your arguments.

In writing your paper, try to answer some of these questions:

- What is the hypothesis, if any? Is a survey the proper method to address it?
- What kind of sampling technique was used? Is it likely to bias the results in any way?
- How does the mode of data collection—face to face, telephone (automated or live interview?), online—impact data quality?
- Are the conclusions drawn by the source article appropriate given the data?

Thinking about the survey items in particular, consider some of these questions:

- Are the questions written in a balanced way?
- Do the questions contain words or phrasing that may confuse respondents?
- Is the proper question format used?
- Are the response choices adequate?
- Is social desirability bias a factor?
- Can respondents reasonably be expected to remember any activities they are asked about?

By no means do you need to address all of these questions. Your survey may present strengths or weaknesses that are not covered by these as well. Perhaps most importantly, **do not use the questions above as section headings in your paper!** Use your own words and structure your paper in a logical way, relying on the paper's organization rather than a series of headings in such a short paper.

Be sure to give the survey you find a fair hearing. While it is often the most interesting to hear about the flaws, be sure to acknowledge the strengths as well. You are not required to find a survey that you think has problems, but be prepared to give strong evidence for why yours is an example of a well-executed survey. Furthermore, the fact one aspect of a survey is poorly done is not proof that other parts are also flawed. More often, there is a single or small number of problems in an otherwise good study.

Make sure that by the end of the paper, you have made clear what your overall assessment of the survey is. Given your criticism or praise of the methods used, what can we take away from the survey? Sometimes there is useful information in a survey in spite of the presence of flaws; in other cases, the methodological problems are too severe to take the results seriously. It is important that you take a clear position in terms of the overall usefulness of the survey you critique and justify that conclusion.

Presentation

The presentation is a counterpart to your paper. It is not expected that you will be able to go into the same level of detail in this talk as you would in the paper. Instead, focus on covering these bases:

1. Introduce the survey, describing what it set out to measure and how the findings were reported.
2. Give an overview of the methods used.
3. Talk about the strengths and weaknesses of the method, using examples as needed.
4. State your conclusions about the overall quality of the survey and the arguments the pollster made about the survey.

You should use PowerPoint or a similar tool in the presentation to help with showing examples and illustrating your points. You do not, however, need to use visuals extensively. If you would prefer to only put an example survey item or two in your slides, that is okay; do whatever best conveys your argument. I expect these presentations to take around 10 minutes.

Scoring

Paper Based on the description given above, the score will be based upon the criteria in the table below. So, for instance, completely ignoring APA formatting guidelines would result in a maximum 10% penalty on the assignment grade. If everything else were perfect, you would receive a 90%. The grade you receive will be a sum of your scores on each of the listed criteria.

Paper Rubric

APA formatting guidelines are followed	10%
Goals and conclusions of the survey are clearly stated	10%
Methods used to collect the data are clearly stated	10%
Strengths and weaknesses of data collection methods are evaluated	20%
Strengths and weaknesses of the survey items are evaluated	20%
Publisher's claims are evaluated	15%
An overall evaluation of the survey based on analysis is given; theoretical importance of findings is assessed	15%

Presentation The grading procedure will be similar to the paper, but with simpler criteria.

Due Dates

Students will sign up in class for a presentation date. The paper is due at 11:59pm on Carmen the evening before the presentation will occur. As an example, if you are signed up for a Tuesday presentation, then you will be required to turn in your paper on Monday by 11:59pm. Powerpoint slides should be turned in on Carmen by the beginning of class on the day the presentation occurs.

Presentation Rubric

Visual aids are informative and clear	10%
The origins, goals, and purported findings of the survey are clearly stated	20%
Methods used to collect the data are clearly stated	15%
Strengths and weaknesses of the survey measures are evaluated using examples	30%
An overall evaluation of the survey based on analysis is given; theoretical importance of findings is assessed	25%

Places to look for surveys

Surveys are, as you may already realize, a common feature of the press and academic research. With that in mind, do not consider this list exhaustive. These may make for a useful starting point, though.

First is a list of news sites that frequently report on public opinion polls of various kinds. A word of warning, though: they also report on other things that are not surveys, so don't latch onto a headline without making sure that the report is really based on survey data.

- fivethirtyeight.com
- nytimes.com/section/upshot
- washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage
- vox.com
- theguardian.com/data
- wsj.com/news/politics
- realclearpolitics.com
- politico.com

The following are places that conduct their own research and report the results to the public. These places will occasionally use non-survey methods, so always look into the details.

- pewresearch.org
- today.yougov.com/results
- norc.org/newseventspublications
- kff.org
- gallup.com
- public-consultation.org

Lastly, below is a list of academic journals that frequently publish articles relating to public opinion using surveys. Note that these face far more rigorous quality controls than the average survey publicized in the news and generally tackle scientific topics, so they are not for the faint of heart.

- Public Opinion Quarterly

- [Political Communication](#)
- [International Journal of Public Opinion Research](#)

Example 2: Communication Technology Weekly Discussion

For this online course, one method I use to keep students engaged with the material in between major assignments – and to help compensate for the lack of real-time discussion that occurs in classrooms – is weekly posts on a discussion board. Students are required to write their own post, usually about two paragraphs in length, and post two substantive responses to other students (which may take the form as a back and forth). The goal is not so much to quiz the students on the material, which is better suited to other kinds of assignments, but to reflect on the material and relate it to their own lives.

General instructions are as follows:

In each of the discussion threads I expect that your response will reflect substantive engagement with the materials provided that week. I expect that your responses to other students will offer up constructive and respectful critique, exploration, or expansion of their ideas. Disagreement and differences in opinion are encouraged as long as you are respectful.

Here I include two prompts, one for a week in which the focus was on privacy and another in which the focus on romance, sexuality, and dating.

* * *

Did you spend much time thinking about your privacy online before these readings? Did anything surprise you or make you consider changing your technology habits?

Considering the Acquisti et al. (2015) reading and what you have learned about privacy, how much responsibility for privacy preservation falls on users of communication technology versus service providers (like Google and Facebook) and governments?

* * *

This week's readings focused on romantic relationships in computer-mediated communication.

Fox and Anderegg (2014) talk about uncertainty reduction strategies using Facebook at different stages in relationships. Do you find this piece to still be up to date? Are there other platforms (e.g., Instagram, Snapchat) or methods that are gaining prevalence for this purpose, in your experience?

Do you agree with Pelley (2016) that in-person breakups are necessarily the best way to end a relationship? Might there be situations in which a CMC breakup is a better choice?

Assignment Overview

In many of my courses, I distribute a document giving an overview of all the graded assignments. Below, I include one such document for my online course in my persuasion. This course includes a number of scaffolded assignments that begin very early in the course and end with a presentation.

* * *

The final grade in the class will consist of the following:

Over the course of the semester, the assignments will add up to 1000 points. This means, for instance, that each quiz—worth 2% of your grade—will be graded out of 20 points. In other words, the points value of each assignment above will be equivalent to 10 multiplied by the percentage of the grade it accounts for.

