

POLITICAL SCIENCE/ETHICS 188FS
American Perspectives on Citizenship
Mon/Wed 1:25-2:40
Gross Hall 104

Course Synopsis

What, if any, responsibilities accompany citizenship in a democratic society? Voting? Active participation in political meetings? Obeying laws? Volunteering in one's community? Preserving natural resources for future generations? This course offers an overview of the different ways in which Americans have answered these questions.

By the end of the semester, you will have a better sense of how American conceptions of citizenship and civic duty have evolved over time. You will also be familiar with several controversies about the meaning and purpose of American citizenship. These controversies include: whether citizens should be actively involved in making and implementing public policy, whether American society promotes individualism at the expense of civic duty, whether there are certain experiences and values that all citizens should share, and whether contemporary challenges—such as globalization and climate change—require changes in how Americans understand citizenship. Finally, you should have a sense of where you stand on these questions.

What is Normative Political Theory?

This is a course in normative political theory. The study of politics entails both normative and positive theories. Positive political theories describe how voters, politicians and other political actors behave in the real world. Normative theories, on the other hand, describe how political life *should* operate. Consider Thomas Jefferson's statement in the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness, That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed,..." This is a normative statement because it reflects Jefferson's beliefs about how political life *should* function, rather than his sense of how political societies do in fact function.

While normative political theories do not always describe the world as it is, they are not completely divorced from real-world experiences. Jefferson's defense of unalienable rights was shaped by his understanding of human nature—in particular his belief that human beings are capable of recognizing and respecting an individual's right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. As we shall see over the course of the semester, different understandings of what it means to be a good citizen are rooted in different understandings of human nature. When evaluating course readings, it is helpful to identify what assumptions different authors make about human beings, such as our ability to work together to achieve common aims or the extent to which we must form relationships with others in order to flourish.

When evaluating course readings, it is also useful to consider how different authors define core political concepts, such as freedom, equality, individualism and rights. Our understanding of these core political concepts also shapes our understanding of the duties and obligations that accompany citizenship.

Basis of Grade

- Attendance and Participation: 15 %
- Response Papers: 15 %
- First Paper: 20 %
- Second Paper: 25 %
- Final Exam: 25 %

Required Course Materials

John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* (Hackett, 1980)

Jack Turner, *Awakening to Race: Individualism and Social Consciousness in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012)

Attendance and Participation

This is a seminar course. With the exception of brief lectures to provide historical context and explain some of the more challenging parts of the readings, we will be discussing the readings together as a class. You should therefore bring the assigned texts to class with you. It is also essential that you come to class prepared to discuss the readings and to ask questions about anything that is unclear. Trying to answer the questions posted on Sakai as you do the readings will help you focus on the central themes of the assignments.

Each student is permitted one unexcused absence; each subsequent unexcused absence will result in a deduction of 1/3 of a letter from the participation grade. Excused absences fall into four categories: illness, personal emergencies, religious observances and varsity athletic performances. If you will be missing class due to athletic activities or religious observances, I expect to be notified in advance. Please notify me by means of a Short-Term Illness Notification Form if an illness or personal emergency prevents you from coming to class.

We will examine a number of controversial issues. You are encouraged to disagree with each other and with me, but are expected to do so without using offensive language, engaging in personal attacks or being disruptive when your fellow students are talking. Participation grades will be based upon the overall quality of participation, including attendance, contributions to discussion and respect shown to other students. *Unless you have special permission, laptop use is not permitted in this classroom.*

Response Papers

You are required to write two response papers. You should be prepared to present the main points from your paper to the class. Response papers *must be handed in at the beginning of the class period*. If you choose to write more than two response papers, I will count the highest two toward your grade.

Response papers should offer a tightly focused reflection on one of the central themes of the day's reading assignment. It should not simply re-state the author's argument. You should not feel compelled to answer the reading questions. An appropriate response paper might identify a central problem with an author's argument, evaluate a reading in light of previous assignments, analyze your reaction to the assignment, or explain why a reading makes an important contribution to our understanding of citizenship.

Essays

In addition to the reaction papers, you will write two 5-7 page essays. These essays offer an opportunity for in-depth analysis of the course material. I will give you prompts and detailed instructions several weeks prior to the due dates. We will also go over the instructions in class. You may re-write one of the essays. If you choose to do so, I will re-grade the paper, and average both grades when calculating your final average. Re-writes are due two weeks after the papers have been handed back.

