

Teaching 'Introduction to American Government' via Professional Political Science Articles.

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## **Abstract**

I experiment with teaching (and students' learning) scholarly articles from the field of Political Science in "Introduction to American Government." From my perspective [teaching], this essay explains how I organized, implemented and evaluated two collaborative workshops as well as two essays based on a scholarly journal articles. I designed to see: (1) if students would gain a better understanding of what a political scientist does at work—the researcher, than otherwise; (2) if there are any *patterns* regarding attitudes toward collaboration in an undergraduate college setting which should be implemented long-term; (3) if collaborative workshops are preferred to lectures (with the supplement of PowerPoint); and (4) if essays based on professional political science articles should replace multiple choice tests.

I Hypothesize that educators should teach / lecture "Introduction to American Government" with a demonstration of the depth within top-tier scholarly research. The data suggests that teachers should use this approach; but not in excess, and it should *not* be a replacement for lectures (with PowerPoint). This paper provides the rubrics given to the students for the essay assignments as well as the essay choices, survey analysis, workshop instructions and handouts [for replication purposes], and briefly explains the teaching experiment.

## **Introduction**

Civics courses impact student knowledge and attitudes in context (Niemi and Junn 1998); yet how much context should be based on professional political science articles? Would collaborative learning projects using scholarly articles increase student learning and development?

This paper tests one primary assumption: political scientists create the [new] literature to explain the political (e.g., behavior, attitudes, institutions, rational choice, structures); and

therefore, students will be more likely to continue to follow politics (and political science) if they better understand actual examples of scholarly research, as opposed to a lecture wholly based on the textbook. Thus, should the teacher reduce lecture time in order to, specifically, initiate two 45 minute collaborative workshops demonstrating top-tier research regarding the class topic (e.g., public opinion and presidency canons)? And, will this make students more aware of what political scientists do and create a more conducive environment to life-long political learning?

One approach is to engage the students in collaborative learning. Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec lay out the fundamental guidelines regarding group work through cooperative learning, and also assess how to best achieve student learning and growth. According to them (1994), “cooperative learning is the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other’s learning” (p. 107). Cooperative learning, if employed with certain characteristics, should create more efficiency in student learning.

The five critical elements necessary for cooperative learning to be successful, as written by Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec (1994), are “(1) positive interdependence... (2) individual and group accountability... (3) promotive interaction... (4) teaching students some necessary interpersonal and small group skills... (and 5) group processing” (p. 9-11). The in-class collaborative projects that I designed are a break from lecture; however, the students work individually and then together in order to understand relevant content—and then *I lead the lecture* as a discussion regarding the students’ collaborative content analysis. Indeed, my design of cooperative learning meets the former standards; however, it is a short and intense cooperative learning exercise.

Cooperative learning engaged among students under the former conditions results in increased effort, better relationships, and greater psychological health (Johnson, Johnson, and

Holubec 1994). Therefore, in addition to teaching via PowerPoint lecture (i.e. a visual aid to my lecture), the experiment of teaching designed in this essay will seek *negative* and *positive* attitudes [as volunteered by the students in a survey] towards the use of scholarly political science articles in (1) two in-class collaborative learning projects (not graded—cooperative learning used), and (2) two analytical essays (graded—not cooperative learning). I provide links to the collaborative in-class workshops in Appendix C and D, and the rubric to the essays along with the article choices in Appendix E.

As group size increases, students are less likely as members to contribute equally, coordinate actions effectively, and reach consensus. Indeed, class sizes of 50-250 students may at first glance not seem amenable to collaborative in-class projects. However, lecture halls of 250 students may readily become collaborative group workshops using my method. For example, the “public opinion” workshop that I created covers 9 different scholarly works—as 9 different one page handouts. With 54 students in class, the first 9 students received different one page summaries to analyze; and on and on. Thus, I had 9 groups of six people, so I split the groups and so that there were 18 groups of 3 people. A teacher of 250 students would simply organize the numbered groups by sectioning off rows (i.e. first four rows—find your group members with the same scholarly title).

The point of the workshops is to: (1) have the student silently analyze the one page summary; then (2), collaborate with 1-4 other students in order to create a best summary; then (3), appoint a spokesperson to inform the class of the “best sentence”; and finally (4), for the teacher to *lecture* via students’ explanations of professional literature and to expound the scholarly content in conjunction with the textbook content. As a result, students critically analyze one professional article, collaborate to create a best answer; and then collectively the students

learn about 9-10 different scholarly articles, each demonstrating different data about the same topic (e.g., public opinion, presidency).

