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CURRICULUM PROPOSAL COVER SHEET
University-Wide Undergraduate Curriculum Committee

UWUCC 4/12/94
Senate 5/3/94

I. CONTACT

Contact Person Dr. Stanford G. Mukasa Phone 357 3097
Department Journalism

II. PROPOSAL TYPE (Check All Appropriate Lines)

☒ **COURSE** Public Opinion
Suggested 20 character title

☒ New Course* JN 430 Public Opinion and the News Print Media
Course Number and Full Title

☐ Course Revision _____
Course Number and Full Title

☐ Liberal Studies Approval + _____
for new or existing course Course Number and Full Title

☐ Course Deletion _____
Course Number and Full Title

☐ Number and/or Title Change _____
Old Number and/or Full Old Title

_____ New Number and/or Full New Title

☐ Course or Catalog Description Change _____
Course Number and Full Title

☐ **PROGRAM:** ☐ Major ☐ Minor ☐ Track

☐ New Program* _____
Program Name

☐ Program Revision* _____
Program Name

☐ Program Deletion* _____
Program Name

☐ Title Change _____
Old Program Name

_____ New Program Name

III. Approvals (signatures and date)

Stanford G. Mukasa
Department Curriculum Committee

D. J. Heilman
Department Chair

BLV 11/17/93
College Curriculum Committee

BLV 11/17/93 No New
Resons
College Dean

+ Director of Liberal Studies (where applicable)

* Provost (where applicable)

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION**JN430 : Public Opinion and the News Media****3 credits****3 lecture hours****Prerequisite : Junior Standing**

A course dealing with understanding and measuring public opinion. Emphasis is placed on, first, critically analyzing the historical origins and the dynamics of public opinion in the policy making process ; and, secondly, measuring what people think on any given issue or issues. Students not only develop a theoretical or conceptual understanding of public opinion and the news media but get an opportunity to engage in a practical measure of the public's attitudes or thinking on any given issues or issues. The goal is to equip students with the requisite skills to understand and measure public opinion. The course is partly a response to market demands for journalists with a capacity to scientifically and objectively measure and articulate public opinion, and partly an aspect of what is known as precision journalism.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Students will develop an analytical understanding of the dynamics of public opinion and the news media.
2. Students will develop , through research instrument design, a methodology for scientifically and objectively measuring public opinion. This will include designing a questionnaire, coding and using an SPSSx program to statistically analyze data.
3. Students will be able to write a credible research report.
4. Students will develop an empirical understanding of the role of the news media in the public policy process as well as the impact of public opinion and the news media on public policy.
5. Students will develop a capability to articulate objectively issues of public concern, relevance and interest.
6. Students will gain substantial exposure to issues and problems in public opinion and the news media. This will be done in part

through *C-SPAN- in -the -classroom* educational video series. From these videos, students will learn from media practitioners their experiences in measuring public opinion.

7. Students will be able to design a research instrument and conduct public opinion polling for both journalism and non journalism related issues. This will enhance their marketability in the job market.

III. COURSE OUTLINE:

The semester will be divided into two parts. The first part will focus on historical and theoretical issues, and the second part on the practical aspects of measuring public opinion.

A Public Opinion conceptual definitions 2 weeks

1. Problems in defining public opinion
2. Concepts used in measure of public opinion
3. Elements of public opinion

B Historical origins of Public Opinion 2 weeks

1. The Enlightenment and the philosophical ideas of John Locke, Jurgen Harbemas, Jean Jacques Rousseau, etc.
2. Evolution of the concepts of "public" and "opinion"
3. The classical and democratic utilitarian models of public opinion

C The political role of Public Opinion 3 weeks

1. Public policy and process defined.
2. Opinion-policy - relationship between public opinion and public policy examined
3. Walter Lippmann's thesis on the democratic theory of public participation in political and policy processes examined
4. Role of American voter as key player in opinion-policy process analyzed

D The environment of public opinion 2 weeks

1. Elite theory of public opinion and models of power in the United States
2. The media and public opinion
3. Family, church, peer groups

E. Public Opinion measurement 3 weeks

1. History of opinion polling in the United States
2. Prescientific and informal polling
3. Scientific polling: Research instrument design
4. Writing a research report

F. Class project : Survey Research 2 weeks

Students will work as a class to design research instrument, carry out a survey research, analyze research results (descriptive only), write and present a research report. The SPSSX program will be run by the Applied Research Lab. There will be an overlap between periods E. and F.

IV. EVALUATION METHODS:

The final grade for the course will be determined as follows :

- 50% Project.** Students will work in groups to identify an issue/s of public interest, design a research instrument, carry out a survey research, analyze data and write a research report. Grade determination will be based on (a) quality of report students produce as a group, and (b) individual contribution to group project. Each student will write a paper detailing the student's contribution to the project. In addition, each student will make a class presentation on examination day analyzing a section of the class report.
- 25% Midterm.** This will be a short essay type of an examination.
- 15% Quizzes.** There will be five quizzes, each worth 20 points. Two of the quizzes will be unscheduled. The format for all quizzes will be multiple choice and true-false

- 10% **Individual project.** In preparation for the final project each student will be required to design a research instrument. Here the student will not carry out a survey research
- 5% **C-SPAN videos and class participation.** Student will watch C-SPAN videos on the media and public opinion answer questions and participate in class discussions

V. **REQUIRED TEXTS, SUPPLEMENTAL BOOKS AND READINGS**

Textbook : Price, Vincent **Public Opinion**, Sage Publications. Newbury, 1992.