Final Exam

The final exam will test your understanding of the course material, and your ability to synthesize information from the different readings. You will be provided with a study guide toward the end of the semester.

Accessibility

I am happy to work with students who require accommodations in order to succeed in this course. If you think you require accommodations, please arrange a meeting with me during the first three weeks of the semester.

Academic Conduct

Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this class. Instances of plagiarism will be dealt with in accordance with university procedures. For more information on how to comply with the Duke Community Standard, see <http://library.duke.edu/research/plagiarism/index.html>.

Schedule of Topics and Readings

All readings not from required texts can be found on Sakai

I. Introduction

Aug 24: Introduction

Aug 26: Citizenship in Post-War America

- Robert Bellah, selections from *Habits of the Heart*

Aug 31: Citizenship in Post-War America

- Michael Schudson, “The Varieties of Civic Experience”

II. Theories of Citizenship and Civic Engagement

Liberalism

Sep 2: Lockean Liberalism

- John Locke, *Second Treatise*, chapters II-V, VII, IX

Sep 7: Lockean Liberalism

- John Locke, *Second Treatise*, chapters X-XII, XIV, XVIII, XIX

Sep 9: Federalists

- John Jay, Alexander Hamilton and James Madison, *Federalist Papers* #'s 2, 9, 10 and 51

Communitarianism

Sep 14: Puritan Visions of Community

- John Winthrop, “A Modell of Christian Charity” and “A Little Speech on Liberty”

Sep 16: The Dangers of Individualism in Democratic Societies

- Alexis de Tocqueville, selections from *Democracy in America*

Sep 21: Contemporary Communitarianism

- Etzioni, *Spirit of Community*, 1-54
- Come to class with a discussion question about the Etzioni reading

Participatory Democracy

Sep 23: CLASS CANCELED FOR YOM KIPPUR

Sep 28: Participatory Democracy in the Early Republic

- Thomas Jefferson, “Letter to Kercheval”
- Jane Mansbridge, “Conflict in a New England Town Meeting”

Sep 30: Strong Democracy

- Benjamin Barber, selections from *Strong Democracy*, 93-98; 117-138

Oct 5: In Class Activity

- *Essay due*

Oct 7: Participatory Democracy and the Politics of Difference

- Iris Marion Young, "Polity and Group Difference: A Critique of the Idea of Universal Citizenship"

Oct 12: FALL BREAK

Democratic Individuality

Oct 14: What is Democratic Individuality?

- Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Self-Reliance"

Oct 19: Implications of Democratic Individuality

- Jack Turner, *Awakening to Race*, chapters 1-2

Oct 21: Implications of Democratic Individuality

- *Awakening to Race*, chapter 3
- Frederick Douglass, "Self Made Man"

Grassroots Organizing

Oct 26: The Settlement Movement

- Jane Addams, "Introduction," "Charitable Effort" and "Early Undertakings at Hull-House"

Oct 28: Broad Based Organizing

- Saul Alinsky, selections from *Rules for Radicals*

Nov 2: Community Organizing in the 21st Century

- Luke Bretherton "The Origins of Organizing: An Intellectual History"
Luke Bretherton will be joining us to discuss his chapter!

Environmental Citizenship

Nov 4: Contested Visions of the National Parks

- John Muir, "Hetch Hetch Valley"
- Gifford Pinchot, "Prosperity"
- Ken Burns, *The National Parks: America's Best Idea*, Part 2, "The Last Refuge" (1890-1915), viewable online through Duke Library

Nov 9: Ecological Citizenship

- Aldo Leopold, “Thinking Like A Mountain,” and “Land Ethic” from *Sand County Almanac*

Nov 11: Postmodern Environmental Citizenship

- James Proctor, “Whose Nature: The Contested Ground of Ancient Forests”
Second Essay Due

Global Citizenship

Nov 16: The Pros and Cons of Humanitarian Intervention

- Fiona Terry, “The Rwandan Refugee Camps in Zaire,” pages 155-186; 202-215

Nov 18: The Need for Global Responsibility

- Iris Marion Young, “Responsibility And Global Sweatshop Labor”

Nov 23: The New Localism

- Wendell Berry, “The Idea of a Local Economy” and “A Native Hill”

Nov 25: THANKSGIVING BREAK

Part IV: Conclusion and Review

Nov 30: Citizenship Jeopardy!

Dec 2: Conclusion

Final Exam: SATURDAY DECEMBER 12