

Clemson University

TigerPrints

Teacher Scholars Civic Engagement & Voting
Rights

TigerPrints

7-2024

COURSE SYLLABUS - Foundations of Community and Civic Engagement"

Andrea Woodward
Berea College

Follow this and additional works at: https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/teacher_scholars

Recommended Citation

Woodward, Andrea, "COURSE SYLLABUS - Foundations of Community and Civic Engagement" (2024).
Teacher Scholars Civic Engagement & Voting Rights. 14.
https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/teacher_scholars/14

This Woodward - Foundations of Community and Civic Engagement is brought to you for free and open access by the TigerPrints at TigerPrints. It has been accepted for inclusion in Teacher Scholars Civic Engagement & Voting Rights by an authorized administrator of TigerPrints. For more information, please contact kokeefe@clemson.edu.

COURSE SYLLABUS

Foundations of Community and Civic Engagement

Welcome to Foundations of Community and Civic Engagement! This course is for students interested in applying knowledge from their academic disciplines to contemporary issues and community contexts. The course examines trends in civic engagement over time, including different forms it has taken and the suitability and limitations of each in various contexts. Social change theories and strategies are studied through the lens of personal and place-based narratives and case studies at the local, state, and national levels. Through applied exercises in the community and engagement with guest speakers, students will connect with community leaders and organizations involved in place-based development, outreach, and change. Students will also explore and reflect upon the intersections of self, organizations, and communities. While the course will emphasize civic engagement examples and themes based in the United States, it offers a framework for considering connections with international contexts and communities.

Course Learning Goals

- Identify circumstances and structures that may promote or limit civic engagement and social change.
- Explore, reflect upon, and articulate one's role as an active participant in interconnected communities.
- Describe a range of civic engagement activities and discern their suitability across contexts and issues.
- Articulate what public-facing work looks like across a range of disciplines.
- Research and analyze contemporary issues related to academic and/or career interests.
- Communicate effectively about a social issue.
- Apply theories of social change to imagine possibilities in communities.

Required Texts

- Alexander, Farrah. 2022. *Resistance in the Bluegrass: Empowering the Commonwealth*. Lexington: Kentucky University Press.
- Dionne, Evette. 2024. *Lifting as We Climb: Black Women's Battle for the Ballot*. New York: Viking.
- Garza, Alicia. 2020. *The Purpose of Power: How We Come Together When We Fall Apart*. New York: One World.
- Guzmán, Mónica. 2022. *I Never Thought of It That Way: How to Have Fearlessly Curious Conversations in Dangerously Divided Times*. Dallas, TX: BenBella Books.
- My Old Kentucky Podcast: <https://myoldkentuckypodcast.podbean.com/>.
Listening to this podcast will be required most weeks. It's released every Tuesday, and when an episode is particularly pertinent to the class, we'll spend some time on the following Friday discussing it.
- News from [allsides.com](https://www.allsides.com) along with news outlets of your choice.
- Additional readings posted to Moodle.

Assessment of Student Learning

20% Reading quizzes

20% Podcast Project

60% Civic Engagement Checklist Activities, Reflections, and Final Synthesis

QUIZZES (20%)

Every day when we have assigned reading/listening/viewing before class, students complete short, open-book quizzes or reading responses and post them to the course LMS at least one hour before the start of class. Receiving these before the start of class makes it possible to assess how well students have comprehended key concepts, which concepts would be most helpful to reinforce in class, and what questions students would like to raise for discussion.

CIVICALLY ENGAGED PODCAST PROJECT (20%)

The most substantial single project students complete this term is one in which they do research on a social or public issue of interest to them, interview someone with expertise on the issue, inform the public about it in the form of a 15-minute podcast episode, and provide information about at least one way for listeners to take action on the issue.

COMMUNITY AND CLASSROOM-ENGAGED EXPERIENCES AND REFLECTIONS (60%)

This class is designed to give students first-hand experience with different forms of civic engagement throughout the term, some of which are experienced together as a class and others that students might participate in individually or in small groups (for example, attending a city council meeting, contacting an elected official about an issue, regularly reading the news from multiple viewpoints, etc.). More details are given about this part of the class in the “Civic Engagement Checklist” assignment students receive at the beginning of the term, which lists activities to be completed, along with instructions for writing reflections about these, throughout the term.