The survey (see Appendix A-B) is designed to be a reflection of whether or not the collaborative projects dependent on professional articles increased learning over the standard lecture. This research is designed to add to the conversation regarding the benefits of discussion (Pollock, Hamann, Wilson 2011). I specifically seek to understand if scholarly literature as a supplement to the textbook creates more learning than simply lecturing from the textbook. Indeed, as Phelps (1994) relates; “thematic supplementary print materials motivate students to explore content in a manner that not only builds and extends textbook concepts but also provides grist for writing about them” (p. 110).

An American philosopher wrote more than a century ago said, “Civics is often taught as if it were a descriptive subject, ignoring the fact that laws and constitutions, like everything else in this living world, are in a constant process of change” (Bourne 1902, p. 95). One solution this essay will test is whether or not students favor or disfavor in-class group work assignments using scholarly political science literature in order to learn the material. My point in using original literature is to demonstrate that political scientists measure many aspects of the political; and that change is often envisaged in their research—alongside the data which provides evidence of political reality and understanding.

The basic design of the cooperative learning projects is (e.g., public opinion workshop):

**Part I:** Distribute handouts. Students read the one page summary and then write down answers to the questions: (1) in two-three sentences, what is the author’s main point—contribution to public opinion research? (2) What is the best quote from your reading? Why? (10 Minutes).

**Part II:** Find your group members—others in class who also read and wrote on same summary. Do a 1 minute interview: name, major, place on campus to go eat... Group

talk about your answers (5 Minutes). Group discussion about “Why this research is meaningful” and create an integrated “Best Answer” for questions 1 and 2 (5 Minutes).

**Part III:** Group Names announced and each group spokesperson addresses the center of the room and explains: (1) the main point of the summary and (2) the best quote. After the student speaks, the teacher connects the student’s comments with the textbook, with wider theories and explanations of public opinion. The teacher *wisely leads the lecture / debate* from one group to the next in order to *lecture effectively* (20-25 Minutes).<sup>1</sup>

This paper is a result of a planned teaching experiment. In my fall, 2012, "Introduction to American Government" course, students were directly involved in struggling with scholarly articles relevant to the course context. From the classroom [teaching], this paper will explain students’ attitudes towards in-class group projects—an exposé of high profile political science articles and books—in order to increase learning. From the students’ perspective, I seek to know if relevant scholarly articles do increase student learning, and if so, should be continued in future teaching endeavors.

Further, I required students to analyze actual political science articles relevant to the course content in 3 essays (of which only the first two are relevant to the survey). In Appendix E, I provide the essays instructions, choices, and assessment rubric.

### **Data Analysis**

37 students completed a voluntary survey in my fall, 2012, Political Science 1010 course. The survey consisted of 20 questions (14 substantive and 6 demographic). Because the survey was administered via the course Blackboard site; students (only) were invited to complete the survey via the Blackboard class email tool and via announcements. This voluntary survey was completed outside of class time at the students’ leisure.

According to the survey respondents, 40% were male and 60% were female. Ethnically, 43% responded as African American, 5% as Asian, 30% Caucasian, 5% Latino/a/Hispanic, and about 14% Other. About 57% described themselves as Democrats, 8% as Republicans, and 27% as Independents. 73% of my class respondents were under 20. None responded as 31 or older. 78% of the respondents were in his or her first year in college (freshman) or second year (sophomore).

Questions 1-14 (see appendix B) all carry the same format. They all begin with: “How likely are you to agree or disagree with the following statement,” and then the statement is given. The purpose of the questions is to provide voluntary feedback on my experimental class lectures and essays—as opposed to lecture and multiple choice tests. Should I continue to teach with scholarly articles in lecture and also in essay assessments? Indeed, questions 1-14 all have the same answer option:

- Agree completely with the statement
- Agree sometimes with the statement
- Neutral
- Disagree with the statement
- Completely disagree with the statement

The next few paragraphs will relate the general negative or positive feeling towards each particular statement. I collapse the two “agree” into a positive attitude regarding the question, and I collapse the two “disagree” choices as a negative attitude.

***Hypothesis:*** Educators should teach / lecture “Introduction to American Government” with a demonstration of the depth within top-tier scholarly research.

