I. Class Meetings
This course meets during the Intersession, which will run December 7, 2013 to January 7, 2013. There are four in-class meetings, scheduled as follows:

- Thursday, December 12, 2013
- Thursday, December 19, 2013
- Thursday, December 26, 2014
- Thursday, January 2, 2014

Each class meeting is seminar style with in-class group work. The class will begin promptly at 5:20 PM and end at 6:50 PM. Students are required to attend all four classes.

Any student that misses a class will automatically receive an F in the course.

Office Hours: Before each class. In addition, we can meet by appointment or directly after each class meeting.

II. Course Summary: Big Bird, Really?
Did you know that Big Bird has an overall favorability rating of 51%? In fact, Big Bird receives highly partisan support, according to a survey conducted by the Public Broadcasting System. For example, during the 2012 Presidential election, Democrats gave Big Bird an overall favorability rating of 58%, while Republicans only gave the flightless ratite an overall favorability rating of 37% - a difference of 21 percentage points! This course will try to make sense of public opinion by looking for answers to the Big Bird, really, question. That is, how do we know what people think about Big Bird, what produces the differences in opinion, and why do we care?

To answer the Big Bird, Really question, we will concentrate on the relationship between the Media and public opinion. First, we discuss the meaning and origins of public opinion. What is public opinion and why should we study it? How is something so personal like an opinion of Big Bird, measured? That is, how do individuals form their opinions? Second, we examine media effects and their impact on opinions held by citizens. How do they move public opinion, if at all? How important is media influence compared to other actors? The 2012 Presidential election will provide some of the framework for our discussions and course work, along with the early stirrings of the 2014-midterm elections. We will apply the principles that we learn to help us understand the impact of the media and public opinion on election outcomes and the democratic order.

Through our work in this course, students will achieve the following learning objectives and by the end of the semester will:

1. Understand of the major themes, debates, and puzzles in the study of public opinion.
2. Comprehend some of the various methodological issues in the field of public opinion.
3. Evaluate the validity of a public opinion poll.
4. Possess the analytical skills necessary to view polling analysis and results critically.
5. Create a point of view with regard to the role of public opinion in democracies.

After completing this course students should be able to:
1. compare the key scholarly works in the field of public opinion and differentiate between outsider critiques and insider critiques.
2. analyze a poll’s methodology and define terms such as random sample, stratification, margin of error and question bias to critically assess results.
3. define and describe the stages of political socialization (youth, pre-adult years, etc.) and their impact on individual opinion formation.
4. measure socioeconomic status, define social groups and understand how differences impact ideology, partisanship, interests and principles.
5. define and discuss media techniques, including priming, framing and agenda-setting, and identify their public opinion with examples.
6. identify organizational bias in the reporting and interpretation of poll results.
7. enumerate ethical standards for polling and the reporting of results as detailed by American Association of Public Opinion Research (AAPOR).
8. summarize, discuss and describe countermajoritarianism, tyranny of the majority, the spiral of silence, the impact of each on public opinion and the democratic order.

Written Assignments: Written assignments include four précis. Each précis is no more than 1-2 spaced pages. The Assignments section of Blackboard contains the details. The purpose of each précis is to provide a clear and concise analysis and summary of the argument presented by each author including those arguments that may not be included.

A successful précis:
1. Conveys the essential facts or dominating idea of the assigned readings.
2. Contains an opening sentence that immediately introduces the central arguments.
3. Summarizes only what the author says; does not add opinions.
4. Will use only your own words and not quotations.

Each précis is due by 9:00PM on the Monday dates listed below. Late assignments automatically receive a reduced full letter grade. An assignment that is turned in electronically past the 9:00PM deadline is considered late. For example, an A paper will automatically receive a B if it is turned in late. Each day thereafter is another full letter grade. There are no extensions. Please upload each Précis to Blackboard by the due date using the links provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Percentage of Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Précis One</td>
<td>December 9, 2013</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Précis Two</td>
<td>December 16, 2013</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Précis Three</td>
<td>December 23, 2013</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Précis Four</td>
<td>December 30, 2013</td>
<td>10%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Online exercises: There will also be a series of quizzes, exercises and reflective thought questions in each lecture that is posted online. Completing both will is required, and will also help you prepare for the final examinations.

Final Examination: The final examination is open book and cumulative.
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Intermission 2013-2014  
Dr. Veronica Donahue  
Vdd2@georgetown.edu/202.687.5935

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Percentage of Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online Exercises</td>
<td>Each week</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Class Final</td>
<td>May 8, 2014</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
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**Required Texts:** The following texts are available at the Campus bookstore or can be purchased online.

**Required Articles:** Copies of the following articles will be made available to you on Blackboard.

**Recommended:**

**Resources for Polling stories and information:**
3. USA Election Polls [http://www.usaelectionpolls.com](http://www.usaelectionpolls.com)

**III. Format**

Although the course includes 4 in-person meetings, the bulk of the class work will be done independently online. Each week, you will be asked to read portions of the texts or other materials and to visit relevant web sites. That means that much of your learning will rely on materials from the Blackboard site and readings, from your interactions with your fellow students, and me and from your assignments. It is true that this course is more flexible than a traditional class. You can log on at any hour of the day or night to complete your assignments and participate in discussion. But that flexibility means that you will need better study discipline and organization than in a traditional class. Do not allow yourself to fall behind. This is not a self-paced course; you are expected to complete assignments by set deadlines. This approach allows the class, as a group, to work through material together and will help prevent you from falling behind.