Students will be assigned to read selected articles in the *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Walter Lippmann's **Public Opinion**, and Bernard Hennessey's **Public Opinion**.

VI. **SPECIAL RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS**

Each student will be expected to supply the following :

one blank computer disk

Students will incur nominal costs in copying materials for class presentation and discussion.

VII. **BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

The following is a partial list of readings used in preparing for the course:

- Baker, K.M. 1990
 "Public Opinion as political invention" In *Inventing the French Revolution: Essays on French political culture in the eighteenth century*, pp 167-199) Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press
- Ball-Rokeach, M., and Grube, J.W. (1984)
The great American values test: influencing behavior and belief through television. New York Free Press
- Blumer, H 1948
 Public Opinion and public opinion polling. *American Sociological Review*, 13, 542-554
- Bogardus, E.S.
The making of Public Opinion. New York: Association Press
Public Opinion Quarterly
- C-SPAN (1988- 1992)

Educational videos on media and public opinion polling (*various*)

- Cantril, H. (1991).
 "The opinion connection: Polling, politics, and the press".
 Washington, D.C.: *Congressional Quarterly Press*.
- Childs, H. L. (1965).
Public opinion: Nature, formation, and role. Princeton, NJ: Van Nostrand.
- Cobb, R. W., & Elder, C.D. (1983).
Participation in American Politics: The dynamics of agenda-building (2nd ed.). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Converse, J.M. (1987).
Survey research in the United States: Roots and emergence 1890-1960. Berkely: University of California Press.
- Converse, J.M., & Presser, S. (1986).
 "Survey questions: Handcrafting the standardized questionnaire". (Sage University Papers series on Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences, series no. 07-063.)
 Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Converse, E.E. (1964).
 "The nature of belief systems in mass publics". In D.E. Apter (Ed.), *Ideology and discontent* (pp.206-261). New York: Free Press.
- Converse, P.E. (1987).
 Changing concepts of public opinion in the political process. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 51, S12-S24.
- Crespi, I. (1989).
Public opinion, polls, and democracy. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Entman, R. M. (1989).
Democracy without citizens: Media and the decay of American politics.
 Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Fan, D. P. (1988).
Predictions of public opinion from the mass media: Content analysis and mathematical modelling. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Fan, D. P., & Tims, A.R. (1989).
 "The impact of the news media on public opinion: American presidential election, 1987-1988." *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 1, 151-163.
- Ginsberg, B. (1986).
The captive public: How mass opinion promotes state power. New York: Basic Books.
- Habermas, J. (1989).
The structural transformation of the public sphere: An inquiry into a category of bourgeois society (T.Burger, Trans.). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
 (Original work published 1962)
- Hennessey, B.C. (1985).
Public opinion (5th ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Herman, E.S., & Chomsky, N. (1988).
Manufacturing consent: The political economy of the mass media. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Iyengar, S. (1990).
 "The accessibility bias in politics: Television news and public opinion." *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 2, 1-15.
- Iyengar, S. & Kinder, D. R. (1987).
News that matters: Television and American opinion. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Key, V.O., Jr. (1961).

- Public opinion and American democracy.** New York: Knopf.
- Lippmann, W. (1925).
- The phantom public.** New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Lippmann, Walter (1925)
- Public Opinion** New York: Harcourt Brace
- Locke, J. (1975).
- An essay concerning human understanding** (A.C. Fraser, Ed., 2 vols.).
Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press. (Original work published 1690)
- Locke, J. (1963).
- Two treatises of government.** Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
(Original work published 1690)
- McCombs, Maxwell. Edna Einsiedel, and David Weaver -
- Contemporary public opinion: issues and the news**
- Mills, C. W. (1956).
- The power elite.** Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Moyers Bill.
- Images and Reality in America.* PBS video series
- Mutz, D. C. (1989).
- "The influence of perceptions of media influence: Third person effects and the public expression of opinions". *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 1, 3-23.
- Namenwirth, J. Z., Miller, R. L., & Webber, R. P. (1981).
- Organizations have opinions: A redefinition of publics. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 45, 463-476.
- Nathans, B. (1990).
- "Habermas's "public sphere" in the era of the French Revolution". *French Historical Studies*, 16, 620-644.
- Neuman, W. R. (1986).
- The paradox of mass politics: Knowledge and opinion in the American electorate.** Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Noelle-Neumann, E. (1970).
- "Wanted: Rules for wording structured questionnaires". *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 34, 191-201.
- Noelle-Neumann, E. (1984).
- The spiral of silence: Public opinion-our social skin.** Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (Original work published 1980)
- Price Vincent (1992)
- Public Opinion.** Sage Publications. Newbury
- Riesman, D., & Glazer, N. (1948).
- "The meaning of opinion." *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 12, 633-648.
- Rosenstone, S. J., & Diamond, G. A. (1990).
- "Measuring public opinion on political issues". (*Report to the National Election Studies Board of Overseers.*) Ann Arbor, MI: Institute for Social Research.
- Speier, H. (1950).
- "The historical development of public opinion". *American Journal of Sociology*, 55, 376-388.
- VanLeuven, J. K., & Slater, M. D. (1991).
- "Publics, organizations, and the media : How changing relationships shape the public opinion process." In J.E. Grunig & L. Grunig (Eds.), *Public relations review annual* (Vol. 3, pp 165-178). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

