

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA, CHAPEL HILL
Fall, 2003

First-Year Seminar:
Citizenship and Society in the United States
(SOCI 6F)

Tuesday/Thursday, 2:00–3:15 Graham Memorial 212

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COURSE OVERVIEW

This course is designed to give you a framework for thinking about the possibilities for, and the impediments to, effective democratic citizenship in the United States.

This course has 3 main goals and 2 secondary goals. The main goals are:

1. To acquaint you with ideas about citizenship and democracy in an American context;
2. To introduce you to the relationship between society and politics; and
3. To get you thinking about both the possibilities for, and the impediments to, effective citizenship.

The secondary goals are:

1. To stimulate critical and sophisticated thinking about politics and democracy; and
2. To provide a gentle, exciting introduction to college.

READINGS AND RESOURCES

Required Books

Nina Eliasoph. *Avoiding Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 1998).

Lani Guinier. *The Tyranny of the Majority* (Free Press, 1994).

Note: Ten copies of this book are available for you to borrow from the instructor.

George Lakoff. *Moral Politics* (University of Chicago Press, 2002).

Benjamin Page and Robert Shapiro. *The Rational Public: Fifty Years of Trends in Americans' Policy Preferences* (University of Chicago Press, 1992).

Robert Putnam. *Bowling Alone* (Simon & Schuster, 2000).

Michael Schudson. *The Good Citizen* (Free Press, 1998).

Deborah Tannen. *The Argument Culture* (Random House, 1998).

Supplementary Readings

All other readings are available either on the web or on the course website. Readings available on the course website are marked with the WWW symbol. Those available on the web are linked from the course website. A few readings are on reserve in the library, and should also be available by electronic reserve; these are marked with the LIB symbol. The course website is available through <http://blackboard.unc.edu> and is also linked from <http://www.unc.edu/~aperrin>.

Other Resources

Have a dictionary close at hand to look up words you don't know. You can find an adequate one at <http://www.dictionary.com> if you prefer using an online version.

The UNC Writing Center (<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb>) can help you with writing clearly and correctly.

There is an astonishing amount of information available on the World Wide Web. A significant proportion of that information—though by no means all—is true and relevant. By all means, use the Web to supplement your reading and knowledge, but use it critically and make sure you know the source of the information.

FORMAL REQUIREMENTS

The requirements of this course are as follows:

Reading You must complete all the course readings. *You are responsible for understanding the readings*—make use of your fellow students, your dictionary, the Internet, and me to make sure you understand the readings. Course time is to be used for substantive discussion and further exploration of the implications of course readings, *not* for grasping the basic contents.

Participation You must attend, and participate in, all class discussions. *Class participation is the only graded measure of your understanding of the readings.* You must therefore be an *active* participant in *all* class discussions.

Team Presentations You will be part of three 3-student teams, each of which will be responsible for structuring and leading discussion of one class's content. The team will:

- Meet with me during office hours at least four days before seminar meets to discuss the issues involved.
- Write a *seminar paper* that considers the reading's main point(s) and takes a provocative stand on some issue in the reading. This seminar paper will be distributed by e-mail no later than 12:00 noon the day before the seminar meets. The seminar paper does not need to be a polished paper; its job is to raise interesting, provocative points for discussion.
- Organize and moderate discussion in the seminar. Discussion will be structured around the team's seminar paper, but will usually "take off" from there to examine a wide range of related issues.

Peer Review One week after your team presents, you will offer a *peer review* of another team's seminar paper and discussion leadership. Your review should highlight strengths and weaknesses of the team's work. In addition to being graded, your review will be shared with the team being reviewed.

Final Paper The final paper is your opportunity to synthesize what you have learned during the class. The paper should address some aspect of the topic: *How healthy is American democracy at the beginning of the 21st century?* It may do so by approaching any issue raised in class. We will spend time in several class sessions discussing the process of writing the final paper.

Final Exam There will be a final examination on the course's material and content.

Grading

Your course grade will be calculated as follows:

Course Participation	20%
Team Presentations and Seminar Papers	25%
Peer Reviews	15%
Final Paper	25%
Final Exam	15%

COURSE SCHEDULE

Part I: The History and Theory of Citizenship

August 26 Introductions and discussion; course organization and ground rules for discussion.

August 28 Discussion: What does “citizenship” mean? What do we think are the threats and opportunities to it?

Assignment: (Do before reading!) Write short answers, based on your knowledge and opinions, to these three questions. *There are no right answers to these questions.*

1. What does “democracy” mean?
2. What does it mean to be a “good citizen”?
3. How healthy is American democracy today?

Reading:

- Tocqueville, 58–60 [WWW](#) [LIB](#)
- Federalist #10 [WWW](#) (<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/federal/fed10.htm>)
- The Port Huron Statement [WWW](#) (http://lists.village.virginia.edu/sixties/HTML_docs/Resources/Primary/Manifestos/SDS_Port_Huron.html)

September 2 How should citizenship work?

Reading: Schudson, chapters 2–3 (Presentation team: read Introduction and chapter 1 as well)

September 4 Schudson, chapter 5 and conclusion

September 9 Class Cancelled

Begin reading: Page and Shapiro, chapters 1, 2, and 3

September 11 How do voters think?

Page and Shapiro, chapters 1, 2, 3, 7, 9, 10

September 16 Can we talk about this?

Lakoff *Moral Politics: How Liberals and Conservatives Think* (Chicago, 2002), chapters 5 and 6

September 18 Page, *Who Deliberates?* (Chicago, 1996), chapters 1, 2, and 5 [WWW](#) [LIB](#)

September 23 No, *Really*, can we talk about this?

Tannen, pp. 3–4, 8–26, and chapters 2 and 4

September 25 Tannen, chapters 7, 8, and 9

September 30 Race and Citizenship

Reading: Guinier, *The Tyranny of the Majority*, chapters 1 and 3

October 2 Guinier and Torres, *The Miner's Canary*, chapters 2 and 6 [WWW](#)

October 7 Citizenship Intervention: Race and Citizenship

October 9 Are we spinning out of sync?
Putnam, chapters 2, 3, 9, 11, 12, 13, 15

October 14 Putnam, chapters 19, 21, 22, 24

October 16 Political Retreat
Eliasoph, Chapters 1, 3, and 5

October 21 Eliasoph, Chapters 8 and 9

October 23 **Fall Break**

October 28 (How) are Movements Successful?
Reading: McAdam, *Freedom Summer*, chapters 2 and 6

October 30 Luker, *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood*, chapters 6 and 7 [WWW](#) [LIB](#)

November 4 Workshop: Internet, Activism, and Citizenship

November 6 Workshop: Internet, Activism, and Citizenship

November 11 The 2000 Election in Florida: What Happened?
Reading:

- Kellner, *Grand Theft 2000*, excerpts [WWW](#) [LIB](#)
- Conway, "Political Participation in American Elections: Who Decides What?" pp. 79–94 in Crotty, ed., *America's Choice 2000* (Boulder: Westview 2001) [WWW](#) [LIB](#)

November 13 Sunstein & Epstein, eds., *The Vote*, chapters 2, 7, and Afterword [WWW](#)

November 18 Citizenship Intervention: Dissecting the 2000 Election

November 20 Citizenship Intervention: Dissecting the 2000 Election

November 25 Final papers due—no class

November 27 **Thanksgiving**

December 2 Citizenship Intervention: Reviving American Citizenship

December 4 Wrap-Up Discussion

December 16 Final Exam, 12:00 noon