It is important to note that online courses are not necessarily easier or less time-consuming than face-to-face courses. Online students form a learning community that requires regular “attendance.” Learning online provides a stimulating, challenging and flexible environment of motivated learners who work together to achieve learning objectives. Here are some tips:
1. **Check in daily:** Turn this online course into a daily activity. It will make it less overwhelming. Getting into a rhythm will help you stay on schedule and keep you connected to the online community.

2. **Look ahead:** Knowing what is due in weeks, not just the next day, will help maximize time. And once you know when an assignment is due, don't wait until the day before to start working on it.

3. **Speak up:** If you struggle or fall behind, don't stay silent. Don't be hesitant to ask for help! I look forward to hearing from you and working with you.

### IV. Assignments Schedule

**Monday:** Précis are due Mondays at 9:00PM.

**Wednesday:** Blog Topic question posted by 9:00PM. Each week a student from the class will post to Blackboard a Blog Topic question for discussion. The question is related to the current week's topic. Make sure you check the schedule to see when you are responsible for posting a question. I will post the first Blog Topic question scheduled for December 11, 2013.

**Thursday:** Class Meetings.

**Friday:** Blog Posting due. You are expected to make one posting by 9:00PM each Friday in response to the Wednesday student Blog Topic question. Please make a minimum of one posting per week. Your week's discussion grade will take into account both whether you meet the deadlines for postings and the quality of your postings. When responding to someone else's posting a substantial answer is one that says more than "Me too" or "I disagree." It is advised that you compose the post in Word, check for spelling and grammatical errors, and then cut and paste it into the Blog. In posting to the course Blog, please follow these guidelines:

1. Post your Blog entry by the deadline. This will allow the correct amount of time for your classmates to read and respond to your contribution.
2. Keep your Blog posts concise and clearly written. Most ideas can be stated in a couple of paragraphs, although sometimes a longer message may be needed to develop your thoughts adequately.
3. Use a Web writing style that: (a) states your main point at the beginning of the Blog, (b) employs short sentences, (c) has a conversational or friendly tone, and (d) makes use of bullets or lists in longer messages to help readers to "see" ideas. Use subject headers that capture attention so that others will read what you have to say.
4. Be respectful of other's ideas, opinions, and beliefs. It's fine to disagree with someone, but please respect his or her right to think differently.
5. A Blog post, both questions and responses, that demonstrates substance contributes to the understanding and application of ideas by doing one or more of the following:
   
   - **Reflection about meaning:** Describe thoughtfully what something means or new insights it provides, or raise a question as a seed for clarification or further discussion.
   - **Analysis:** Discuss relevant themes, concepts, main ideas, components, or relationships among ideas. Or, identify hidden assumptions or fallacies in reasoning. Ask a question.
   - **Elaboration:** Build on ideas of others or ideas found in the readings by adding details, examples, a different viewpoint, or other relevant information.
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- Application: Provide examples -- or illuminate counterexamples -- of how principles or concepts can be applied to actual situations, or discuss the implications of theory for practice.
- Synthesis: Integrate multiple views to provide a summary, a new perspective, or a creative refashioning of ideas. Ask a question about the implications.
- Evaluation: Assess the accuracy, reasonableness, or quality of ideas.

6. Avoid using all caps. IT SEEMS LIKE SHOUTING!

Saturday: Court Lecture posted. Because this is a compressed course, we will have two lectures a week, in addition to the class meetings.

Sunday: Student summary of the week’s Blog posted by 9:00PM. You will receive your assigned week at the first class meeting. Remember to check the updated course schedule for your assignment after we meet. When writing the post, remember that summarizing is used to highlight key points, clarify issues, and give participants a sense of direction. A summary is not simply compiling everyone’s posts into one long message. Summaries extract ideas from Blog posts and provide order to help blog participants re-focus (if topic has begun to drift), move forward, or prepare for the end of the discussion, or to encapsulate the main ideas of an ended discussion.

When you complete your assigned Blog summary, please remember that a well written summary:
- condenses discussion comments into a short report
- refers to specific comments made in the discussion
- reviews what has been covered so far by weaving comments together to synthesize the discussion
- identifies various points of view and acknowledges differences and similarities
- reviews unexpected developments or findings
- lists issues still unresolved
- interprets the main contribution of the discussion toward the overall goal or assignment

When summarizing, be sure to include multiple perspectives on the issue(s) being discussed and hold off on judging. Instead, try using some of the original blog poster's words to briefly re-cap and integrate the results in a concise and useful way.

