

Fall 2009

Senior Seminar in Civic Engagement

Marvin R. Cohen
School of Education and Social Policy
Soc Pol 351

Time: Thursday, 2-4:50p.m.
Place: Annenberg Hall, Room 345
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Office Hours: By appointment

EVALUATION: The student's grade for this course will be based upon attendance, discussion questions, class participation, oral presentation, as well as a take home mid-term and a final exam. In the last weeks of the course, student groups will present discussion questions and lead the seminars.

All written work must be typed. All books are available at Norris Bookstore.

SYLLABUS

This course is designed to synthesize experiential and academic learning. We will explore the experiences that students bring to the course from prior involvement with not-for-profit organizations, political campaigns and government agencies, employing current academic research to enhance our understanding its significance. Students will have an opportunity to articulate the central issues that have emerged from their experiences, and to delve more rigorously into the subject matter. The goal of the course is to give students a conceptual framework within which to advance their goals after graduation.

- September 24: Introduction
- Goals of course, requirements & rules of the road
 - Students' reflections on their experiences with civic engagement
 - Beginning to construct a theoretical framework for the course
 - Assignment: Prepare a two-page paper summarizing experiences with civic engagement and framing questions for subsequent study

- October 1: Constructing a Vocabulary to Conceptualize Civic Engagement.
- Read: Bowling Alone (Robert D. Putnam); Chapters 1 – 3, 16, 18 & 21 - 22
 - **Written assignment due**
- October 8: Contemporary Issues in Civic Engagement: Is There a Generational Sea Change in Civic Engagement?
Read: A New Engagement? (Cliff Zukin, Scott Keeter, Molly Andolina, Krista Jenkins, & Michael X. Delli Carpini)
- Selection of themes for students' reports and organization of groups
- October 15: Another View
Read: The Good Citizen (Russel J. Dalton)
- October 22: Does Engagement Depoliticize?
Read: Downsizing Democracy (Matthew A. Crenson & Benjamin Ginsberg)
- Assignment: Midterm exam distributed in class (take home/five pages).... **Due, October 23rd by 12:00 noon**
- October 29: Do We Really Gain from Hearing the Other Side?
Read: Hearing the Other Side (Diana C. Mutz)
- November 5: Civil Society: A Useful Concept?
Read: Civil Society (Michael Edwards)
- November 12: Students' Reports
Read: to be assigned
- November 19: Students' Reports
Read: to be assigned
- November 26: Thanksgiving Vacation
- December 3: Summing it up
- Final exam distributed in class (take home/ten pages).... **Due December 7th by 5:00 pm**