Quizzes (13, 2% each)	26%
Discussion posts (13, 1% each)	13%
Discussion summaries (2, 2% each)	4%
Annotated Bibliography	8%
Problem, Solution, Barriers paper	12%
Audience survey response	2%
Audience Analysis paper	12%
Final speech	18%
Final peer review	2%
Final reflection	3%

Recurring Assignments

Quizzes There will be weekly quizzes, typically in multiple choice format, that are due each Wednesday by 11:59 PM. These quizzes will primarily assess your understanding of the assigned readings and lectures for the week the quiz is given. However, it will often be necessary to be familiar with concepts and theories from previous weeks.

These short quizzes will have a time limit of 10 minutes. You are free to use notes, the textbook and other readings, as well as lectures to help in answering the questions—though it is wise to remember that frequent consultation of these resources will likely take too much time if done for every question. Students *must work on these quizzes alone*. If cooperation is suspected, it will be treated as serious academic misconduct and addressed as such.

Immediately after completion of the quiz, you will learn your score. However, you will not know which questions were missed or the correct answers to them. You can take each week's quiz a second time and the highest score out of the two attempts will be accepted as the final grade. Quiz questions are pulled randomly from a larger group of questions. This means you will likely get different questions each time you attempt the quiz.

The best way to approach the quizzes is to first review all of the materials for the week. Then create outlines and/or highlight materials. Since your time is limited, the more organized you are and the better grasp you have of the material, the easier it will be to answer the questions.

The answers to the quiz will be available after the quiz closes for you to check understanding and to help you with other assignments.

Discussion Posts You will have one required discussion post each week, typically due on a Saturday. Like the quizzes, these are intended to check your understanding of the class materials covered in the assigned readings and lectures. You are encouraged, but not required, to respond to your classmates' posts.

Each week's discussion board on Carmen will contain a prompt for you to respond to. The goal of these assignments is to partly replace the type of open-ended question and answer that occurs in a physical classroom. Since you have more time to refine your thoughts, it is expected that the quality of the posts is higher than the typical in-class comment.

Discussion posts should be approached like an extended response exam question. That means they are not meant to be essay-length, but should consist of at least a few sentences. Further, the things you say should be accurate and written in a clear and grammatically correct way.

Discussion Summaries As a way to address the occasional confusion and unclear time commitment that goes along with requiring students to reply to their classmates' discussion posts, instead each student will do what is called a discussion summary twice during the semester. These

involve choosing one out of a limited set of weeks to examine their classmates' discussion posts and then writing up a summary of them for that week. More details will be provided in a separate handout.

For the **first** discussion summary, students may choose one of the following weeks:

- Week 4, Defining Persuasion
- Week 5, Defining Attitudes
- Week 6, Strong Attitudes and Judgment
- Week 7, Attitude Measurement

For the **second** discussion summary, students may choose one of the following weeks:

- Week 8, Attitudes and Behavior
- Week 9, Message Processing 1
- Week 10, Message Processing 2
- Week 11, Persuasion Campaigns

Note that these assignments will be due on the Sunday of Weeks 8 and 12. If you choose an earlier week, it is encouraged to turn it in before the due date while the topic is still fresh in your mind.

Scaffolded Assignments

The following assignments are all interrelated and build on one another. Each will be dealing with your chosen problem/topic. You are allowed to make changes to your argument or even your topic from one assignment to the next, but the course is designed for each one to address the same topic. This allows you, in addition to working on persuasion in general, to deal with a subject on which you will be an expert by the end of the semester.

For each of the following assignments, much more detail will be provided in separate handouts. They are presented in the order you will complete them.

Annotated Bibliography This first writing assignment focuses on researching your topic and becoming familiar with APA style. You will find a specified number of research sources and write about the relevance of each to your persuasive argument.

Problem, Solution, Barriers paper This paper is your major assignment in which you will work on persuasive *writing* exclusively. As the title suggests, you will lay out your persuasive argument starting with the problem you are interested in, followed by proposing a solution, and concluding with discussion of some obstacles to persuading your audience.

Survey A key theme of the semester will be that not all audiences are created equally. As a way to put that principle into practice, you will learn about one of the dominant forms of understanding audiences: surveys. In one of your discussion posts, you will submit a small number of questions pertaining to your topic that you would like your audience to answer. These will then be compiled into a survey that everyone in the class will take. I will distribute the results of that survey to the class for analysis.

There are two assignments pertaining to the survey.

Survey Response

Students are required to respond to the survey and are given credit for doing so.

Audience Analysis Paper

Using the results of the answers to the questions you submitted, you will write a paper discussing what you have learned from the survey. In addition to the experience in learning about your audience, this paper gives you the chance to write in a different genre than the previous paper.

Final Speech The final assignment will be given as a speech. Most applied forms of persuasion that students will need to do outside of this class will involve talking to people; many professions require formal presentations on a regular basis. This assignment requires students, using the preparation from the previous assignments, to record a persuasive speech with the goal of getting fellow students to support a nonprofit organization that addresses the social problem the speaker chooses.

Peer Review and Reflection

You will be assigned some of your classmates' speeches to watch and evaluate. This will expose you to some of the important issues they have been working on and give you a chance to look at persuasion from the point of view of an audience member. You will evaluate their use of persuasion techniques and write a paper reflecting on what you have learned.

Syllabi

Last, I include two syllabi in their near entirety. I have omitted, for brevity, sections of the syllabi that are standardized across the university such as the policies on plagiarism and cheating, reasonable accommodation, and Title IX.

COMM 3597

Media and Terrorism

Jacob Long

long.1377@osu.edu

Office Hours: *Wednesday and Friday, 10:30am–12:30am.*

Autumn 2018. Journalism Building 371.
Wednesday and Friday, 9:10am–10:05am.

“The success of a terrorist operation depends almost entirely on the amount of publicity it receives.”

– Walter Laquer, *Terrorism* (1977)

Course Description

This course helps you understand the problem of political violence known as terrorism in our contemporary, increasingly global, world. Our approach is communication-based but draws upon literature from many disciplines to help explain the key issues related to international and domestic terrorism, counter-terrorism, and communication. We will use a case study format to examine the relationship between terrorism and the mass-mediated messages that depict it. You will be introduced to communication theories to explore and explain how media depictions, in both the news and fictional material, affect public opinion and social/political reactions to terrorism. Additionally, we will examine how terrorist groups use media to disseminate their messages.

Course Objectives

Students who complete this course will be able to:

- Define terrorism and differentiate it from related concepts.
- Understand who terrorists are, what goals they have, and how societies have reacted to them.
- Recognize the extent to which terrorists rely on new and old media to achieve their goals.
- Consider the tension between the values of free societies and freedom-limiting measures sometimes used to fight terrorism.

Required Materials

Textbooks and readings

There is no required text for this course. All readings will be made available on Carmen.