IV. Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M/9</td>
<td>1st Précis Due</td>
<td>Written Assignment</td>
<td>Select one of the assigned readings from 12/7 for the Précis written assignment due by 9:00PM in BB.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W/11</td>
<td>Blog</td>
<td>Blog Discussion Question</td>
<td>Dr. Donahue will post the first question in BB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F/13</td>
<td>Blog</td>
<td>Blog Post Due</td>
<td>Please post your response to the Blog Discussion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Question in BB by 9:00PM</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SA/14</td>
<td>Lecture Posted</td>
<td>Understanding Public Opinion: A Scientific Assessment continued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SU/15</td>
<td>Blog</td>
<td>Student Blog Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/16</td>
<td>2nd Précis Due</td>
<td>Written Assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W/18</td>
<td>Blog</td>
<td>Blog Discussion Question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R/19</td>
<td>2nd Class</td>
<td>Influences on Public Opinion: Political Socialization, The Media and Political Socialization &amp; Group Differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F/20</td>
<td>Blog</td>
<td>Blog Post Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA/D21</td>
<td>Lecture Posted</td>
<td>Reporting Public Opinion: Analyzing &amp; Interpreting the polls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SU/D22</td>
<td>Blog</td>
<td>Student Blog Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/D23</td>
<td>3rd Précis Due</td>
<td>Written Assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R/26</td>
<td>3rd Class</td>
<td>Influences on Public Opinion: Media Effects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA/28</td>
<td>Lecture Posted</td>
<td>Public Opinion &amp; The Democratic Order: Some Conclusions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/30</td>
<td>4th Précis Due</td>
<td>Written Assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W/J1</td>
<td>Class Blog</td>
<td>Blog Discussion Question</td>
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<tr>
<td>R/J2</td>
<td>Class Blog</td>
<td>In-Class Final Examination</td>
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V. Grading

The Grade Structure for the course is as follows:

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 Précis Essays:</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blog:</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Exercises:</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation:</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Examination:</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grading Policy:**

- A 94 – 100%
- A- 90 – 93%
- B+ 87 – 89%
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B 83 – 86%
B- 80 – 82%
C+ 77 – 79%
C 83 – 86%
C- 70 – 72%
D 63 – 69%
F 0 – 62%

Grading: Here are the academic guidelines used for grading in this course:
• An A designates work of extraordinarily high quality that consists of unusual thoroughness and comprehensiveness, cogency and clarity in the development of ideas, and critical reflection and conceptual sophistication. Written work should be well organized, clearly argued and free of serious grammatical, spelling, and syntactical errors. Students who receive an A will consistently come to class prepared, participate in the on-line discussions and often initiate discussions either in person or virtually.
• A B designates work of high quality regarding the organization and development of ideas. Work substantively addresses the main issues/topics/questions of the assignments. Writing is relatively well organized and free of serious grammatical and spelling as well as syntactical errors. Students will receive a B if they contribute regularly to class discussion and/or have a near perfect attendance record, and participate in the on-line discussions each week.
• A C designates work that minimally meets acceptable requirements as stated in guidelines for assignments. Written work is not well organized, ideas are less clearly stated, and there will be several grammatical, spelling, and syntactical errors. Work may only address a part of the assignment. Students receiving a C will infrequently participate in class and often wait until they are called on to do so.
• A D designates work that does not meet minimum acceptable requirements of the assignment(s). Work is very poorly written in terms of organization and development of ideas and in terms of grammar, spelling, and syntax. Students who do not complete all assignments are likely to receive a D.
• An F designates a failure to complete all assignments and/or a failure to demonstrate a minimal degree of engagement with the readings or the written assignments. Students who miss two or more classes will automatically fail the course.

VI. Academic Policies

Plagiarism: The sources for all information and ideas in your assignments must be documented. In addition, all quotations must be identified as quotations, using quotation marks and documentation of the source of the quotation. Anything less than these standards will constitute an act of plagiarism. Plagiarized work will be reported to Georgetown's Honor Council (see below). If the council finds that the work has been plagiarized or in some other way violates the Honor Code, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment and for the course.

Georgetown Honor System: All students are expected to follow Georgetown's honor code unconditionally. We assume you have read the honor code material located at gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu and in particular have read the following documents: Honor Council Pamphlet, What is Plagiarism, Sanctioning Guidelines, and Expedited Sanctioning Process. Papers in this course will all be submitted to SafeAssign for checking.

Submitting material in fulfillment of the requirements of this course means that you have abided by the Georgetown honor pledge:

In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor, and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.

Submitting Assignments:
Written assignments must be submitted electronically, in both Blackboard and Turnitin.com. An assignment will not count as submitted until it has been uploaded to both Web sites. Printed assignments will not be accepted and will earn no credit. Similarly, assignments submitted by e-mail will not be accepted and will earn no credit.

All work for this class should be typed double-spaced, spell-checked, have one-inch margins, and use 12-point font. Please follow APA style.

**Turnitin.com:**
Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for a Textual Similarity Review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be added as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers in the future. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the terms of use agreement posted on the Turnitin.com site.

**Disabilities:** If you are a student with a documented disability who requires accommodations or if you think you may have a disability and want to inquire about accommodations, please contact the Academic Resource Center at 202-687-8354 or arc@georgetown.edu.