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IN-CLASS ACTIVITY - Voter Education and Registration— Nonlegal Barriers

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Recommended Citation

Ludwig, Bernadette, "IN-CLASS ACTIVITY - Voter Education and Registration— Nonlegal Barriers" (2024).
Teacher Scholars Civic Engagement & Voting Rights. 70.
https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/teacher_scholars/70

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IN-CLASS ACTIVITY

Voter Education and Registration— Nonlegal Barriers

Teacher Scholar Fellow: Bernadette Ludwig, PhD | **Course:** Sociology of Gender

Possible course adaptations: gender studies, Black studies, American studies, ethics, government, politics

LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT

- To educate students why some people do not/are not able to vote even though they are legally able to do so.
- To understand how systemic oppression and discrimination have distinct effects on different population groups.
- To raise awareness of barriers so students may be able to address them in their personal lives and exercise their right to vote if they are eligible to do so.

Preparation for Class Activity

- If combined with in-class voter registration
 - Advise students to bring their state ID, SSN, and information about mailing address to class.
 - Prepare information for voter registration and voting in counties where students hold citizenship (have this information readily available on the day of the class).
 - Familiarize yourself or work with campus group or League of Women Voters on how to register to vote/request an absentee ballot AND ensure information is available about how to do this in other countries for students who are either not US citizens or dual citizens; possibly use Periclean Voting Module, “How to Vote.” ([slides](#))
- Use the Periclean Voting Module, “Why Voting Matters.” ([slides](#); [class activities](#))
 - This module (in particular the slides) discusses a number of legal barriers to voting (e.g., citizenship, past and present felony convictions). However, in addition there are many nonlegal barriers that prevent would-be voters from casting their vote. Add this section (details below) to the [slides](#).

Nonlegal Barriers to Voting

This is NOT an exhaustive list.

- ID laws
- Not knowing how to register
- Lack of transportation
- Having to work on election day
- Having to be a caretaker on election day
- Lack of permanent address/home
- Having missed the deadline to request absentee ballot
- Limited literacy
- Visual disabilities
- Purging of voter rolls (e.g., exact name match)

Class Activity

1. Use the Periclean Voting Module, “Why Voting Matters” ([slides](#))
2. After slide 7 “Current Voting Rights” add the above-mentioned nonlegal barriers
3. Discuss in class or in small groups—depending on the size of the class—how these different barriers affect specific groups; below are some examples:
 - Women are more likely than other genders to be caretakers
 - Women are more likely to change their last name after getting married, hence their ID, voter registration records, and current legal name may not match
 - ID laws restrict BIPOC and Hispanics’ ability to vote more than those of non-Hispanic White Americans ([source](#))
 - Immigrants and many BIPOC are more likely to have non-Anglo-Saxon names and thus the name on their ID may not be an exact match to those on the voter roll (examples include: spelling, hyphenation, longer names)
 - Transgender young people are more likely to be unhoused than cisgender people; not having a permanent address can prevent people from registering to vote
 - Women are more likely than other genders to be in hourly paid jobs ([source](#))
 - Black and non-White Hispanic people in the United States earn lower hourly wages than non-Hispanic White and Asian people in the United States ([source](#))
4. Invite students to think about whose voices are heard in a democracy (remind them to think about intersectionality)