

PSC 300 – CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

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INFORMATION: Department of Political Science
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COURSE Graham Building; Room No. 207
MEETINGS: Tuesday/Thursday 12:30pm – 1:45pm

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY: My aim is to promote the building of a quality educational community in the classroom, within the University, and in the community-at-large through readings, discussions, experiential learning that cultivate character, promote coherence, foster collaboration, and encourage civic engagement.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course focuses on two major themes within the literature on American public life, civic engagement and political participation. Who participates in politics, how, why, and to what effectiveness? Why do social groups adopt particular political strategies and not others? What is the state of American civic engagement, and why should we care? We will approach these questions broadly, considering, for example, the role of voluntary organizations and civic groups in American political life; the factors that lead individuals to (or limit) participation in both electoral (e.g., voting, campaigning) and non-electoral (e.g., group acting, protest) activities; and the ways that these themes relate to concepts of citizenship, civil society, and democracy. We will give particular attention to the ways in which institutions and public policies shape patterns of civic life and political equality.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to do the following:

- Understand the major theories that have shaped American public life;
- Analyze the political and organizational contexts of civic engagement and political participation;
- Explain and research contemporary issues regarding civic participation and political equality;
- Evaluate and implement methods for fostering community dialogue;
- Learn oral communication skills and increase communication competency; and
- Recognize our collective role in developing a civil society.

Because this is a “Speaking Intensive Course,” students will practice public speaking in a variety of formats (i.e., individual, group, and class level) and conduct research needed to have informed dialogue. Students are expected to utilize the services of the Speaking Center to prepare for at least one of the assignments. We will also spend considerable time using the skills learned in theory and apply them to a real world experience as we host a National Issues Forum for the University-community.

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REQUIRED TEXTS

Tony Wharton, *Democracy's Challenge: Reclaiming the Public's Role*. (National Issues Forum Institute, 2006). Available via the web at: http://www.nifi.org/stream_document.aspx?rID=13779&catID=14&itemID=13773&typeID=8

Stephen Macedo, et. al., *Democracy at Risk: How Political Choices Undermine Citizen Participation, and What We Can Do About It* (Brookings Institution Press, 2005).

Cliff Zukin, et. al., *A New Engagement?: Political Participation, Civic Life, and the Changing American Citizen* (Oxford University Press, 2006).

Additional readings, assignments, or library/internet/community research will be required of you throughout the semester reflecting the theme we are considering. These assignments will be posted on Blackboard. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that s/he has access to Blackboard, that s/he knows how to interface with the system, and checks her/his official UNCG email periodically for course information.

DISABILITY SERVICES:

To request and receive accommodations at UNCG you must be registered with the Office of Disability Services (ODS). Students eligible for accommodations must provide me with the corresponding forms by Week 3. If you have any specific questions or concerns call ODS at (336)334-5440 or visit their website: <http://ods.dept.uncg.edu/services/>.

CLASSROOM COURTESY:

Please turn off or otherwise silence all cell phones. Should the instructor believe that you are detracting from the learning environment of your fellow students (*i.e.*, reading the newspaper, doing work for another class/activity, texting) you will be asked to step out of the class until you are able to reconcile your issues and will be considered partially absent.

Just as you expect your instructors to be prompt and prepared, I expect the same of you (and you should expect the same of each other). Class begins at 12:30pm and ends at 1:45pm. My aim is to start and end class on-time so that you can continue throughout your day as you have carefully scheduled. If you have difficulty being prompt, for *your* peace of mind, it may be worthwhile to reschedule this class for a date and time when you can fully attend without compromise or conflict.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Your class attendance and tardiness WILL affect your final grade. You are allowed up to two (2) absences, excused or otherwise. Please know that two (2) tardies equals one (1) absence.

You are responsible for obtaining class notes and information from your colleagues, the assignments missed, and be prepared for the following class meeting, including any assignments that are to be turned in on the day you return. Additionally, if you show up late and/or leave early without consulting me first, you may be counted partially or totally absent. In short, attending class, on time and prepared is a sign of respect to all.