Another form of community engagement that is critical in this course is engagement in the classroom. Especially in this course focused on community engagement and democratic citizenship, in-person participation is just as important to your learning as the other work you do for this class. The time we spend together is a vital “text” that contributes to the collective learning experience, and it also provides practice and skill-building around being an active member of the communities of which you are a part. Since discussions and active engagement in the community of our classroom are such central parts of the course, it’s vital to everyone’s experience of the course that you’re all present and engaged. To this end, students are allowed three absences throughout the semester without it affecting their grade. Any absences beyond the three that are allowed will start affecting your “Engagement” grade listed above, unless a student has an extenuating circumstance that they discuss with me before they plan to be absent.

Course Calendar

Week	Topics and Readings
1	<p>Civic Health and the Role of Universities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Policy Circle, n.d. "Civic Engagement Overview." • Daniels, Ronald J. 2021. "Universities are Shunning Their Responsibility to Democracy," <i>The Atlantic.</i> • Koenig, Rebecca. 2021. "American Democracy is Sick. Can Colleges Be Part of the Cure?" EdSurge.
2	<p>Public Policy in Kentucky</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KYPolicy. 2024. "The Money Is There and So Are the Needs: Preview of the Budget of the Commonwealth." • Institute for Citizens and Scholars. 2023. "The Civic Outlook of Young Adults in America." • My Old Kentucky Podcast. Episode 356: "How the Legislature Works." • My Old Kentucky Podcast. Episode 358: "The Session Is Underway."
3	<p>Democracy and State Politics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My Old Kentucky Podcast (most recent episode). • KY ACLU's Peoples' Lobbying Guide. <p>What is Democracy?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to Citizen Podcast: "It's All Greek to Me" and "Democracy Means People Power, Literally."
4	<p>Local Politics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black in Appalachia Podcast. "Election Season." • Barry, Dan. 2022. One Small Step in a "Live Free or Die Town," <i>New York Times,</i> July 10. • Episode 341 of My Old Kentucky Podcast. "Four Good Bills, Four Bad Bills." • Guest Speakers from city government and city council. • Attend city council meeting.
5	<p>Voting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Election Week 2020: "Young People Increase Turnout, Lead Biden to Victory." • <i>Forbes.</i> Why Should College Students—Or Anyone Else—Bother Voting? • Dionne, Evette. 2020. <i>Lifting As We Climb: Black Women's Battle for the Ballot Box.</i> New York: Viking.

Week	Topics and Readings
6	<p>Voting Rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Film: <i>Selma</i>. • Continue reading <i>Lifting As We Climb: Black Women’s Battle for the Ballot Box</i>. • Vox/Netflix “Whose Vote Counts?” Episodes 1 and 3. • <i>Time</i>. 2016. “7 Ideas From Other Countries That Could Improve US Elections.” • Liao, Kristen. 2020. “What Voting Rights Look Like In 6 Countries Around the World.” <i>Global Citizen</i>. • Sebert, Sara Garfield. 2021. “Electoral Systems Around the World.” <i>The Alliance for Citizen Engagement</i>. • “Compulsory Voting.” International Idea.
7	<p>State Capitol Field Trip</p>
8	<p>Podcast Production Workshop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual meetings with me to discuss podcast outlines.
9	<p>Spring Break</p>
10	<p>Dialogue Across Difference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I Never Thought of It That Way</i>.
11	<p>Podcast Editing Workshop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black in Appalachia Podcast: “Environmental Justice.” <p>Community Organizing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read introduction through chapter 2 in <i>The Purpose of Power</i>.
12	<p>Community Organizing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Purpose of Power</i>, chapters 3-6 and student-selected chapters. • Community Organizer Guest Speaker. <p>Community Organizing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Nerve Film and Guest Speaker</i>.
13	<p>Case Studies in Organizing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Resistance in the Bluegrass</i>.
13	<p>Workshop: How to Write an Op-Ed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excerpts from Putnam, R. and S. R. Garrett 2020. <i>The Upswing: How America Came Together a Century Ago and How We can Do It Again</i>. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Week	Topics and Readings
14	The Past and Future of Democracy in the US <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="285 285 1235 317">• Excerpts from Richardson, Heather Cox. 2024. <i>Democracy Rising</i>.
15	Project work week
Final class reflection and podcast discussion during final exam time	