Evaluation

This class will use the standard OSU grading scheme:

A	93-100%	A-	90-92.99%	B+	87-89.99%
B	83-86.99%	B-	80-82.99%	C+	77-79.99%
C	73-76.99%	C-	70-72.99%	D+	67-69.99%
D	60-66.99%	E	0-59.99%		

Assignments

The final grade in the class will consist of the following:

Exams (x2)	150 / 30%
Response Papers (x3)	75 / 15%
Case Study Paper	125 / 25%
Participation	150 / 30%
Total	500 / 100%

Exams: There will be two exams, roughly corresponding with the midterm and final exam times. These will be administered outside of class time and include a mixture of multiple choice and short answer question formats.

Response Papers: Each of you will pick three week's readings and prepare essays dealing with the themes contained in those readings or other materials, e.g. videos. Each paper should be around 500 words (about one page, single-spaced). You will sign up for due dates for the essays, and they should be uploaded to Canvas before the start of class for the week you are writing about. I want your reactions to the course materials – not the lectures or class discussions – so the idea is that you write these before hearing the lectures or classroom discussion.

In preparing the essay, first consider ALL the material that is assigned for the given week; that is, read any articles or chapters assigned, watch any films, etc., and think about a theme that runs through these materials. In your essay, provide a concise description of the theme, and explain it. Offer your reaction to the theme.

The best essays will articulate a point of view with respect to the materials and then use facts from the materials to support this argument. These papers should not be a summary of the main points. I am more interested in your reaction to the information. This might involve the usefulness of the information, the level of interest you have in it, anything that you found particularly surprising or disappointing, etc. With that being said, your statements should have a *factual basis*. This is not a space for rants or speculation.

Note that although these essays are short, they should contain the elements of any well-written essay: A good, creative title, strong lead, and good introduction, transitions and conclusion. While you will not be graded for adherence to APA format, any external sources (other than assigned class materials) should be cited in a discernible way.

Case Study Paper: In this paper, which will be around 1000-1500 words in length, you will select a terrorist attack or set of attacks for closer analysis. You will describe the event, its background, its perpetrators and victims, and the media depictions thereof. You will use theories and (counter)examples from class to analyze this particular case. A list of potential events will be provided and any others you may want to analyze must be cleared with the instructor.

Participation: This course involves subject matter that is sometimes deeply multifaceted, controversial, and without simple truths. These sorts of issues can only be understood through careful conversation and exposure to varying points of view. A purely lecture- and reading-based format cannot provide this type of learning experience, so a significant component of the class involves participation in classroom discussions and other activities. In recognition of the fact that not everyone is as comfortable and skilled at jumping into an open discussion, the participation grade will also be partly comprised of brief written assignments before and during class.

Detailed explanations of the requirements for assignments will be provided as they come due.

Grade Disputes

Any dispute about a grade must be done within one week of the grade posting. You should compose an email, making clear that you are challenging the grade, with information about the assignment and details (using the rubric and guidelines) of why you feel you should receive a different score. Note that decreased scores, in addition to increased scores, are possible following a grade challenge.

Course Policies

Late Policy

Penalties on late work are as follows:

Time past deadline	Maximum grade
0-1 hour	95%
1-24 hours	90%
24-48 hours	80%
48-72 hours	70%
> 72 hours	0% (no credit)

In other words, a paper that is just under 24 hours late will first be assessed as if it is not late, then that grade will be multiplied by 90%. A 90% paper would then be entered as a 81% in the gradebook ($.9 \times .9 = .81$). If there are special circumstances that cause you to be unable to complete assigned work, you may contact me to make arrangements. In all cases, I have discretion over whether the situation justifies excusing late work; furthermore, I may be ask you to provide documentation of the issue (e.g., signed doctor's note). Generally speaking, I will be more accommodating if approached well ahead of the assignment due date.

Discussion and Communication

The following are my expectations for how we should communicate as a class.

Tone and civility: Statements that generalize about religions, nationalities, ethnicities, races, sexual orientations, gender identities, and physical, mental, or intellectual abilities will not be tolerated. This is not an exhaustive list. Furthermore, the course is not designed to be a platform for political or religious debates. On some occasions, we will deliberately discuss questions of policy and morality at which times you should feel empowered to state your feelings. At other times, we will discuss sensitive topics with the goal of factual and/or scientific understanding rather than moral evaluation.

During course discussions, do not assume that I agree or disagree with you or someone else just because I do not say so. Likewise, do not feel as if you must state your disagreement with someone else unless it will add to our collective understanding of the topic at hand. I may cut off class discussions if I sense that people are getting too emotional or distracted to benefit further. I will speak to anyone who has become too uncivil or disrespectful and if severe or frequent enough, academic sanctions may follow (including but not limited to penalties to the participation grade).

Asking questions about the class

For questions or concerns that do not require an immediate answer, it is strongly preferred that you speak to me before, during, or after class or during office hours. This is the best way to quickly resolve your question/concern and (if in class) allows me to answer a question a single time for the entire class rather than multiple times individually.

You of course are not required to share personal information in front of the class, so you are always welcome to contact me privately whether in person or via email. You will never be specifically penalized for asking a question over email, but I may simply reply by telling you to talk to me in person if I feel the query will be cumbersome over email.

Faculty feedback and response time

Allow 10-14 days for grades on major assignments, although sometimes you will receive feedback sooner. In general, expect a response to emails within 24 hours on business days. If you haven't gotten a response after a couple of days, feel free to reach out again.

Attendance

Attendance is expected at all class periods. You are entitled to two unexcused absences over the course of the semester with no penalty. Each additional unexcused absence will result in a 30-point penalty to your participation grade. In other words, 7 unexcused absences will result in a 0% participation grade and the best possible course grade would be 70% if you scored perfectly on all other assignments.

I observe university policy regarding excused absences. Sickesses that are acute enough to merit a visit to the doctor are excused with documentation. Travel for athletics or other activities in which you represent Ohio State are also excused with advance notice. Other circumstances will be evaluated on a case by case basis.

Diversity

The School of Communication at The Ohio State University embraces and maintains an environment that respects diverse traditions, heritages, experiences, and people. Our commitment to diversity moves beyond mere tolerance to recognizing, understanding, and welcoming the contributions of diverse groups and the value group members possess as individuals. In our School, the faculty, students, and staff are dedicated to building a tradition of diversity with principles of equal opportunity, personal respect, and the intellectual interests of those who comprise diverse cultures.

Written Assignments

All written work must be typed and must conform to APA formatting, citing, and referencing guidelines (see <http://www.apastyle.org/> and <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>).

Unless otherwise noted, assignments must be uploaded to the dropbox no later than 11:59 p.m. on the assigned due date.

Changing nature of this syllabus

The assignments, policies, and readings in this syllabus are subject to change at any time. If this occurs, the changes will be announced and an updated version of the syllabus will be posted to Carmen.

For a quick way to see which version of the syllabus you are looking at, the right side of the footer on the first page of this document includes a date followed by an alphanumeric code (known as a hash) in parentheses. The date represents the day of the most recent change to the syllabus and should be treated as more reliable than the "last modified" date your computer shows you. The alphanumeric hash is given for the rare circumstance in which more than one change is issued on the same day; no two versions of the syllabus will have the same alphanumeric hash, regardless of the edit date.

