

# POL368: Social Networks and Politics

Course Syllabus-Spring 2022

(Version 1.23.22)

## Contact Information

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Office Hours ([Zoom link](#)): Monday 11:30am-1:00pm (or by appointment, if in-person)

## Course Information

### Course Description

An examination of social networks in contemporary politics. The course progresses from interpersonal social networks to the use of online social networks. Attention given to how interpersonal social networks shape political attitudes and behavior, how online social networks are used to organize movements, and to communicate political information. Course is offered online.

### Learning Objectives

- Comprehend the leading theories regarding the influence of social networks on political attitudes.
- Appraise current research on the use of online social networks.
- Apply existing theories of political communication to new media.
- Write analyses by collecting the most pertinent evidence, drawing appropriate inferences, organizing effectively for one's intended audience, and writing in a confident voice using correct grammar and punctuation.

### Course Policies and Mode of Communication

- The course schedule is a guideline of how the course will proceed. If there is any change to be made to the schedule, you will be notified in advance to accommodate. Every effort will be made to give the short paper questions and on the dates outlined in this syllabus.
- Course-related questions should be posted in the General Questions Forum in the course Discussion board. For personal/private issues, email me directly. If you use Blackboard's email tool from the course site, it will automatically include your full name, course name and section when you send me an email. Please allow between 24-48 hours for an email reply. Your Stony Brook University email must be used for all University-related communications. You must have an active Stony Brook University email account and access to the Internet. All instructor

correspondence will be sent to your SBU email account. Plan on checking your SBU email account regularly for course-related messages. To log in to Stony Brook Google Mail, go to <http://www.stonybrook.edu/mycloud> and sign in with your NetID and password.

- When access to Blackboard is not available for an extended period of time (greater than one entire evening-6pm until 11pm) you can reasonably expect that the due date for assignments will be changed to the next day).
- Preparation for class means reading the assigned readings and reviewing all information required for each class session. Attendance in an online course means logging into Blackboard on a regular basis and participating in all course learning activities.
- If you have a serious problem, contact the instructor immediately. Problems can be solved if you bring them up before you miss a deadline. There will be no make-up exams given unless the instructor is notified about a problem before the exam and gives approval. There will be absolutely no exceptions to this policy.
- I will frequently check my email and will happily respond to most questions, but do not abuse this privilege.
- Blackboard comments disparaging groups or individuals (especially other students) will not be tolerated.

## Assignments and Grading

All lectures and readings will be posted to Blackboard. All assignments should be turned in via Blackboard. In most weeks, there will be one required reading along with a couple of recommended (optional) readings. Your grades will be based on **Weekly Quizzes (25%)**, **Response Paper assignments (45%)** and **Final Exam (30%)**. See the sections below for more on these.

### Grading Scale

93+	A	73 - 76	C
90 - 92	A-	70 - 72	C-
87 - 89	B+	67 - 69	D+
83 - 86	B	63 - 66	D
80 - 82	B-	60 - 62	D-
77 - 79	C+	0-59	F

### Weekly Quizzes (25%)

Each week, except for Weeks 8, 14 and 15, will have a learning module containing brief recorded lecture videos, slides, quizzes and any other relevant course material. ***The material will be uploaded on Monday every week (with some variations, though typically by the end of Monday at the latest).*** With the exception of the course introduction module in Week 1, the embedded weekly quizzes will be graded. Once you've reached the quiz portion toward the end of the learning module, you will have 30 minutes to complete (i.e., answer and submit) 5 multiple choice questions based on the course materials covered in that module, as well as the required reading (**NOT** recommended readings). These questions will be straightforward as long as you remain attentive to the lecture content and complete the required weekly reading. There will be a total of 11 graded weekly quizzes with the lowest scored quiz being dropped; thus, each of the remaining 10 quizzes will be worth 2.5% of your overall course grade. Each quiz will be due at **5pm on Friday and you will receive a zero for any quiz you failed to submit by the due date.**

## Response Papers (45%)

Over the course of the semester (in **Weeks 5, 10 & 14**), you will be required to write three papers (5-6 pages double-spaced each, with 12pt Times New Roman font and 1" margins) in response to one of the provided prompts in which you analyze and evaluate how various concepts covered in the course relate to political attitudes and behavior. Each paper will be worth 15% of the overall course grade. The prompts and instructions for these written assignments will be posted to Blackboard roughly two to three weeks before the papers are due. Papers should be uploaded through SafeAssign in Blackboard by the deadline listed. Each response paper will be due at **5pm on Saturday and a full letter grade deduction will be applied every 24-hour period past the due date. Corrupt file submissions will be marked as incomplete.**

