

Political Science 548 4K: Civic Participation and Democracy

Time: Wednesdays, 6:25 pm – 9:05 pm
Location: MM 209
Web: <http://klofstad.weebly.com/>

Professor Casey A. Klofstad
Office: 314-G Jenkins Hall
Office Hours: WED, 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm
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Course Description and Objectives

In a democracy the actions of the government are based on the wishes of the citizenry. Citizens participate in the governing process by pressuring the government to respond. In this course we will examine these various means of “civic participation”. The course focuses on the United States, but we will devote some time to discuss civic participation in other countries as well.

Requirements

Participation: 10%

Attendance, completion of reading and writing assignments, and active participation in class discussion are required (this is not a lecture course).

Weekly Quizzes: 45% (5% per quiz)

Instead of having a traditional midterm or final exam, I will assess your progress each week with a brief quiz. We have 8 substantive meetings; each quiz will count for 5% of your final grade. Discussion questions for each week of class are posted on Blackboard. This will point you to the important aspects of the material that we will cover in the quizzes and in class discussion. You are free to miss one quiz over the semester without a penalty. If you complete every quiz I will drop the one with the lowest score from your grade.

Term Paper Prospectus: 5% (due via email by 5:00pm on Wednesday, March 6)

A brief one page, double spaced, summary of your paper topic. Refer to the paper assignment handout for more information.

Term Paper Presentation: 5% (Wednesday, November 28, in class)

Each student will be required to give a brief presentation to the class on their paper. PowerPoint is available, but optional. If you intend to use Keynote please bring your own Mac.

Term Paper: 35% (due via email by 5:00pm Wednesday, May 1)

The 15 page term paper qualifies this course for writing credit (the “W” requirement). Late papers will not be accepted without prior consent, and only in extreme circumstances. Those accepted will receive a one third grade penalty for each day they are late (e.g. a B+ becomes a B).

Experiment: +2 points on final grade (dates/times to be announced)

I may conduct an experiment with students this semester. Your participation is voluntary.

Academic Misconduct

As in any of your other classes, plagiarism or cheating of any kind will not be tolerated. By submitting materials to meet course requirements you assert that the work is your own. "Minor" infractions, such as failure to adequately cite source materials will lead to an F on the given assignment. Outright copying of materials or cheating in any other form will lead to an F in the course and referral to the Honor Council. If you have any questions about what constitutes academic misconduct, please consult me or refer to the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook.

Class Cancellation

In the event a class is canceled (natural disaster, instructor illness, etc.) you are still responsible for having done the work assigned on this syllabus by its due date.

Electronic Devices in the Classroom

Upon entering the classroom, your cell phone needs to be silenced (i.e., *not* on vibrate) and placed out of view in your bag or in your pocket, not on the desk/table. Students using their phones during class will be asked to leave. Laptops may only be used for note taking. If a student is seen using a laptop for any other purpose, they will be asked to leave.

Required Texts

Putnam, Robert D. 2000. *Bowling Alone*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

Skocpol, Theda & Morris P. Fiorina. 1999. *Civic Engagement in American Democracy*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.

Verba, Sidney, Kay Schlozman, and Henry Brady. 1995. *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Klofstad, Casey A. 2012. *Civic Talk: Peers, Politics and the Future of Democracy*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Additional readings will be provided on Blackboard.

Class Schedule and Readings

Wednesday, January 16: Introduction and Course Overview

Wednesday, January 23: Participatory Democracy

Voice and Equality: Chapters 1 & 17

Civic Engagement in American Democracy: Chapter 2

Bowling Alone: Chapter 1

Wednesday, January 30: NO CLASS TODAY

Wednesday, February 6: Public Opinion

Political Behavior of the American Electorate: Chapter 6 [copy to be provided]

The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion: Chapter 3 [copy to be provided]

The Rational Public: Chapter 10 [copy to be provided]

Party Polarization in American Politics [copy to be provided]

Voice and Equality: pp. 84-91

Wednesday, February 13: Political Civic Participation

Voice and Equality: Chapters 2 & 3

Bowling Alone: Chapter 2

Federalist #10 [copy to be provided]

Civic Engagement in American Democracy: Chapter 10

Wednesday, February 20: Non-Political Civic Participation

Bowling Alone: p. 19 and Chapters 3-9

Voice and Equality: pp. 40-42 and pp. 74-84

Civic Engagement in American Democracy: Chapter 4

Wednesday, February 27: Why People Participate (Or Why They Don't)

Voice and Equality: Chapter 4, pp. 269-273, & Chapters 10-14

Civic Talk: Chapters 1-3

Wednesday, March 6: NO CLASS TODAY (paper prospectus due by 5pm via email)

Saturday, March 9 – Sunday, March 17: SPRING BREAK

Wednesday, March 20: Representation, Equality, and Democracy

Voice and Equality: Chapters 6-8 & 16

Civic Engagement in American Democracy: Chapters 11

Bowling Alone: Chapter 19

Wednesday, March 27: The Decline of Civil Society?

Bowling Alone: Chapters 1, 10-15

Civic Engagement in American Democracy: Chapters 1, 10, 13

"Unsolved Mysteries: The Tocqueville Files" [copy to be provided]

"Understanding the American Decline in Social Capital, 1952-1998" [copy to be provided]

Wednesday, April 3: The Comparative Context

Voice and Equality: p. 70, pp. 79-81

Bowling Alone: Chapter 21

“The Structural Contexts of Civic Engagement” [copy to be provided]

“Political Participation in the Chinese Countryside” [copy to be provided]

Democratic Phoenix: Chapters 1-2 & 11 [copy to be provided]

Wednesday, April 10: NO CLASS TODAY

Wednesday, April 17: The Future of Participatory Democracy

Civic Engagement in American Democracy: Chapters 8 & 9

Bowling Alone: Chapters 23-24

Civic Talk: Chapters 7-8

Wednesday, April 24: Term Paper Presentations

Wednesday, May 1: Term Paper Due by 5pm via email