At first glance, the data affirms the hypothesis. The top-tier professional political science literature in class lectures (henceforth workshops); and the review of two professional journal articles to be at the heart of two essay assessments, *should* continue with future classes. At the time of the survey, the students had turned in two essays (see Rubric in Appendix E) and experienced the two lectures wholly formed from political science canons (Appendix C). The rest of this section will discuss the specific data results.

Regarding the statement: “The 2 group work assignments on the ‘Presidency’ and ‘Public Opinion’ [i.e., read the one page summary, get in groups to write thesis statement and best quote] gave me a much better understanding of what political scientists do” resulted in 51% of the respondents to answer positive; while 41% remained neutral, and *only 8% responded negatively*. Similarly, 54% said that the workshops “helped me to understand the textbook material at a much deeper level,” with just 16% responding negatively.

Conversely, a few questions compared the workshops to other classroom time activity or to the context of learning reflection. For instance, students said that the workshops “made me more interested in reading professional political science articles” positively by 43%, 27% neutral, and about 30% responded negatively. Regarding: “The 3 Essays based on reading professional journal articles (50% of my grade) helped me understand American government much more than 3 multiple choice Tests based on the textbook reading”; almost 60% responded positively, 21% responded neutral, and 19% responded negatively.

However, to better understand how using professional essays contribute to learning political science in an Introduction to Government course, I said: “The class should be made of 6 essays, so that the Tests (the 50 question online multiple choice tests) could be eliminated.” Most disagreed! Only 11% positively responded and 3% were neutral, while 86% responded



negatively! To be sure, I asked, “The graded essays should be at a 6 page minimum, not the 3 pages currently set.” In this case, only 8% positively affirmed, 11% remained neutral; but most, 81%, responded negatively!

I attempted to see if students would prefer scholarly material from analysis of historical or contemporary research. I asked, “I prefer that the Professor spend much more lecture time talking about ‘the real world’ (like Obama / Romney videos and websites—do more of this); instead of talking about the history of politics (like George Washington, the Federalists and Cincinnatus—do less of this)”; 50% were positive, 19% were neutral, and 29% responded negatively.

I sought to see if introduction to government students would affirm or deny the need to struggle with top-tier research in lecture or via essay. In Question 9, I said, without the workshops, “I would know much less about political scientists as researchers in general.” 38 responded positively, 37% were neutral, and 24% responded negatively (they disagree or completely disagree with the statement). Following, I said that the workshops “should be expanded to cover 8 chapter topics (instead of the two).” Accordingly, 24% answered positively, while 30% were neutral, and 46% responded negatively.

The overall *balance* of “lecture versus cooperative learning” is meant to be reflected in the following four survey question answers / answers (Qs 11-14). First, only 24% agreed that the workshop lectures covering 5-10 scholarly works (see Appendix C and D) “...were much more helpful than the PowerPoint Lectures,” while 48% responded *negatively* (with 24% neutral).<sup>2</sup> Second, 86% of the class positively affirmed that: “The PowerPoint lectures outlined the chapter content extremely well,” with only 5% negative response. Third, about 10% of the respondents agreed that: “The PowerPoint lectures were much less informative than the group work

assignments,” while 67% responded negatively—suggesting that the PowerPoint lectures were essential to learning. Finally, 62% of the respondents positively affirmed: “You should continue the 2 Group work assignments (i.e. public opinion and presidency analysis with group speeches) with future classes,” and only 19% responded negatively to the former statement.

What does all this data mean?

[Insert Table 1 about here] see Appendix F

## **Conclusion**

This quasi-experiment was designed to help answer the hypothesis: Educators should teach / lecture “Introduction to American Government” with a *demonstration* of the depth within top-tier scholarly research. The initial results are positive. The data suggests that the students, overall, positively at 60%, said that the 3 Essays based on scholarly articles (see Appendix E), “helped me understand American government much more” than the 3 multiple choice Tests; while only 19% found the statement negative. Conversely, 62% of respondents think that I should use the workshops in future class, with only 19% disagreeing (Appendix B).

Educators teaching an Introduction to American Government course *should* incorporate professional political science articles into his or her lecture and assessment components, given the initial survey results. However, the results are complex. On the one hand, a majority of students recommend that the hypothesis is affirmed—that I should *continue* to advance the workshop lectures and essays with future classes (see Appendix A-F). On the other hand, the data suggests, I should *not increase* the amount of essays or workshops currently administered by too much!