Calendar

Unless otherwise specified, quizzes, discussion posts, and other assignments are due at 11:59 PM on the date they are due.

If the information on Carmen contradicts this syllabus, assume the information on Carmen is correct.

This schedule provides a broad overview. More details will be available on Carmen, where you will access the lectures and other materials.

Background

Week 1, 8/20 – 8/26: Defining terrorism

Wednesday, 8/22: Course overview

Fri, 8/24: No readings

Week 2, 8/27 – 9/2: What terrorism is and who terrorists are

Wednesday, 8/29:

Hodgson, J. S., & Tadros, V. (2013). The impossibility of defining terrorism. *New Criminal Law Review: An International and Interdisciplinary Journal*, 16, 494–526. doi:[10.1525/nclr.2013.16.3.494](https://doi.org/10.1525/nclr.2013.16.3.494).

Hunter, R. E. (2012). Terrorism and war. In Y. Boyer & J. Lindley-French (Eds.), *Oxford Handbook of War* (pp. 199–210). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Kinsley, M. (2001). Defining terrorism. *Slate*. Retrieved from http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/readme/2001/10/defining_terrorism.html.

Fri, 8/31:

Cottee, S. (2015b). The 'Zoolander' theory of terrorism. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/05/zoolander-terrorists-brainwashed-isis/393050/>.

Krueger, A., & Maleckova, J. (2002, July). *Education, poverty, political violence and terrorism: Is there a causal connection?* National Bureau of Economic Research. doi:[10.3386/w9074](https://doi.org/10.3386/w9074).

Lind, W. S., Nightengale, K., Schmitt, J. F., Sutton, J. W., & Wilson, G. I. (1989). The changing face of war: Into the fourth generation. *Marine Corps Gazette*, 22–26.

Motivations and radicalization

Week 3, 9/3 – 9/9: Social identity and moral disengagement

Wednesday, 9/5:

Rowland, R. C., & Theye, K. (2008). The symbolic DNA of terrorism. *Communication Monographs*, 75, 52–85. doi:[10.1080/03637750701885423](https://doi.org/10.1080/03637750701885423).

Sapolsky, R. (2017, June 22). Why your brain hates other people. Retrieved from <http://nautil.us/issue/49/the-absurd/why-your-brain-hates-other-people>.

Fri, 9/7:

McCauley, C., & Moskalenko, S. (2008). Mechanisms of political radicalization: Pathways toward terrorism. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 20, 415–433. doi:10.1080/09546550802073367.

Goodman, B. (Director). (2017, February 7). *Oklahoma City*. PBS. retrieved from <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/oklahoma-city/>.

Week 4, 9/10 – 9/16: Religion

Wednesday, 9/12:

Cottee, S. (2015a). It's nearly impossible to understand what motivates terrorists. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/06/terrorism-isis-motive/395351/>.

Cottee, S. (2017). "What ISIS really wants" revisited: Religion matters in jihadist violence, but how? *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 40, 439–454. doi:10.1080/1057610X.2016.1221258.

Kirby, J., & Mumford, R. (2005, October 21). In God's name? Evaluating the links between religious extremism and terrorism. Retrieved from <http://www.pewforum.org/2005/10/21/in-gods-name-evaluating-the-links-between-religious-extremism-and-terrorism/>.

Fri, 9/14:

Weggemans, D., Bakker, E., & Grol, P. (2014). Who are they and why do they go? The radicalisation and preparatory processes of Dutch Jihadist foreign fighters. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 8, 11.

Winter, C. (2017). *Media Jihad: The Islamic State's doctrine for information warfare*. The International Centre for the Stud of Radicalisation and Political Violence. London, UK.

Press responses to terrorism

Week 5, 9/17 – 9/23: Terrorism on the news

Wednesday, 9/19:

Nacos, B. L. (2003). Terrorism as breaking news: Attack on America. *Political Science Quarterly*, 118, 23–52. doi:10.1002/j.1538-165X.2003.tb00385.x.

Fri, 9/21:

Nacos, B. L. (2009). Revisiting the contagion hypothesis: Terrorism, news coverage, and copycat attacks. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 3, 3–13. Retrieved from <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/73>.

Norris, P., Kern, M., & Just, M. (2003). Framing terrorism. In *Framing terrorism* (pp. 3–26). New York, NY: Routledge.

Week 6, 9/24 – 9/30: Effects of news coverage

Wednesday, 9/26:

Chermak, S. M., & Gruenewald, J. (2006). The media's coverage of domestic terrorism. *Justice Quarterly*, 23, 428–461. doi:10.1080/07418820600985305.

Jetter, M. (2017). The effect of media attention on terrorism. *Journal of Public Economics*, 153, 32–48. doi:10.1016/j.jpubeco.2017.07.008.

Fri, 9/28:

Powell, K. A. (2011). Framing Islam: An analysis of U.S. media coverage of terrorism since 9/11. *Communication Studies*, 62, 90–112. doi:[10.1080/10510974.2011.533599](https://doi.org/10.1080/10510974.2011.533599).

Week 7, 10/1 – 10/7: Quality(ies) of news coverage

Wednesday, 10/3:

Schmid, A. (1989). Terrorism and the media: The ethics of publicity. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 1, 539–565. doi:[10.1080/09546558908427042](https://doi.org/10.1080/09546558908427042).

Wilkinson, P. (1997). The media and terrorism: A reassessment. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 9, 51–64. doi:[10.1080/09546559708427402](https://doi.org/10.1080/09546559708427402).

Fri, 10/5:

Bonner, R. (2011). The media and 9/11: How we did. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from <https://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2011/09/the-media-and-9-11-how-we-did/244818/>.

Brooker, C. (2011). The news coverage of the Norway mass-killings was fact-free conjecture. *The Guardian: Opinion*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2011/jul/24/charlie-brooker-norway-mass-killings>.

Week 8, 10/8 – 10/14: Quality(ies) II

Wednesday, 10/10:

Pew Research Center. (2002, May 23). The war on terrorism. Retrieved from <http://www.journalism.org/2002/05/23/the-war-on-terrorism/>.

Pew Research Center. (2006, September 11). How 9-11 changed the evening news. Retrieved from <http://www.journalism.org/2006/09/11/how-9-11-changed-the-evening-news/>.

Fri, 10/12: No class (Fall Break)

Public opinion and public reactions to terrorism

Week 9, 10/15 – 10/21: Fear

Wednesday, 10/17: **Exam 1 due**

Kohut, A. (2001). Fear of terrorism weighs heavily on public. *Pew Research Center*. Retrieved from <http://www.people-press.org/2001/06/29/fear-of-terrorism-weighs-heavily-on-public/>.

Fri, 10/19:

Mueller, J. (2004). A false sense of insecurity? *Risk*, 27, 42–46.

Week 10, 10/22 – 10/28: Direct and indirect effects

Wednesday, 10/24:

Huff, C., & Kertzer, J. D. (2018). How the public defines terrorism. *American Journal of Political Science*, 62, 55–71. doi:10.1111/ajps.12329.