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CLASS PARTICIPATION: Because this is a “Speaking Intensive Course” participation is an important part of your learning. Insightful and informed participation as well as well-presented argumentation is invited during periods of discussion. There will be large and small group facilitated discussion, which will accommodate for different levels of comfort to participate in class. With this in mind, participation is critical to the success of our class. But remember, how much you say is not as important as the *strength and informed insightfulness* of your contribution

When discussing, we all, both students and instructor, need to keep in mind that many topics discussed within Civic Engagement and Political Participation can be viewed as controversial. You can be assertive in your positions without being belligerent. If you state an opinion, you may be asked to provide concrete reasons as to why you believe what you believe. If you have questions about a statement, ask for clarification. Be polite and respectful to one another and we will all learn more together.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: ALL assignments that take place in and out of class must be your *own* work and *original* for this course. Should a student be found in violation of the policy, the professor will follow the procedures as outlined by the Dean of Students Office (<http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/philosophy/>). Ignorance of the policy does not exempt a student from receiving a failing grade for the course, a permanent citation on your academic record, and/or suspension from UNCG depending on the severity of the infraction.

GRADING RUBRIC:	Grade	Overall Course Expectations
	A	EXCELLENT: Indicates achievement of distinction and excellence in several if not all of the following aspects: 1) completeness and accuracy of knowledge; 2) intelligent use of knowledge; 3) independence of work; and 4) originality.
	B	GOOD: Indicates general achievement superior to the acceptable standard defined as C. It involves excellence in some aspects of the work, indicated in the definition of A.
	C	AVERAGE: Indicates the acceptable standard for graduation from UNCG. It involves such quality and quantity of work as may fairly be expected of a student of normal ability who gives to the course a reasonable amount of time, effort, and attention. Such acceptable standards should include the following factors: 1) familiarity with the content of the course; 2) familiarity with the methods of study of the course; and 3) ability to write about the subject in intelligible English.

More information about UNCG’s grading policy can be found at:
<http://www.uncg.edu/reg/Catalog/current/AcaRegs/Grading.html>

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GRADING POLICY:	Percentage	Assignment*	
	10%	Participation	* Information about these assignments will be given on a separate handout.
	10%	Homework	
	15%	Four (4) Annotations	
	15%	Community-based Research Interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Personal Interview ▪ Peer Interview 	
	30%	National Issues Forum (Semester Project)	
	20%	Final Paper	
	100%	TOTAL	

ALL assignments, papers, and projects are due by midnight on a specific Day, unless otherwise stated. Late homework assignments, papers, and/or projects will be docked per day that they are late (i.e. if you earned a “B” and turned the assignment in late by two days you would receive a “C+”). If more than five (5) days late, the assignment will result in an “F” grade. ALL assignments will be submitted via Blackboard to ensure timeliness.

The schedule below is the one that we will be using throughout FALL 2009 for this class. It will serve as a guideline for the pace of the lectures and the coverage of topics. I reserve the right to alter the schedule as necessary as well as bring in outside speakers to instruct on specific topics throughout the course of the semester.

Course readings are to be read for the day they are discussed in class.

DAY	(WEEK)	DATE	THEME	ASSIGNMENT(S)
Tuesday	(Week 1)	August 25 th	Our Learning Community	Introductions Expectations Overview of Course
Thursday		August 27 th	Community Building	Marin Burton Team Quest Program Director
Tuesday	(Week 2)	September 1 st	Classical Theories of Civic Engagement & Democracy	Readings from Alexis de Tocqueville, <i>Democracy in America</i> (BB)
Thursday		September 3 rd	Overview of Assignments and Library Research Training	Meet at 1 st Floor - CITI Lab (UNCG Jackson Library) Training with Lynda Kellam, Political Science Librarian
Tuesday	(Week 3)	September 8 th	Social Capital & Its Significance in Modern Political Life	Robert Putnam, <i>Bowling Alone, Excerpt</i> (BB)
Thursday		September 10 th	Explaining America’s Declining Social Capital	Robert Putnam, <i>The Strange Disappearance of Civic America</i> (BB)
Tuesday	(Week 4)	September 15 th	Who Cares if Social Capital IS Declining?	National Issues Forum Kettering Foundation <i>Democracy’s Challenge: Reclaiming the Public’s Role, Brief</i> (BB)

