

POLITICAL DELIBERATION

COMM 417/POL SCIENCE 455

Course Times/Location:

Mon/Wed 8:30-10:20 MARY GATES HALL 241

Friday sections 9:30-12:20, various rooms

Course website: courses.washington.edu/com417

Professor: John Gastil, 331 Comm Bldg.
Office hours: M/W 10:30-11:30am

Teaching Assistant: Wenlin 340-U Comm Bldg.
Office hours: Tues 10am-12pm

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 skill at deliberating; (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 and our society more deliberative.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Student grades will be based upon a midterm covering the first units of the course (10% of total grade), a comprehensive final covering the entire course (30%), four brief papers (50% total), and class participation (10%). In addition, extra credit may be awarded for various additional assignments that may be offered during the quarter.

The four short papers are as follows:

1. A 4-5 page content-analysis of the media coverage of a contemporary political issue or election (10% of total grade).
2. A 5-6 page analysis of the experiences of selected participants in the 2009 Australian Citizens’ Parliament (15% of total grade).
3. A 3 page reflection paper on the experience of deliberating as part of the Countywide Community Forums (5% of total grade).
4. A complete new entry in the Participedia.net website (20% of total grade). This paper may be written in 2-3 person teams, if you choose. A solo paper is the equivalent of a 5 page paper, and each additional co-author requires the equivalent of 3 more pages of detail/complexity..

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>).

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).

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENT

By the May 31 class session, you also must purchase an Radio Frequency Response Card, which the University Bookstore sells for something like \$40. The UW has almost standardized this technology, meaning that you may end up needing it for another class at some point. Like a textbook, you can also resell it after the quarter is over.

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.

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. One assignment is as follows (with the other to be described in class at a later date):

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.

COURSE SCHEDULE

UNIT 1	DEMOCRACY AND DELIBERATION	READINGS	
M	Mar 29	Overview of deliberation and democracy Choose issue for NIF forum	
W	Mar 31	Democracy and deliberation Self-inventory of deliberative activities	PCD Preface & 1
F	Apr 2	Political conversations	
M	Apr 5	Discussion as the heart of democracy	PCD 2
W	Apr 7	NIF forum	NIF booklet (417 website)
F	Apr 9	Study circle discussions	Discussion guide (417 website)
UNIT 2	MEDIA AND ELECTIONS	READINGS	
M	Apr 12	Deliberating in the mass media Choose content analytic focus for paper #1	PCD 3
W	Apr 14	Introduction to paper #1 (media analysis) Review of past results of student research	<i>Seattle PI</i> op-eds
F	Apr 16	Media analysis training	Sample article (417 website)
M	Apr 19	Conventional politics and deliberative reforms	PCD 4
W	Apr 21	Presentation of media analysis results Discussion of CIR-Oregon <i>Paper #1 due at start of class</i>	NSF Proposal (packet)
F	Apr 23	Exam review session	
M	Apr 26	Midterm exam	

UNIT 3		DELIBERATIVE GOVERNANCE	READINGS
W	Apr 28	Bringing government and citizens together Overview of the Australian Citizens Parliament Introduction of paper #2 (ACP analysis)	PCD 7 Dryzek article (packet)
F	Apr 30	Deliberation analysis training	Spörndli article (packet)
M	May 3	Deliberation within govt. institutions	PCD 5
W	May 5	Allocating the royalties budget	
F	May 7	Paper-writing workshop	
M	May 10	Presentation and discussion of ACP papers <i>Paper #2 due at start of class</i>	
UNIT 4		BUILDING DELIBERATIVE COMMUNITY	READINGS
W	May 12	Building a deliberative community Introduction to paper #3 (CCF analysis)	PCD 8 Promotional materials on CCF
F	May 14	Paper-writing workshop	
M	May 17	Discussion of CCF experience <i>Paper #3 due at start of class</i>	
UNIT 5		JURIES AND DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY	READINGS
W	May 19	Introduction to Participedia.net	Sample essays (417 website)
F	May 21	First workshop on paper #4	
M	May 24	Mock jury session	<i>State v. Mayfield</i> (packet)
W	May 26	Deliberation in the jury room The civic impact of jury service	PCD 6
F	May 28	Second workshop on paper #4	
M	May 31	UW HOLIDAY (Memorial Day)	
W	June 2	International deliberation and the World Court An integrated model of deliberative democracy	PCD 9; Gastil et al. (packet)
F	June 4	Review for final exam <i>Paper #4 due at start of section</i>	PCD 10
FINAL EXAM Tuesday, June 8, 8:30am- 10:20am, MGH 241			