The evidence suggests that students prefer a multi-method approach to teaching and learning. It is clear that the PowerPoint lectures were quite important to student learning (i.e.

perhaps more important than the collaborative learning workshops); however, the students also recommend that I continue to decrease lecture time by engaging the cooperative learning projects. To be sure, only 10% of the students agreed or strongly agreed that the PowerPoint lectures were “much less informative” than the group work assignments. And even though 83% of respondents positively agreed that the cartoons in the PowerPoints really helped them understand the material better; this must be coupled with the fact that only 8% of the students disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that *workshops taught me what political scientists do*.

The benefit of this research is that it may be replicated by other educators (considering different teachers and students). Indeed, we need much more evidence regarding the degree to which students benefit from the integration of top-tier journal articles as opposed to not utilizing political science literature in the classroom, as well as the degree of classroom discussion as an optimal equilibrium.

I have provided links to all of the lectures and essay materials in the appendices, as well as the raw data—on my blog (I altered the identification)—for further research inquiry.<sup>4</sup> After all, if student learning is the center-piece of education; then collaboration of educational means—using each other’s techniques—will help us advance effective teaching. Using professional political science articles in an “Introduction to American Government” course does provide a demonstration of the depth within top-tier scholarly research, and students do benefit from these teaching processes.

**Notes:**

1. See the “Teaching” tab: <http://politicalpipeline.wordpress.com/teaching>
2. One respondent skipped this question.
3. One respondent skipped this question.

4. The raw data is available under the “Research” tab:  
<http://politicalpipeline.wordpress.com/research>

## References

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## Appendix A: Survey Cover Page

**Availability:** Item was available in Blackboard from November 12, 2012 to November 27, 2012.

**Purpose:** This survey will help the instructor to better understand how students evaluate different teaching techniques in the classroom so that the instructor may improve--change.

**Procedure:** This survey asks respondents 20 questions and will take about 5 minutes to complete.

**Confidentiality:** This data is being collected for teaching methodology purposes only. The study does not collect names or IDs of respondents. The instructor will share all participants' *anonymous* responses with the class [and other researchers for academic purposes]. The data shared cannot be linked back to the respondents. You are guaranteed confidentiality.

**Participation:** Participation is *completely voluntary*; respondents are not required to answer any of the survey items. By participating in the study, respondents acknowledge that they are 18 years of age or older and a student in Girdwood's PS 1010 (Fall 2012).

## Appendix B: Survey Questions with Statistics

### Survey on Teaching PS 1010, Fall 2012

There were 37 respondents answering 20 questions. The following are the questions and statistics regarding each answer. The statistics were calculated by the Blackboard Survey program.

Question 1: How likely are you to agree or disagree with the following statement: “The cartoons in the PowerPoints really helped me understand the material better.”

Percent Answered:	Agree completely with the statement	32.4%
	Agree sometimes with the statement	51.3%
	Neutral	8.1%
	Disagree with the statement	5.4%
	Completely disagree with the statement	2.7%

Question 2: How likely are you to agree or disagree with the following statement: “The 2 group work assignments on the “Presidency” and “Public Opinion” [i.e., read the one page summary, get in groups to write thesis statement and best quote] gave me a much better understanding of what political scientists do.

Percent Answered:	Agree completely with the statement	18.9%
	Agree sometimes with the statement	32.4%
	Neutral	40.5%
	Disagree with the statement	5.4%
	Completely disagree with the statement	2.7%

Question 3: How likely are you to agree or disagree with the following statement: “The 2 group work assignments on the “Presidency” and “Public Opinion” [i.e., read the one page summary, get in groups to write thesis statement and best quote] helped me to understand the textbook material at a much deeper level.

Percent Answered:	Agree completely with the statement	18.9%
	Agree sometimes with the statement	35.1%
	Neutral	29.7%
	Disagree with the statement	10.8%
	Completely disagree with the statement	5.4%

Question 4: How likely are you to agree or disagree with the following statement: “The 2 group work assignments on the “Presidency” and “Public Opinion” [i.e., read the one page summary, get in groups to write thesis statement and best quote] made me more interested in reading professional political science articles.