Curry, M., & Cullman, S. (Director). (2011). *If a tree falls: A story of the Earth Liberation Front*. Marshall Curry Productions. Retrieved from <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1787725/>.

Shamir, J., & Shikaki, K. (2002). Self-serving perceptions of terrorism among Israelis and Palestinians. *Political Psychology*, 23, 537–557. doi:10.1111/0162-895X.00297.

Fri, 10/26: Norway case

Thoresen, S., Flood Aakvaag, H., Wentzel-Larsen, T., Dyb, G., & Kristian Hjemdal, O. (2012). The day Norway cried: Proximity and distress in Norwegian citizens following the 22nd July 2011 terrorist attacks in Oslo and on Utøya Island. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology*, 3, 19709. doi:10.3402/ejpt.v3i0.19709.

Counterterrorism**Week 11, 10/29 – 11/4:** Basics

Wednesday, 10/31:

Smith, M. (Director). (2016, October 11). *Confronting ISIS*. PBS. retrieved from <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/confronting-isis/>.

Weinberg, L., & Perliger, A. (2010). How terrorist groups end. *CTC Sentinel*, 3, 16–18.

Fri, 11/2:

Mueller, J. (2005). Six rather unusual propositions about terrorism. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 17, 487–505. doi:10.1080/095465591009359.

Week 12, 11/5 – 11/11: Backfire effects

Wednesday, 11/7:

Abrahms, M. (2006). Why terrorism does not work. *International Security*, 31, 42–78. doi:10.1162/isec.2006.31.2.42.

Haberman, C. (2015). Memories of Waco siege continue to fuel far-right groups. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/13/us/memories-of-waco-siege-continue-to-fuel-far-right-groups.html>.

Hersh, S. M. (2004). Torture at Abu Ghraib. *The New Yorker*. Retrieved from <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2004/05/10/torture-at-abu-ghraib>.

Fri, 11/9:

Johnson, D. A., Mora, A., & Schmidt, A. (2016). The strategic costs of torture: How "enhanced interrogation" hurt America. *Foreign Affairs*, 95, 121–132.

Kilcullen, D. (2009). *The accidental guerrilla: Fighting small wars in the midst of a big one*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press.

Week 13, 11/12 – 11/18: Counterterrorism and the public

Wednesday, 11/14:

Sides, J., & Gross, K. (2013). Stereotypes of Muslims and support for the war on terror. *The Journal of Politics*, 75, 583–598. doi:[10.1017/S0022381613000388](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381613000388).

Fri, 11/16:

Hetherington, M., & Suhay, E. (2011). Authoritarianism, threat, and Americans' support for the war on terror. *American Journal of Political Science*, 55, 546–560. doi:[10.1111/j.1540-5907.2011.00514.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2011.00514.x).

Week 14, 11/19 – 11/25: No class (Thanksgiving Break)

Week 15, 11/26 – 12/2: Soft power

Wednesday, 11/28:

Nye, J. S. (2009). Get smart: Combining hard and soft power. *Foreign Affairs*, 88, 160–163. JSTOR: [20699631](https://www.jstor.org/stable/20699631).

Fri, 11/30:

Tella, O. (2018). Boko Haram terrorism and counter-terrorism: The soft power context. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 53, 815–829. doi:[10.1177/0021909617739326](https://doi.org/10.1177/0021909617739326).

Week 16, 12/3 – 12/9: Final week

Wednesday, 12/5: **Exam 2 due**

Acknowledgments

Layout adapted from [Dr. Kieran Healy's](#). Readings and course structure are inspired by previous sections taught by Emily Davidson and Dr. Jerry Kosicki.

COMM 4820

Public Opinion and Communication

Jacob Long

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Summer 2016. University Hall 090.

Class: Tues. and Thurs. 9:00am–12:10pm.

Office Hours: Tues. and Thurs. 1:00pm–3:00pm.

“To speak with precision of public opinion is a task not unlike coming to grips with the Holy Ghost.” (V. O. Key, 1961, *Public Opinion and American Democracy*, p. 8)

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course surveys theory, research, and practice in the domain of public opinion with an emphasis on the role of communication. Other disciplines drawn from include political science, sociology, and social psychology. We begin by grappling with current and historical takes on the meaning of the concept before covering the techniques with which public opinion is measured. As the course progresses, our focus turns to covering major theories related to public opinion and its relationship with both mass and interpersonal communication. Throughout the course, the texts and subject matter covered will be a mixture of historically important work and some of the latest scholarly contributions. Further, we will keep an eye on the current political environment and assess whether it meets the expectations set by the material covered in class.

With that in mind, there are several explicit objectives for this course. By the end of the term, students should:

- Gain an understanding both of what public opinion is commonly understood to mean and the limitations of that definition.
- Know the predominant methods by which public opinion is measured as well as the pitfalls thereof.
- Understand the psychological processes involved in the formation and maintenance of opinions.
- Have a working knowledge of major theories relating communication and public opinion.
- Be able to see connections between individual opinions, group dynamics, and larger institutions such as the government and mass media.
- Be savvy consumers of present-day reporting of information that purports to be about public opinion.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

There is no required textbook for this course. We will be using *The Oxford Handbook of American Public Opinion and the Media* on a fairly regular basis, but this can be accessed in its entirety online. I will distribute PDFs of the assigned chapters, but you can see the complete text at <http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199545636.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199545636> when connected to campus WiFi or <http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com.proxy.lib.ohio-state.edu/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199545636.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199545636> otherwise. Readings will draw from many other sources as well, but PDF copies will always be provided via Carmen.

With that in mind, consistent access to the internet will be necessary in order to access readings, turn in assignments, and keep up with any updates to the class. Carmen will be the preferred method of communication to the class and the place where written assignments are generally turned in. Any changes to class policies or scheduling will be reflected in updates to this syllabus, which will be uploaded to Carmen.

EVALUATION

This class will use the standard OSU grading scheme:

A	93-100%	A-	90-92.99%	B+	87-89.99%
B	83-86.99%	B-	80-82.99%	C+	77-79.99%
C	73-76.99%	C-	70-72.99%	D+	67-69.99%
D	60-66.99%	E	0-59.99%		

The final grade in the class will consist of the following:

Participation	20%
Discussion questions	10%
Methods critique	15%
Article presentation	10%
Topic report	30%
Final presentation	15%

Discussion questions These will be required to be posted to Carmen by 11:59pm on the day before each class meeting. These should be questions that you would like to raise in class and that would add to a larger discussion. While your question may build on or be inspired by another student's question, it should not be a duplicate of a question already posted. You are expected to contribute one question for each assigned reading, except when the reading schedule says otherwise. On the day you are doing your article presentation, you do not need to submit discussion questions.

Methods critique This is a written assignment in which students will locate and analyze a recently published report—either from a mass media source, research firm, or academic journal—that describes the results of a public opinion poll. The analysis will focus on the strengths and weaknesses of the methods used to collect the data and the conclusions the source drew from that information. Students are expected to draw upon the readings and discussion on survey methodology in order to make their arguments. It will not be a research paper per se, but will require references to sources from assigned readings or elsewhere to justify arguments.