## Final Exam (30%)

A multiple choice final exam will be posted on Blackboard in Week 15. You will have 120 minutes to complete the exam once you begin it. Exam questions will be based on lecture materials and required readings. I will send out an email about a review session to be held during Week 14 later in the semester. The exam will be due at **5pm on 5/6 and you will receive a zero for your failure to submit it by this deadline.**

## SBC-Write Effectively in One's Discipline (WRTD)

This course fulfills the WRTD requirement as part of the Stony Brook Curriculum if you complete a (passing) paper of 15 pages at a minimum. Because the three response paper assignments require you to write 15-18 pages in total (5-6 pages per paper), the course can be used to fulfill the WRTD requirement if you successfully complete these assignments (i.e., receiving a passing grade on each). The WRTD requirement has the following learning outcomes: Collect the most pertinent evidence, draw appropriate disciplinary inferences, organize effectively for one's intended audience, and write in a confident voice using correct grammar and punctuation. The various elements of the response paper assignments are designed to help you fulfill these outcomes.

## Computing Requirements

This is an online course and therefore there will be no face-to-face class sessions. All assignments and course interactions will utilize internet technologies. Therefore, this course requires you to have access to a computer that can access the internet. You are responsible for having both a reliable computer and reliable internet connection throughout the course. You will need to have access to, and be able to use, the following software packages:

- A web browser (e.g., Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, Safari)
- Adobe Acrobat Reader (free)
- Microsoft Office (free)

## Student Accessibility Support Center Statement

If you have a physical, psychological, medical, or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact the Student Accessibility Support Center, Stony Brook Union Suite 107, (631) 632-6748, or at [sasc@stonybrook.edu](mailto:sasc@stonybrook.edu). They will determine with you what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential.

## **Academic Integrity Statement**

Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person's work as your own is always wrong. Faculty is required to report any suspected instances of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. Faculty in the Health Sciences Center (School of Health Technology & Management, Nursing, Social Welfare, Dental Medicine) and School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty please refer to the academic judiciary website at [http://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/academic\\_integrity/index.html](http://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/academic_integrity/index.html)

## **Critical Incident Management**

Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, or inhibits students' ability to learn. Faculty in the HSC Schools and the School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. Further information about most academic matters can be found in the Undergraduate Bulletin, the Undergraduate Class Schedule, and the Faculty-Employee Handbook.

## **Incomplete Policy**

Under emergency/special circumstances, students may petition for an incomplete grade. Circumstances must be documented and significant enough to merit an incomplete. If you need to request an incomplete for this course, contact me for approval as far in advance as possible.

## **Course Materials and Copyright Statement**

Course Materials and Copyright Statement: Course material accessed from Blackboard, Zoom, Echo 360, VoiceThread, etc. is for the exclusive use of students who are currently enrolled in the course. Content from these systems cannot be reused or distributed without written permission of the instructor and/or the copyright holder. Duplication of materials protected by copyright, without permission of the copyright holder is a violation of the Federal copyright law, as well as a violation of Stony Brook's Academic Integrity.

## Course Schedule

All learning modules can be found in the *Modules* section and all course readings can be found in the *Readings* section on Blackboard.

### Week 1. 1/24-1/30. Course Introduction

#### *No Required Reading*

#### *Recommended Readings:*

- Goffman, Erving. 1956. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press. Introduction, pp. 1-9.
- Chudek, Maciej and Joseph Henrich. 2011. "Culture–Gene Coevolution, Norm Psychology and the Emergence of Human Prosociality." *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 15(5): 218-226.

#### *Complete Course Introduction Module*

### Week 2. 1/31-2/6. Basics of Social Network Analysis I

#### *No Required Reading*

#### *Recommended Readings (for both Week 2 and Week 3):*

- Scott, John. 2000. *Social Network Analysis: A Handbook*. 2nd Edition. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications. Ch. 1-2, "Networks and Relations" & "The Development of Social Network Analysis", pp. 1-37.
- Ward, Michael D., Katherine Stovel and Audrey Sacks. 2011. "Network Analysis and Political Science." *Annual Review of Political Science* 14: 245-264.