Percent Answered:	Agree completely with the statement	21.6%
	Agree sometimes with the statement	21.6%
	Neutral	27.0%
	Disagree with the statement	21.6%
	Completely disagree with the statement	8.1%

Question 5: How likely are you to agree or disagree with the following statement: “The 3 Essays based on reading professional journal articles (50% of my grade) helped me understand American government much more than 3 multiple choice Tests based on the textbook reading.”

Percent Answered:	Agree completely with the statement	24.3%
	Agree sometimes with the statement	35.1%
	Neutral	21.6%
	Disagree with the statement	16.2%
	Completely disagree with the statement	2.7%

Question 6: How likely are you to agree or disagree with the following statement: “The class should be made of 6 essays, so that the Tests (the 50 question online multiple choice tests) could be eliminated.”

Percent Answered:	Agree completely with the statement	8.1%
	Agree sometimes with the statement	2.7%
	Neutral	2.7%
	Disagree with the statement	21.6%
	Completely disagree with the statement	64.8%

Question 7: How likely are you to agree or disagree with the following statement: “I prefer that the Professor spend much more lecture time talking about “the real world” (like Obama / Romney videos and websites—do more of this); instead of talking about the history of politics (like George Washington, the Federalists and Cincinnatus—do less of this).”

Percent Answered:	Agree completely with the statement	29.7%
	Agree sometimes with the statement	21.6%
	Neutral	18.9%
	Disagree with the statement	24.3%
	Completely disagree with the statement	5.4%

Question 8: How likely are you to agree or disagree with the following statement: “The graded essays should be at a 6 page minimum, not the 3 pages currently set.”

Percent Answered:	Agree completely with the statement	2.7%
	Agree sometimes with the statement	5.4%
	Neutral	10.8%
	Disagree with the statement	32.4%
	Completely disagree with the statement	48.6%

Question 9: How likely are you to agree or disagree with the following statement: “Without the 2 group work assignments on the “Presidency” and “Public Opinion” [i.e., read the one page summary, get in groups to write thesis statement and best quotes]; I would know much less about political scientists as researchers in general.”

Percent Answered:	Agree completely with the statement	16.2%
	Agree sometimes with the statement	21.6%
	Neutral	37.8%
	Disagree with the statement	13.5%
	Completely disagree with the statement	10.8%



Question 10: How likely are you to agree or disagree with the following statement: “The group work assignments on the “Presidency” and “Public Opinion” [i.e., read the one page summary, get in groups to write thesis statement and best quotes] should be expanded to cover 8 chapter topics (instead of the two).”

Percent Answered:	Agree completely with the statement	16.2%
	Agree sometimes with the statement	8.1%
	Neutral	29.7%
	Disagree with the statement	29.7%
	Completely disagree with the statement	16.2%

Question 11: How likely are you to agree or disagree with the following statement: “The group work assignments on the “Presidency” and “Public Opinion” [i.e., read the one page summary, get in groups to write thesis statement and best quotes] were much more helpful than the PowerPoint Lectures.”

Percent Answered:	Agree completely with the statement	5.4%
	Agree sometimes with the statement	18.9%
	Neutral	24.3%
	Disagree with the statement	35.1%
	Completely disagree with the statement	13.5%
	Unanswered <sup>3</sup>	2.7%

Question 12: How likely are you to agree or disagree with the following statement: “The PowerPoint lectures outlined the chapter content extremely well.”

Percent Answered:	Agree completely with the statement	45.9%
	Agree sometimes with the statement	40.5%
	Neutral	8.1%
	Disagree with the statement	5.4%
	Completely disagree with the statement	0%

Question 13: How likely are you to agree or disagree with the following statement: “The PowerPoint lectures were much less informative than the group work assignments.”

Percent Answered:	Agree completely with the statement	10.8%
	Agree sometimes with the statement	0%
	Neutral	21.6%
	Disagree with the statement	45.9%
	Completely disagree with the statement	21.6%

Question 14: How likely are you to agree or disagree with the following statement: “You should continue the 2 Group work assignments (i.e. public opinion and presidency analysis with group speeches) with future classes.”

Percent Answered:	Agree completely with the statement	29.7%
	Agree sometimes with the statement	32.4%
	Neutral	18.9%
	Disagree with the statement	13.5%
	Completely disagree with the statement	5.4%

Question 15: What is your gender?

Percent Answered:	Male	40.5%
	Female	59.5%

Question 16: The following ethnic group describes you best?

