Politics affect many aspects of our every day lives, whether we are aware of it or not. How we notice or respond to these politics depends on a wide variety of factors --- from how knowledgeable you are about politics to your personality. This class focuses on how average citizens respond to politics in their everyday lives. Specifically, the class addresses answers to the questions what affects political behavior and how are political attitudes formed?

This class surveys the vast literature that explores political behavior and formation of political attitudes. The primary focus is on the political behavior of non-elite actors in the American context. We begin with the basic question of how informed the electorate is, and how that might affect their decision-making. We then turn to one of the most discussed expressions of political behavior, voting. We investigate how voter and candidate characteristics and institutional features shape voting behavior. Next, we analyze how political attitudes are formed and disseminated, specifically paying attention to attitudes on race. Finally, we examine other avenues through which one expresses political attitudes including social media, protesting, and contacting elected officials. Throughout the class, we will pay particular attention to how behavior and attitude formation are measured as the literature in this class draws on methodologies from many fields including psychology, sociology, and computational linguistics.