Article presentation Students will present the argument of their written methods critique to the class on several dates throughout the semester. The presentation should last 8–15 minutes after which the class may discuss the issues raised further. An opportunity to choose a date will be provided early in the term.

Topic report Due on the final day of class, this assignment requires you to use what you have learned to independent research a public opinion topic of interest and present a detailed report of your findings. Drawing upon existing data from academic and other sources, describe the state of knowledge about the chosen topic. The guidelines for choosing a topic are deliberately broad to allow for you to be creative and pursue your own interests. Acceptable ideas can be how different social groups differ in their opinions, an in-depth analysis of opinions on a particular issue, or the way a particular media source covers public opinion on an issue.

Final presentation The last day of class will be dedicated to 10–15 minute presentations of the findings of the topic report. These presentations, which should include some sort of visual aids—such as PowerPoint slides—should summarize what was written in the topic report.

Participation is discussed in more detail in the course policies section.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance

Attendance in this course is mandatory and, considering this is a 6-week term with only 11 total class meetings, critically important. Students will be granted 1 unexcused absence over the course of the term, for which no notice or reason is needed. Any graded activities (e.g., presentations) that occur on a day of an unexcused absence will be given a 0. Each unexcused absence beyond the 1 allotted will result in a penalty of a full letter grade on your final grade in the course (e.g., a B+ becomes a C+).

Excused absences for university-approved or medical purposes must be *convincingly* documented and done within one week of the absence. It is at the instructor's discretion to determine what consists of sufficient reason for an excused absence; when in doubt, check in advance.

Punctuality Tardiness is discouraged, but no specific penalties will be given so long as you enter within a reasonable time and the lateness is not a pattern. Special arrangements may be considered if there are acceptable reasons for being slightly late to class. When you are late, it is your responsibility to ensure that you were counted for attendance. While the instructor will make every effort to notice late entries and add them to the attendance log, you must approach the instructor after class or during break *on the day of the class* to verify you were counted.

Participation

Beyond mere attendance, involvement in class discussion is an important part of the learning environment. This is not only for the benefit of the student, but for all students who will learn and generate ideas from one another. It is expected that students will participate in discussion in all or nearly all class periods. This requires having completed assigned readings and any other required activities *prior* to the beginning of class. This *does not* require that you completely understand all assigned readings; to the contrary, questions arising from a sincere attempt to understand the material are among the most helpful contributions to the class. In any case, there is a necessary balance of quality and quantity. Relatively infrequent comments and questions that are intellectually rigorous are welcome, just as frequent innocuous or unhelpful comments are discouraged.

Participation entails both contribution and engagement. Otherwise positive contributions can be undermined if you are spending the rest of your time distracted. Making for a positive discussion requires both input and engaged, respectful listening.

Technology Use

You may feel free to use laptops or tablets to take notes and/or access course documents during class. However, it is unacceptable to use these devices for non-class activities. I cannot and will not police their use throughout class time, but it is not hard to tell who is using their devices productively and who is distracted. If you are frequently focused on your computer screens rather than what is going on in the classroom, I may lower your participation grade. I may not always disrupt the class when I see someone using technology inappropriately, so do not assume that just because I haven't said anything that you are unnoticed. If it becomes too large of a problem, I may change this policy accordingly.

Written Assignments

In-class assignments may be handwritten, but all other work must be typed and must conform to APA formatting, citing, and referencing guidelines (see <http://www.apastyle.org/> and <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>). Unless otherwise noted, assignments must be uploaded to the dropbox no later than 11:59 p.m. on the assigned due date.

Classroom Civility

Given the content of this course, we will frequently be talking about political issues over which reasonable people may disagree. This is not a class designed to hash out our political disagreements, however, and disagreements of this nature should not be dwelled upon in class. Further, statements of your own political beliefs in general are discouraged unless they clearly advance the class's discussion of a scholarly topic. It is especially important that we avoid racist, sexist, homophobic, or other negative language that may unnecessarily exclude members of our campus and classroom. This is not an exhaustive list of behaviors; rather, they represent the minimal standards that help make the classroom a productive learning environment for all concerned.

Consultation

I'm happy to talk about any questions or concerns you may have about class. The best way to do this is by visiting me during my office hours, which are posted at the top of this syllabus. You do not need to warn me that you'll be dropping by; you should assume that I will be there unless I have given advance notice otherwise. If office hours won't work for you, chat with me after class to schedule another time we can meet.

Email

I prefer to meet in person to discuss any questions or concerns. Email should generally be reserved for issues that absolutely cannot wait until the next class or office hours. Email is an acceptable way to arrange a face-to-face meeting as well. You may email to give advance notice about university-approved absences or to explain medical/emergency absences that will be documented later per course policy. Please treat email correspondence as formal communication and be professional when you use it. Email is absolutely not the medium for negotiating special requests, addressing grade concerns, or discussing ideas for assignments; those issues must be handled in person.

Challenging a Grade

I am always willing to discuss your grades with you, but I will not do so during class time. If you are only looking for more details or feedback, there is no formal process required. However, do not use the need for more feedback as a subtle way of asking for a grade change.

To challenge a grade, you must meet me during office hours or make an appointment within one week of the assignment being returned to you. When we meet, you must present your concerns in writing and attach the graded speech, paper, or exam. Please note that a challenge may result in grades being raised or lowered.

READING SCHEDULE

Be on the lookout each week for a “reading memo” in which I will give you more details on which parts of the assigned readings you should focus most of your energy on and if there are portions that you do not need to read.

Thursday, 05/12: Introduction

No assigned readings.

Optional:

- Druckman, J. N. (2014). Pathologies of studying public opinion, political communication, and democratic responsiveness. *Political Communication*, 31(3), 467–492. doi:10.1080/10584609.2013.852643.
- Feldman, S. (2003). Values, ideology, and the structure of political attitudes. In D. O. Sears, L. Huddy, & R. Jervis (Eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*. Oxford University Press.
- Gunther, A. C., Perloff, R. M., & Tsfati, Y. (2008). Public opinion and the third-person effect. In *The Sage handbook of public opinion research* (pp. 184–191).
- Hastorf, A. H., & Cantril, H. (1954). They saw a game; a case study. *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 49(1), 129–134. doi:10.1037/h0057880.
- Price, V. (1992). Problems of public opinion. In *Public opinion* (pp. 4–22). Sage.

Tuesday, 05/17: Defining public opinion*Required:*

- Herbst, S. (2011). Critical perspectives on public opinion. In R. Y. Shapiro & L. R. Jacobs (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of American Public Opinion and the Media* (pp. 302–314). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kinder, D. R. (1998). Opinion and action in the realm of politics. In D. T. Gilbert, S. T. Fiske, & G. Lindzey (Eds.), *Handbook of Social Psychology* (4th, pp. 778–784). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Zaller, J. (1994). Positive constructs of public opinion. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 11(3), 276–287.