Percent Answered:	African American	43.2%
	Asian	5.4%
	Caucasian	29.7%
	Latino/a/Hispanic	5.4%
	Native American	0%
	Other	13.5%
	Unanswered	2.7%

Question 17: What political party are you most likely to identify with?

Percent Answered:	Democrats	56.7%
	Republicans	8.1%
	I'm an Independent	27.0%
	Other	8.1%

Question 18: What age range are you within?

Percent Answered:	Under 20	72.9%
	21-25	21.6%
	26-30	5.4%
	31 and up	0%

Question 19: What is your college / academic year?

Percent Answered:	First year in college (Freshman)	54.0%
	Sophomore	24.3%
	Junior	13.5%
	Senior	5.4%
	Other	2.7%

Question 20: Are you going to major in the social sciences or physical sciences?

Percent Answered:	Social sciences	24.3%
	Physical sciences	18.9%
	Undecided	29.7%
	Other	27.0%

## Appendix C: Links to the Workshops

In general, my collaborative lectures are accessible on my blog's (Political Pipeline) "Teaching" tab. The link is: <http://politicalpipeline.wordpress.com/teaching>

### **Public Opinion Workshop:**

*The Lecture Question:* "How do political scientists research public opinion?"

I have taken 9 "canons" from the political science literature and condensed them into 1 page (thus 9 pages of handouts—this works well for 27 students or, 270). Each canon is an excerpt from a book review or from the actual canon. The idea is that every PS 101 student should know what a political scientist actually does, and the canons indeed represent how political scientists research public opinion. Also, I hand out the entire nine pages to political science majors

The entire handout with instructions is available at:

<http://politicalpipeline.wordpress.com/teaching/public-opinion-workshop>

Or, <http://politicalpipeline.files.wordpress.com/2012/10/public-opinion-workshop.pdf>

### **Presidency Workshop:**

*The Lecture Question:* "How do political scientists research the presidency?"

I have taken 8 "canons" from the political science literature and condensed them into 1 page each. Thus, there are 8 unique pages of handouts. Students silently read and analyze.

The entire handout with instructions is available at:

<http://politicalpipeline.files.wordpress.com/2012/10/presidency-workshop-right.doc>

## Appendix D: Example of Workshop Document

### Group 5: Divided by Color: Racial Politics and Democratic Ideals.

By Donald R. Kinder and Lynn M. Sanders. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996. Pp. 391. \$27.50.

Despite a reduction in overt racial prejudice among whites, there has been no decline in the political significance of race. If racial differences in reactions to the O. J. Simpson verdict did not convince us of this verity, *Divided by Color* should.

Kinder and Sanders reveal the vast chasms between white and black opinion across a variety of issues. This is most obvious on policies that explicitly refer to blacks as beneficiaries of government activities, where the average difference between black and white support for six racially explicit policies is over 46 percentage points a gap that would be even larger if respondents and interviewers had been matched on race. "Differences as drastic as these," the authors point out, "simply have no counterpart in studies of public opinion" (27). Large divisions are also evident on issues that are implicitly racial (food stamps, welfare spending, capital punishment), and on policies of domestic social spending.

The authors explain the racial divide by analyzing the "primary ingredients" of public opinion: self-interest, sympathy and resentment toward racial groups, and support for the principles of equality, individualism, and limited government. Despite its prominence in democratic theory, individual self-interest has little influence on support for explicitly racial policies. Group interests, assessed through items that tap respondents' perceptions of how their racial group will be harmed or advantaged by affirmative action policies, have a greater impact on opinion.

The core argument in this work is that racial resentment (the new term for what Kinder and his colleagues had formerly called symbolic racism) is integral to white political opinion. It taps an animosity toward blacks based not on the belief of biological inferiority (with which it is weakly correlated) but on the belief- that blacks have not tried hard enough to achieve economic and social success. Racial resentment has a strong effect on an array of racially salient policies, and modest effects across a wide range of nonracial policies, including family leave, morality issues, immigration, and even some aspects of foreign policy. Moreover, racial resentment better explains white perceptions of their self and group-interests than do their actual circumstances.