#### *Complete Learning Module 1 – Quiz #1 Due at 5pm on 2/4*

### Week 3. 2/7-2/13. Basics of Social Network Analysis II

#### *No Required Reading*

#### *Complete Learning Module 2 – Quiz #2 Due at 5pm on 2/11*

### Week 4. 2/14-2/20. Formation of Interpersonal Networks

#### *Required Reading:*

- Minozzi, William, Hyunjin Song, David M. J. Lazer, Michael A. Neblo and Katherine Ognyanova. 2019. "The Incidental Pundit: Who Talks Politics with Whom, and Why?" *American Journal of Political Science* 64(1): 135-151.

#### *Recommended Readings:*

- McPherson, Miller, Lynn Smith-Lovin and James M. Cook. 2001. "Birds of a Feather: Homophily in Social Networks." *Annual Review of Sociology* 27(1): 415-444.
- Eveland, William P. and Steven B. Kleinman. 2013. "Comparing General and Political Discussion Networks Within Voluntary Organizations Using Social Network Analysis." *Political Behavior* 35(1): 65-87.

#### *Complete Learning Module 3 – Quiz #3 Due at 5pm on 2/18*

**Week 5. 2/21-2/27. Formation of Online Social Networks*****Required Reading:***

- Boutyline, Andrei and Robb Willer. 2017. "The Social Structure of Political Echo Chambers: Variation in Ideological Homophily in Online Networks." *Political Psychology* 38(3): 551-569.

***Recommended Readings:***

- Jones, Jason J., Jaime E. Settle, Robert M. Bond, Christopher J. Fariss, Cameron Marlow and James H. Fowler. 2013. "Inferring Tie Strength from Online Directed Behavior." *PLoS ONE* 8(1): e52168.
- Barberá, Pablo, John T Jost, Jonathan Nagler, Joshua A Tucker and Richard Bonneau. 2015. "Tweeting From Left to Right: Is Online Political Communication More Than an Echo Chamber?" *Psychological Science* 26(10): 1531-1542.

**Complete Learning Module 4 – Quiz #4 Due at 5pm on 2/25**  
**Response Paper #1 Due at 5pm on 2/26**

**Week 6. 2/28-3/6. Group Dynamics*****Required Reading:***

- Huddy, Leonie, Lilliana Mason and Lene Aarøe. 2015. "Expressive Partisanship: Campaign Involvement, Political Emotion, and Partisan Identity." *American Political Science Review* 109(1): 1-17.

***Recommended Readings:***

- McClendon, Gwyneth H. 2014. "Social Esteem and Participation in Contentious Politics: A Field Experiment at an LGBT Pride Rally." *American Journal of Political Science* 58(2): 279-290.
- Pérez, Efrén O. 2015. "Xenophobic Rhetoric and Its Political Effects on Immigrants and Their Co-Ethnics." *American Journal of Political Science* 59(3): 549-564.

**Complete Learning Module 5 – Quiz #5 Due at 5pm on 3/4**

**Week 7. 3/7-3/13. Political Socialization*****Required Reading:***

- Jennings, M. Kent, Laura Stoker and Jake Bowers. 2009. "Politics across Generations: Family Transmission Reexamined." *Journal of Politics* 71(3): 782-799.

***Recommended Readings:***

- Sinclair, Stacey, Elizabeth Dunn and Brian Lowery. 2005. "The Relationship Between Parental Racial Attitudes and Children's Implicit Prejudice." *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 41(3): 283-289.
- Iyengar, Shanto, Tobias Konitzer and Kent Tedin. 2018. "The Home as a Political Fortress: Family Agreement in an Era of Polarization." *Journal of Politics* 80(4): 1326-1338.

**Complete Learning Module 6 – Quiz #6 Due at 5pm on 3/11**

**Week 8. 3/14-3/20. Spring Recess**

Be safe and enjoy your time off!

**Week 9. 3/21-3/27. Social Pressure and Political Judgment and Decision-Making*****Required Reading:***

- Gerber, Alan S., Donald P. Green and Christopher W. Larimer. 2008. "Social Pressure and Voter Turnout: Evidence from a Large-Scale Field Experiment." *American Political Science Review* 102(1): 33-48.