Optional:

- Gunnell, J. G. (2011). Democracy and the concept of public opinion. In G. C. Edwards, L. R. Jacobs, & R. Y. Shapiro (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of American public opinion and the media* (pp. 270–283). Oxford University Press.

Thursday, 05/19: Opinion measurement*Required:*

- Berinsky, A. J. (2011). Representative sampling and survey non-response. In G. C. Edwards, L. R. Jacobs, & R. Y. Shapiro (Eds.), *The oxford handbook of american public opinion and the media* (pp. 332–345). Oxford University Press.
- Bishop, G. F. (2005b). The elusiveness of "public opinion". In *The illusion of public opinion: Fact and artifact in American public opinion polls* (pp. 1–17). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Delli Carpini, M. X. (2011). Constructing public opinion: A brief history of survey research. In G. C. Edwards, L. R. Jacobs, & R. Y. Shapiro (Eds.), *The oxford handbook of american public opinion and the media* (pp. 284–301). Oxford University Press.

Optional:

- Fricker, S., Galesic, M., Tourangeau, R., & Yan, T. (2005). An experimental comparison of web and telephone surveys. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 69(3), 370–392. Retrieved February 10, 2015, from <http://poq.oxfordjournals.org/content/69/3/370.short>.

Tuesday, 05/24: Knowledge and competence*Required:*

- Bishop, G. F. (2005a). Illusory opinions on public affairs. In *The illusion of public opinion: Fact and artifact in American public opinion polls* (pp. 18–45). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Glynn, C. J., Herbst, S., O'Keefe, G. J., Shapiro, R. Y., & Lindeman, M. (2004). Public opinion and democratic competence. In *Public opinion* (2nd, pp. 283–354). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Kuklinski, J. H., & Quirk, P. J. (2000). Reconsidering the rational public: Cognition, heuristics, and mass opinion. In A. Lupia, M. D. McCubbins, & S. L. Popkin (Eds.), *Elements of reason: Cognition, choice, and the bounds of rationality* (pp. 153–82).

Optional:

- Althaus, S. L. (1998). Information effects in collective preferences. *American Political Science Review*, 92(3), 545. doi:10.2307/2585480.
- Delli Carpini, M. X., & Keeter, S. (1993). Measuring political knowledge: Putting first things first. *American Journal of Political Science*, 37(4), 1179. doi:10.2307/2111549.
- Delli Carpini, M. X., & Keeter, S. (1996). From democratic theory to democratic practice: The case for an informed citizenry. In *What Americans know about politics and why it matters* (pp. 22–61). New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Price, V., & Neijens, P. (1997). Opinion quality in public opinion research. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 9(4), 336–360. Retrieved March 30, 2016, from <http://ijpor.oxfordjournals.org/content/9/4/336.short>.

Thursday, 05/26: Misperceptions and rumoring*Required:*

- Garrett, R. K. (2011). Troubling consequences of online political rumoring. *Human Communication Research*, 37(2), 255–274. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2958.2010.01401.x.

Nyhan, B. (2010). Why the "death panel" myth wouldn't die: Misinformation in the health care reform debate. *The Forum*, 8(1), 1–24. doi:[10.2202/1540-8884.1354](https://doi.org/10.2202/1540-8884.1354).

Optional:

Garrett, R. K., Nisbet, E. C., & Lynch, E. K. (2013). Undermining the corrective effects of media-based political fact checking? The role of contextual cues and naïve theory. *Journal of Communication*, 63(4), 617–637. doi:[10.1111/jcom.12038](https://doi.org/10.1111/jcom.12038).

Thorson, E. (2015). Belief echoes: The persistent effects of corrected misinformation. *Political Communication*, 1–21. doi:[10.1080/10584609.2015.1102187](https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2015.1102187).

Weeks, B. E., & Garrett, R. K. (2014). Electoral consequences of political rumors: Motivated reasoning, candidate rumors, and vote choice during the 2008 U.S. presidential election. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 26(4), 401–422. doi:[10.1093/ijpor/edu005](https://doi.org/10.1093/ijpor/edu005).

Tuesday, 05/31: Receive-Accept-Sample (RAS) Model

Required:

Zaller, J. (1992a). Chapter 2: Information, predispositions, and opinion. In *The nature and origins of mass opinion* (pp. 6–39). Cambridge; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Zaller, J. (1992b). Chapter 3: How citizens acquire information and convert it into public opinion. In *The nature and origins of mass opinion* (pp. 40–52). Cambridge; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Optional:

Zaller, J. (2012). What Nature and Origins leaves out. *Critical Review*, 24(4), 569–642. doi:[10.1080/08913811.2012.807648](https://doi.org/10.1080/08913811.2012.807648).

Thursday, 06/02: Selective exposure and polarization

Required:

Garrett, R. K., Carnahan, D., & Lynch, E. K. (2013). A turn toward avoidance? Selective exposure to online political information, 2004–2008. *Political Behavior*, 35(1), 113–134. doi:[10.1007/s11109-011-9185-6](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-011-9185-6).

Prior, M. (2013). Media and political polarization. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 16(1), 101–127. doi:[10.1146/annurev-polisci-100711-135242](https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-100711-135242).

Tuesday, 06/07: Spiral of silence and political discussion

Required:

Scheufele, D. A. (2008). Spiral of silence theory. In *The SAGE handbook of public opinion research* (pp. 173–183).

More TBA

Thursday, 06/09: Framing*Required:*

Nelson, T. E. (2011). Issue framing. In G. C. Edwards, L. R. Jacobs, & R. Y. Shapiro (Eds.), *The oxford handbook of american public opinion and the media* (pp. 189–203). Oxford University Press.

Nelson, T. E., Clawson, R. A., & Oxley, Z. M. (1997). Media framing of a civil liberties conflict and its effect on tolerance. *The American Political Science Review*, 91(3), 567. doi:[10.2307/2952075](https://doi.org/10.2307/2952075). JSTOR: [2952075?origin=crossref](https://www.jstor.org/stable/2952075).

Tuesday, 06/14: Agenda setting and priming*Required:*

McCombs, M. E. (2005). A look at agenda-setting: Past, present and future. *Journalism Studies*, 6(4), 543–557. doi:[10.1080/14616700500250438](https://doi.org/10.1080/14616700500250438).

Scheufele, D. A., & Tewksbury, D. (2007). Framing, agenda setting, and priming: The evolution of three media effects models. *Journal of Communication*, 57(1), 9–20. doi:[10.1111/j.1460-2466.2006.00326.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2006.00326.x).