Affect toward blacks is not the only important ingredient of racial opinion; belief in the principles of limited government and equality of opportunity also matter. The principle of economic individualism, however, has virtually no impact on any policy area-an intriguing finding given that racial resentment is theoretically tied to a belief in abstract individualism. The authors examine how the terms of a policy debate affect public opinion. For instance, respondents were randomly offered one of two possible justifications for opposing affirmative action: that such policies discriminate against whites or that such policies give blacks advantages they have not earned. Under the unearned advantage frame, racial resentment has a substantial negative impact on opinions of affirmative action, while endorsement of equal opportunity is associated with support for affirmative action. Under the reverse discrimination frame, racial resentment has no effect while endorsement of equal opportunity is associated with opposition to affirmative action. These findings are consistent with the contention that elite opponents of affirmative action adopted the reverse discrimination frame in order to have an argument that could both appeal to a belief in equal opportunity and withstand the charge of racism.

The 1988 presidential campaign illustrates the impact of elite frames. Republican ads featuring Willie Horton and the Massachusetts prison furlough program seem to be a clear case of elites framing the vote choice in terms of racial sentiments. In fact, for those respondents interviewed on the eve of the election, the impact of racial resentment on support for Bush was more than twice what it was for those interviewed prior to the onset of the Horton campaign.

The tone of the book is one of pessimism. Racial resentment is an important ingredient in understanding white political opinion. Realizing this, elites manipulate the terms of political discourse so that race prejudice redounds to their benefit.

Kinder and Sanders base their findings on a variety of National Election Studies as well as the General Social Survey. Their analysis is careful paying great attention to replication and the effects of alternative wording and rooted in theories of democratic governance. In the process they have produced a work that students of public opinion and electoral politics will find extremely valuable.

**Review** by: Mary Herring, *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 59, No. 3 (Aug., 1997), pp. 932-934.

\*\*\*Everyone receives this Handout:

## Example: Public Opinion in Political Science Workshop

“Every PS 101 student should know what a political scientist actually does.”

**PART I:** Hand out cover sheet (this page), 1 copy to each student; 50 students means 50 copies; every student takes ONE article summary paper (download from Appendix C). There are 9 summaries, so for 54 students make 6 copies of the 9 different scholarly summaries.

**10 Minutes: Silent Reading and Critical Thinking.** Write down your answers to the questions below after carefully reading the 1 page summary you were given.

**1. In two-three sentences, what is the author’s main point—contribution to public opinion research?**

**2. What is the best quote from your reading? Why?**

**PART II:** Find your group members—others in class who also read and wrote on *same summary*. Do a 1 minute interview: name, major, place on campus to go eat... 5 minutes.

- **5 Minutes:** Group talk about your answers—1 person starts, and the student to right reads next, until done. Each reader should explain why they thought their sentence represented the material well.
- **5 Minutes:** Group discussion about “Why this research is meaningful” and create an integrated “Best Answer” for 1 and 2.

**Group answer to Q. 1:**

**Group answer to Q. 2:**

Spokesperson: \_\_\_\_\_

**Group Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PART III: 20 – 25 Minutes:** Group Names announced and each group spokesperson addresses the center of the room and explains: (1) the group’s main point of the summary and (2) the group’s best quote.

\*\*\*Instructor will pile on important information between groups in order to create a master *lecture* about PS scholarship. Article summaries are often actual excerpts or from book reviews. I have given credit when necessary, but these print material do not necessarily represent the entire article / book.

## Appendix E: Essay Assignment Material—Rubric

The syllabus for my Fall 2012 American Government details the Essay assessment, and is available at the bottom of this webpage: <https://politicalpipeline.wordpress.com/teaching>

**3 ESSAYS:** Each student must write a [full] three page paper [not more than 5 pages] [Arial, 12 point font, 1 inch margins]. The topics and due dates are [these are your directions]:

**Topic 1: Civil Rights or Civil Liberties.** Upload to Blackboard, Essay tab, Essay 1-**SEPT 26, 9pm.**

Possible Civil Liberties / Civil Rights Essays to Review: (**Choose 1**)

- Ion Bogdan Vasi and David Strang. *Civil Liberty* in America: The Diffusion of Municipal Bill of Rights Resolutions after the Passage of the USA PATRIOT Act. *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 114, No. 6 (May 2009), pp. 1716-1764.
- Jacquelyn Dowd Hall. The Long *Civil Rights* Movement and the Political Uses of the Past. *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 91, No. 4 (Mar., 2005), pp. 1233-1263.