A. Details of the course.

- A1. The journalism department offers no regularly scheduled courses covering public opinion and the news media. The proposed course will offer a critical dimension to journalism education, namely, to train journalism students how to articulate intellectually and scientifically what people think and say. While the department of political science offers courses in public policy (PS 250) and political behavior (PS 377), issues in public opinion, i.e. historical origins, models and problems in public opinion as well as the role of the news media and other socialization processes in public opinion formation and holding are not covered. This course proposes to do so.

Public Opinion and the News Media is designed for majors. It attempts to widen the students' knowledge base and develop their ability to understand, measure and articulate intellectually what people think and say in so far as this relates to issues of public concern and interest. A major emphasis is placed on identifying issues of public interest, designing a research instrument, conducting a survey research and writing a report.

The course is not intended for inclusion in the Liberal Studies program.

- A2. Public Opinion and the News Media will not require any changes in content in existing courses or program offerings.
- A3. Public Opinion and the News Media will be offered as a mixture of lecture and practical activities as is typical of many of the courses in our program. The course is similar to other courses on mass media and society, but differs in subject focus-- understanding the environment of, which includes the news media, and how to measure, public opinion.
- A4. Public opinion has been offered as a special topics course. During the Spring semester, 30 students were enrolled in the course.
- A5. Public Opinion and the News Media is not a dual-level course.
- A6. Public Opinion and the News Media will not be offered for variable credit.
- A7. Similar courses are offered at these institutions:

Bethany College: *Public Opinion*

New York University : *Public Opinion*

California State University-Pomona : *Mass Media, Public Opinion and Propaganda*

Duquesne University: *Public Opinion*

- A8. The Society for Professional Journalists and the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication do not require a course in public opinion but endorse related courses, like mass media and society.

B. INTERDISCIPLINARY IMPLICATIONS

- B1. One instructor will teach Public Opinion and the News Media. Team teaching with other departments may be proposed in the future but not at the present.
- B2. No corollary courses are needed with Public Opinion and the News Media.
- B3. Public Opinion and the News Media does not overlap with any other courses at the university.
- B4. Continuing education students will be welcomed in the Public Opinion and the News Media course.

C. IMPLEMENTATION

C1. Resources

- a No new faculty are needed to teach this course. The journalism faculty will be able to teach Public Opinion and the News Media regularly without adding new faculty.
- b Current space allocations are adequate to offer Public Opinion and the News Media.
- c The library has adequate holdings on the subject.
- d. No other new resources are needed.

- C2. No grant funds are associated with this course. A nominal amount (about \$100) may be needed each semester to print bulk questionnaires for public opinion research surveys.

- C3. This course will probably be taught once a year or less frequently.

- C4. One section of Public Opinion and the News Media will be offered in a given semester.**
- C5 Public Opinion and the News Media can accommodate as many as 30 students. Active student participation in class through reports and discussions limits enrollment to 30.**
- C6. In general, the Society for Professional Journalists and the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication suggest no more than 30 students in non-writing-intensive journalism courses.**
- C7 Public Opinion and the News Media will be a departmental elective.**

D. MISCELLANEOUS

No additional information is necessary

a.
INDIANA UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
INDIANA, PENNSYLVANIA 15701

SUBJECT: Course Proposal

October 5, 1993

TO: Stanford G. Mukasa
Dept. of Journalism
Davis 421

FROM: Dr. Carl W. Schneider 

We have received the course proposal JN430 "Public Opinion."

Although some overlap with our course in "Mass Media", we do not
see any essential problems seeing that course approved.

Pat.

October 28, 1993

TO: Dr. Stanford Mukasa
Journalism Department

FROM: Kurt P. Dudt, Ph.D. *K.P.D.*
Chairperson, Department of
Communications Media

This memo is to indicate that the Communications Media Department has indicated that there is no curriculum conflicts with the proposed course, Public Opinion.

KPD/smw

DATE: 22 November 1993

TO: Dr. Stanford Mukasa, Journalism Department

FROM: Dr. David Chambers, Chair, Political Science

RE: New course proposal

The Political Science Department has reviewed Dr. Mukasa's proposal to create a new course, JN 431 - Public Opinion and the News Media. While there is some overlap between this course and a Political Science course, PS 377 - Political Behavior, we do not perceive that overlap to be a problem. We support Dr. Mukasa's proposal.