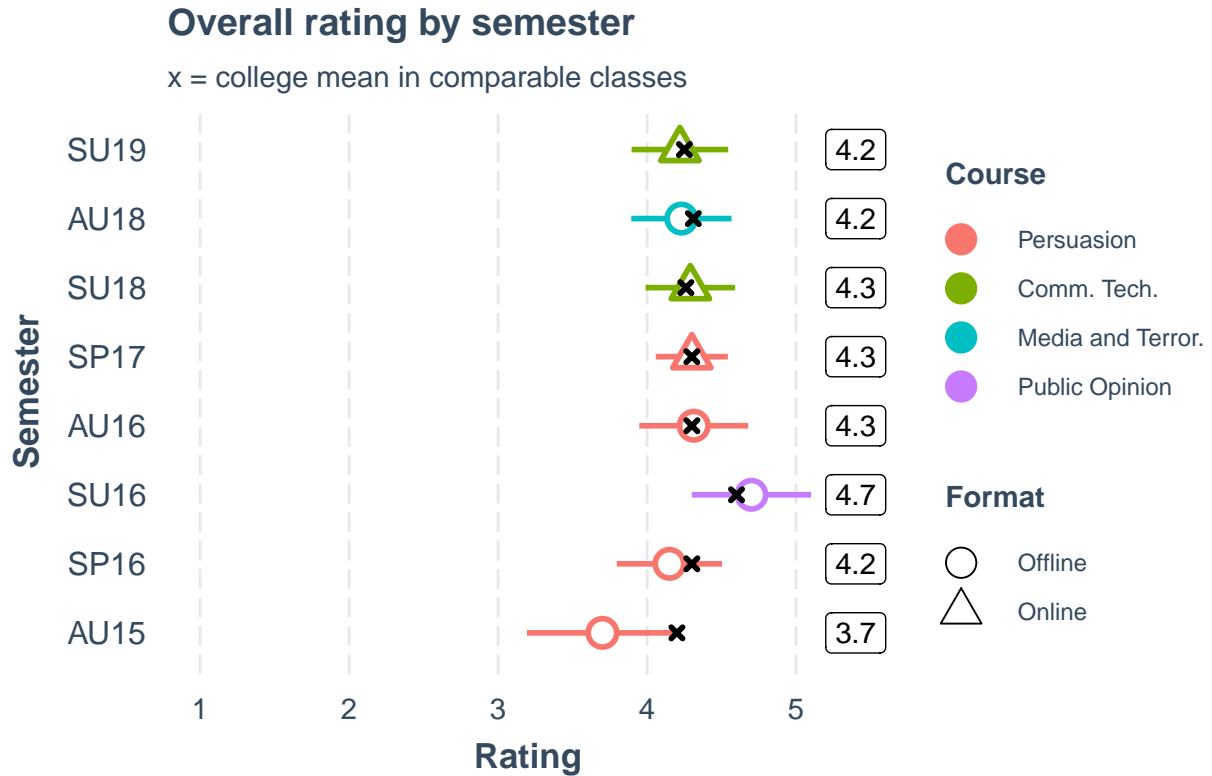
Thursday, 06/16: Final class

Topic papers due, in-class presentations

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

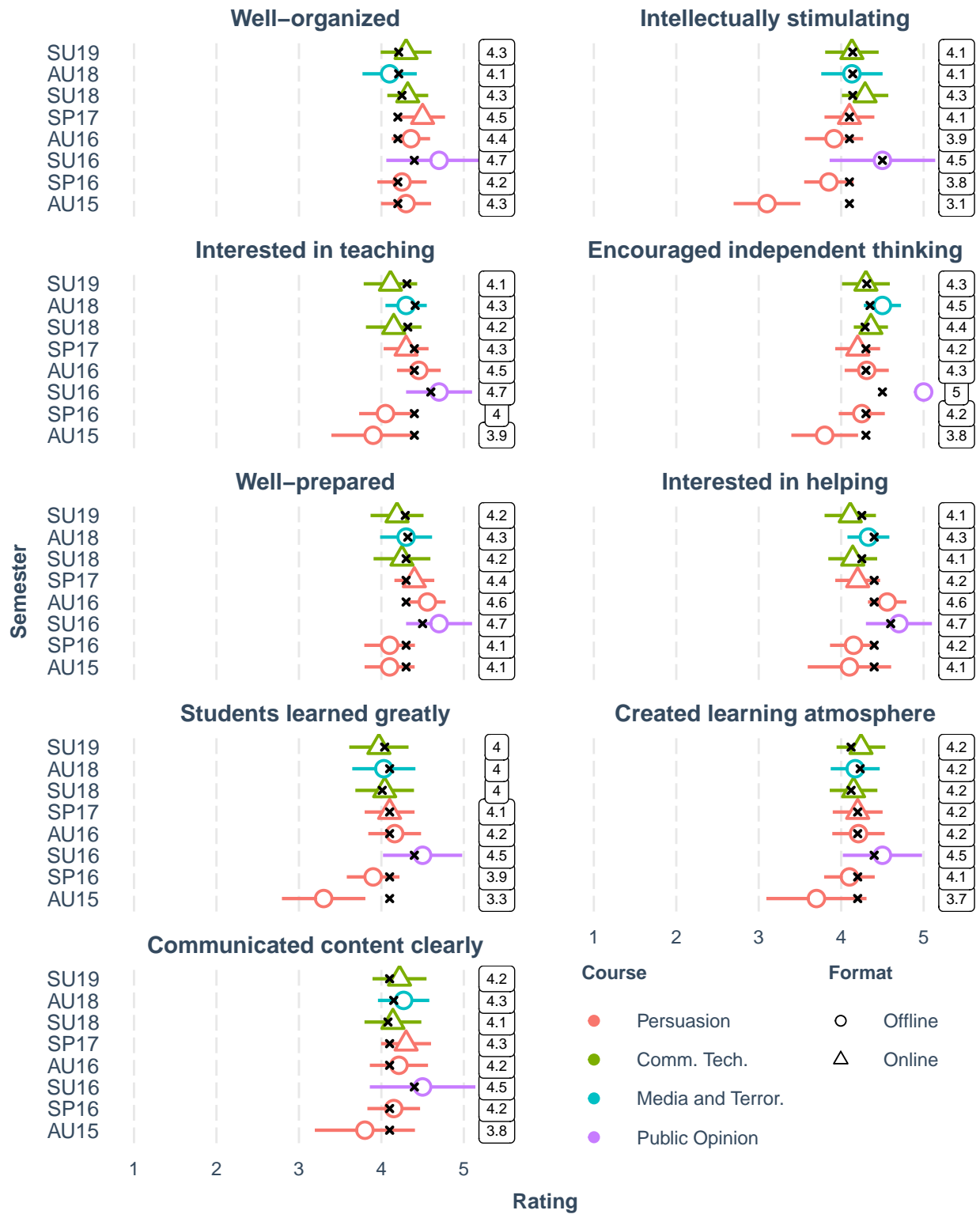
Layout adapted from Dr. Kieran Healy's. Course policies borrowed in part from Dr. Rashna Richards, Dr. Chip Eveland, and Kristie Sigler. Readings and course structure inspired in part by Dr. David Clementson, Dr. Kathleen McGraw, Dr. Gerald Kosicki, and George Pearson.

Appendix A: Evaluations with Reference Means



Student evaluations by semester

x = college mean in comparable classes



Horizontal lines are 95% confidence intervals calculated based on class size and standard deviation.