**Topic 2: Electoral College and Voting.** Upload to Blackboard, Essay tab, Essay 1-**Oct 31, 9pm.**

Possible Essays to Review: (**Choose 1**)

- Lawrence D. Longley and James D. Dana, The Biases of the Electoral College in the 1990s Jr. *Polity*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (Autumn, 1992), pp. 123-145.
- Mark N. Franklin and Wolfgang P. Hirczy. Separated Powers, Divided Government, and Turnout in U. S. Presidential Elections. *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (Jan., 1998), pp. 316-326.

\*\*I did not include the presidency and congress articles for essay 3, since they were due after the survey was completed by the students.

**Grading:** You will analyze *one* professional political science *article according to the topic* [Essays may be located in Blackboard site]. Articles must be critically evaluated on the *topic* in PAGE 1 and 2 of your paper.

1. Page one is analysis of the topic in general [use 2 quotes from coursebook and outside resources].
2. On page two, analyze the depths of the article—the thesis / hypothesis, why the thesis / hypothesis matters, and the EVIDENCE to support the thesis / hypothesis.
3. On page three, indicate your “professional” position on the issue—as if you are a “critical” political scientist.

Each paper is worth 100 points. They are worth 50% of your grade. No late papers. No exceptions.

Each paper is graded on four criteria, which are weighted equally:

(1) Quality of the introduction to the topic (e.g., political culture / institutions / political violence): FULL POINTS will require 2 *quotes from textbook and what those quotes mean* for the reader regarding the topic; *why this topic is important* for political scientists, for governments, *for the average voter*, and for the community in general—also consider 2 outside quotes on topic (like BrainyQuote.com.) THIS IS PAGE 1 (to 2).

(2) Quality of the critique of the actual article: Full Points requires explanation of *hypothesis / thesis*, 3 *quotes from the journal article* to support the hypothesis / thesis, and why they are important for political scientists, for governments, and for the community in general [for the average voter]. THIS IS PAGE 2 (to 3).

(3) Quality of the student's analysis / critique of the essay according to topic. FULL POINTS requires: best points of author, missed points and weaknesses of article, something that the author left out [meaning you must think critically about it], what are the IMPLICATIONS of the research? *What new article would you write to add to this article?!* THIS IS PAGE 3 (to 4).

(4) quality of writing [grammar, page length, bibliography, title page, title, page numbers, opening quote on title page]—Writing Center too.

Students receive ratings of "good," "average," or "poor" for each of the former *four* categories, with 25 points being given for each "good," 20 points for each "average" score, and 15 points for a "poor" [remember it is out of 100]. If any of the former four assessment explanations are not in the paper, then the student will receive a 0 for that section.

\*\*in this class, the papers were worth 50 points each, but 100 is much easier for calculation purposes.

**Appendix F: Table 1**

**Table 1.** Attitudes on Learning via Professional Political Science Articles

<i>The Statement</i>	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Cartoons in PowerPoint are really helpful	32.4%	51.3%	8.1%	5.4%	2.7%
Workshops taught me what political scientists do	18.9%	32.4%	40.5%	5.4%	2.7%
Workshops made textbook material much deeper	18.9%	35.1%	29.7%	10.8%	5.4%
Workshops made me more interested in PS articles	21.6%	21.6%	27.0%	21.6%	8.1%
Essays helped me understand much more than Tests	24.3%	31.5%	21.6%	16.2%	2.7%
Assessment should be 6 Essays and no Tests	8.1%	2.7%	2.7%	21.6%	64.8%
Teach via the present (current events), not history	29.7%	21.6%	18.9%	24.3%	5.4%
The Essays' minimum should be 6 pages; not 3	2.7%	5.4%	10.8%	32.4%	48.6%
Without workshops, I would know much less about what political scientists do in general	16.2%	21.6%	37.8%	13.5%	10.8%
Expand workshops to cover 8 chapter topics, not 2	16.2%	8.1%	29.7%	29.7%	16.2%
Workshops "much more helpful" than PowerPoints*	5.4%	18.9%	24.3%	35.1%	13.5%
PowerPoints outlined chapter content extremely well	45.9%	40.5%	8.1%	5.4%	0.0%
PowerPoints <i>less</i> informative than Workshops	10.8%	0.0%	21.6%	45.9%	21.6%
Continue the Workshops with future classes	29.7%	32.4%	18.9%	13.5%	5.4%

\* One person did not answer this question. n=37.