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DAY	(WEEK)	DATE	THEME	ASSIGNMENT(S)
Thursday	(Week 4)	September 17 th	Building Social Capital at UNCG	Planning, Hosting, and Moderating a National Issues Forum Self-Interview DUE 1 st Completed Annotation DUE
Tuesday	(Week 5)	September 22 nd	Measuring Associationalism & Social Capital Part I	Bob Coats Governor's Census Liaison Strategic Management North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management
Thursday		September 24 th	Part II	Macedo, <i>Democracy at Risk</i> , Chapter 1
Tuesday	(Week 6)	September 29 th	From Associations to Nonprofits: How does politics matter? Part I	Macedo, <i>Democracy at Risk</i> , Chapter 4 Community-Based Peer Interview DUE
Thursday		October 1 st	Part II	
Tuesday	(Week 7)	October 6 th	National Issues Forum Moderating Skills Part I	National Issues Forums Moderator Guide (BB)
Thursday		October 8 th	Part II	Mid-term evaluations. NOTE: The syllabus may be altered based on student feedback. If any revisions are made, you will be informed during Week 8. Final submission for ALL four (4) Annotations DUE
Tuesday	(Week 8)	October 13 th	NO CLASS	FALL BREAK Have fun & return safely!
Thursday		October 15 th	From Civic Engagement to Voting	Macedo, <i>Democracy at Risk</i> , Chapter 2
Tuesday	(Week 9)	October 20 th	Civic & Political Participation in American Metropolis	Macedo, <i>Democracy at Risk</i> , Chapter 3
Thursday		October 22 nd	Patterns of Engagement in Guilford County	2006 Social Capital Community Benchmark Report for Greensboro, NC (BB)

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DAY	(WEEK)	DATE	THEME	ASSIGNMENT(S)
Tuesday	(Week 10)	October 27th	Is there a NEW civic engagement?	Zukin, <i>A New Engagement</i> , Chapters 1-2
Thursday		October 29th	Civic and Political Participation in the Millennial Generation	Zimur Ugochukwu IGNITE Greensboro/ Got Two? Founder Zukin, <i>A New Engagement</i> , Chapter 3
Tuesday	(Week 11)	November 3rd	PSC 300 & Your Involvement in Democracy	Zukin, <i>A New Engagement</i> , Chapter 4
Thursday		November 5th	National Issues Forum Simulation	Marin Burton Team Quest Program Director
Tuesday	(Week 12)	November 10th	National Issues Forum	Final Organizing Meeting
Wednesday		November 11th	NATIONAL ISSUES FORUM -- THE EVENT	“Democracy’s Challenge: Reclaiming the Public’s Role”
Thursday		November 12h	National Issues Forum Reflection & Debriefing	Emily Janke Assistant Director for Service Learning
Tuesday	(Week 13)	November 17 ^h	If democracy IS at risk, what can be done? Part I	Macedo, <i>Democracy at Risk</i> , Chapter 5 Zukin, <i>A New Engagement</i> , Chapter 5
Thursday		November 19 th	Part II	
Tuesday	(Week 14)	November 24 th	Restoring American Community	Zukin, <i>A New Engagement</i> , Chapter 6-7
Thursday		November 26 th	NO CLASS	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY Enjoy being thankful!
Tuesday	(Week 15)	December 1 st	The Civic Voluntarism Model & Political Participation – Engagement for Life! Part I	CIRCLE Publication: The Role of Civic Skills in Fostering Civic Engagement (BB)
Thursday		December 3 rd	Part II	FINALS FIESTA Last day to turn in all National Issues Forum Assignments
Thursday	(Week 16)	December 10 th	NO CLASS	FINAL PAPER DUE