

POLITICAL DELIBERATION

COMM 417/POL SCIENCE 455

Course Times/Location:
Mon/Wed 8:30-10:20 SMITH 304
Friday sections 8:30-12:20, various rooms

Course website: courses.washington.edu/com417

Professor: John Gastil, 331 Communications Bldg., 543-4655

Office hours: M/W 10:30-11:30am

Teaching Assistant: Leah Sprain 340N Comm Bldg.

Office hours: W 11:30am-1:30pm and by appointment

Contact email for both of us: com417@u.washington.edu

COURSE SUMMARY

A wave of theory and research has developed the idea that the ideal form of government is a “deliberative democracy.” This course introduces you to a wide range of perspectives on political deliberation and sharpens your skills at a wide range of deliberative processes—from informal political conversation to legislative debate. You will participate directly in forums discussing current issues, analyzing and critiquing media coverage of the Presidential election, and write about different forms of deliberation that could help us address difficult public policy issues. If the course is successful, you should end the quarter with: (a) a clearer understanding how deliberative processes work; (b) a bit more talent at taking part in deliberative processes effectively; (c) the ability to recognize when contemporary practices fall short of the deliberative ideal; and (d) some ideas for how to make our political process more deliberative.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Student grades will be based upon a quiz (10% of total grade), final (40%), two brief papers (20% each), and class participation (10%). In addition, extra credit may be awarded for various extra assignments offered during the quarter. The quiz will cover the first unit of the course, and the final will cover the entire course. The first short paper will propose a means of analyzing deliberation, and the second will content-analyze media coverage of the 2008 Washington gubernatorial election.

Class participation will be assessed based on both involvement in large-class discussions and the Friday activities. You should attend every one of the scheduled classes unless an emergency prevents you from doing so. When in class, you should listen attentively, and you should speak up when you have questions or wish to express an idea or viewpoint. Be sure to participate actively in all in-class activities, and always feel free to raise questions during lecture.

If you are unable to attend an exam due to medical illness or family emergency, contact us as soon as it is possible to do so. Be sure to schedule your travel such that you’ll be present for the final exam. Makeup exams are only available for excused absences on exam day. Assignments turned in late result in a loss of one assignment-grade level per day late; turning it in the same day as the deadline (but after the time due) results in the loss of one grade level.

Though it could probably go without saying, I expect you to do your own work. Note that material copied from the Internet must be referenced with footnotes or some other form of citation, just as is true for material that you get from books, articles, and other media. Any cheating on tests, plagiarizing on your assignments, or submitting others' work as your own will result in a score of zero for the exam or assignment, and disciplinary action will be taken, typically resulting in a permanent notation on your transcript. For more details on this, refer to the UW website on plagiarism/cheating, which has all the ugly details (<http://depts.washington.edu/grading/issue1/honesty.htm#misconduct>).

EXTRA CREDIT

Extra credit assignments can be completed any time during the quarter. Doing one extra credit assignment gives you a tie-breaker: when your final grade score is calculated, if your score is just below the cutoff for a decimal grade, you get rounded up to the next decimal. Doing two extra credit assignments gives you a slightly larger bump-up at the end of the quarter. Two assignments are available:

- (1) Write a 2 page, single-spaced analysis of a work of fiction or popular program (movie, album, book, radio or TV show, etc.) relevant to the course material. This short paper should provide a brief synopsis of the media's content, then describe in detail how it illustrates or relates to one or more concepts and theories in the class. The movie previews listed on the syllabus might give you some ideas, but I'm especially interested in works with which I am not already familiar. To submit this assignment, email your completed paper to com417@u.washington.edu.
- (2) Post a page on wikipedia relevant to deliberation and related programs or concepts in the course. The wikipedia is an online encyclopedia that people often use as a basic reference tool. Your job is to add a page for a term that's not yet in the wikipedia (e.g., Citizens' Jury, but see People's Jury), significantly improve an existing page (e.g., "deliberative democracy" at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deliberative_democracy), or improve the indexing among related but currently scattered terms. To do this assignment, you must first get instructor approval: send an email to com417@u.washington.edu explaining what you wish to do on the wikipedia, along with links to any relevant pages.

DSS

If you would like to request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact Disabled Student Services, 448 Schmitz, 543-8924 (V/TDD). If you have a letter from disabled Student Services indicating that you have a disability requiring academic accommodations, please present the letter to me so that we can discuss the accommodations you might need for class.

READINGS

The one main text for the course is available at the University bookstore. It is John Gastil, *Political Communication and Deliberation* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2008). Chapters from the primary text are referred to by PCD (*Political Communication and Deliberation*), along with a number indicating the required chapter. Additional readings/handouts are in the reading packet or found on the 417 website. Please remember to do each reading before the class in which that reading is discussed. The reading packet can be obtained from Ram's Copy Shop (4144 University Way NE; 206-632-6630).

COURSE SCHEDULE

UNIT 1		DEMOCRACY AND DELIBERATION	READINGS
M	Jan 5	Overview of deliberation and democracy	
W	Jan 7	Democracy and deliberation	PCD Preface & 1
F	Jan 9	Self-inventory of deliberation	
M	Jan 12	Discussion as the heart of democracy	PCD 2
W	Jan 14	NIF forum	Discussion guide (417 website)
F	Jan 16	Quiz and review on key concepts	
UNIT 2		DELIBERATIVE GOVERNANCE	READINGS
M	Jan 19	[MLK Day holiday]	
W	Jan 21	Deliberation within govt. institutions	PCD 5; Bächtiger et al. chapter
F	Jan 23	Budget committee deliberation	Sturgis chapters
M	Jan 26	Final budget deliberations, in full assembly Bringing government and citizens together	PCD 7
W	Jan 28	B.C./Ontario Citizens' Assemblies	Ratner and Ferejohn chapters
UNIT 3		ASSESSING DELIBERATION IN AUSTRALIA	READINGS
F	Jan 30	Introduction of paper #1	Assign. description (417 website)
M	Feb 2	Overview of the Citizens/Online Parliaments	Readings by Carson/Hartz-Karp, Goodin/Dryzek, and Niemeyer
W	Feb 4	How to measure/assess deliberation	Black et al. chapter
F	Feb 6	Workshop on paper #1	
M	Feb 9	Analysis of deliberation transcripts	Transcript at 417 website
W	Feb 11	(Jet-lagged) report from Australia	Linked material at 417 website
F	Feb 13	Discussion of Australian experiment <i>Paper #1 due at start of section</i>	
UNIT 4		MEDIA AND ELECTIONS	READINGS
M	Feb 16	[Presidents' Day holiday]	
W	Feb 18	Deliberating in the mass media	PCD 3
F	Feb 20	Media analysis training	Sample article (417 website)
M	Feb 23	Conventional politics and deliberative reforms	PCD 4
W	Feb 25	Presentation of media analysis results The most ambitious electoral reforms <i>Paper #2 due at start of class</i>	O'Leary chapter
UNIT 5		JURY AND COMMUNITY DELIBERATION	READINGS
F	Feb 27	Mock jury session	Jury instructions (417 website)
M	Mar 2	Deliberation in the jury room	PCD 6
W	Mar 4	Building a deliberative community	PCD 8
F	Mar 6	Review for final exam	Discussion guide (417 website)
M	Mar 9	International deliberation and the World Court	PCD 9; Gastil/Lingle/Deess article
W	Mar 11	An integrated model of deliberative democracy	PCD 10; Warren chapter

FINAL EXAM Tuesday, March 17, 8:30-10:20am, SMITH 304