***Recommended Readings:***

- White, Ismail K., Chryl N. Laird and Troy D. Allen. 2014. "Selling Out?: The Politics of Navigating Conflicts between Racial Group Interest and Self-interest." *American Political Science Review* 108(4): 783-800.
- Pickup, Mark, Erik O. Kimbrough and Eline A. de Rooij. 2021. "Expressive Politics as (Costly) Norm Following." *Political Behavior* <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-020-09667-6>.

**Complete Learning Module 7 – Quiz #7 Due at 5pm on 3/25**

**Week 10. 3/28-4/3. Expertise in Social Networks*****Required Reading:***

- Ryan, John Barry. 2011. "Accuracy and Bias in Perceptions of Political Knowledge." *Political Behavior* 33(2): 335-356.

***Recommended Readings:***

- Anspach, Nicolas M. and Taylor N. Carlson. 2020. "What to Believe? Social Media Commentary and Belief in Misinformation." *Political Behavior* 42(3): 697-718.
- Feezell, Jessica T. and Brittany Ortiz. 2021. "I Saw it on Facebook: An Experimental Analysis of Political Learning through Social Media." *Information, Communication & Society* 24(9): 1283-1302.

**Complete Learning Module 8 – Quiz #8 Due at 5pm on 4/1**

**Response Paper #2 Due at 5pm on 4/2**

**Week 11. 4/4-4/10. Disagreement and Deliberation in Social Networks*****Required Reading:***

- Klostad, Casey A., Anand Edward Sokhey and Scott D. McClurg. 2013. "Disagreeing about Disagreement: How Conflict in Social Networks Affects Political Behavior." *American Journal of Political Science* 57(1): 120-134.

***Recommended Readings:***

- Karpowitz, Christopher F., Tali Mendelberg and Lee Shaker. 2012. "Gender Inequality in Deliberative Participation." *American Political Science Review* 106(3): 533-547.
- Bail, Christopher A., Lisa P. Argyle, Taylor W. Brown, John P. Bumpus, Haohan Chen, M. B. Fallin Hunzaker, Jaemin Lee, Marcus Mann, Friedolin Merhout and Alexander Volfovsky. 2018. "Exposure to Opposing Views on Social Media Can Increase Political Polarization." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States* 115(37): 9216-9221.

**Complete Learning Module 9 – Quiz #9 Due at 5pm on 4/8**

**Week 12. 4/11-4/17. Social Media and Collective Political Actions*****Required Reading:***

- Larson, Jennifer M., Jonathan Nagler, Jonathan Ronen and Joshua A. Tucker. 2019. "Social Networks and Protest Participation: Evidence from 130 Million Twitter Users." *American Journal of Political Science* 63(3): 690–705.

***Recommended Readings:***

- González-Bailón, Sandra and Ning Wang. 2016. "Networked Discontent: The Anatomy of Protest Campaigns in Social Media." *Social Networks* 44(1): 95-104.
- Langer, Melanie, John T. Jost, Richard Bonneau, Megan MacDuffee Metzger, Sharareh Noorbalooshi and Duncan Penfold-Brown. 2019. "Digital Dissent: An Analysis of the Motivational Contents of Tweets From an Occupy Wall Street Demonstration." *Motivation Science* 5(1): 14-34.

***Complete Learning Module 10 – Quiz #10 Due at 5pm on 4/15***

**Week 13. 4/18-4/24. Political Elites on Social Media*****Required Reading:***

- Russell, Annelise. 2021. "Minority Opposition and Asymmetric Parties? Senators' Partisan Rhetoric on Twitter." *Political Research Quarterly* 74(3): 615-627.

***Recommended Readings:***

- Auter, Zachary and Jeffrey A. Fine. 2016. "Negative Campaigning in the Social Media Age: Attack Advertising on Facebook" *Political Behavior* 38(4): 999-1020.
- Aldrich, John H., Rachel K. Gibson, Marta Cantijoch and Tobias Konitzer. 2016. "Getting Out the Vote in the Social Media Era: Are Digital Tools Changing the Extent, Nature and Impact of Party Contacting in Elections?" *Party Politics* 22(2): 165–178.

***Complete Learning Module 11 – Quiz #11 Due at 5pm on 4/22***

**Week 14. 4/25-5/1. Final Exam Review**

***No Required Reading***

***No Learning Module***

***Response Paper #3 Due at 5pm on 4/30***

**Week 15. 5/2-5/6. Final Exam**

***No Required Reading***

***No Learning Module***

***Final Exam – Due at 5pm on 5/6***