

Political Participation and Civic Engagement

Fall 2017

Basic Information

Class meets: Tuesday and Thursday

Instructor: Dr. Ondercin

Office: 013 Kauke

E-mail: hondercin@wooster.edu

Office Phone: 330-287-1934

Office hours: Wednesday 9:00-10:30 and Tuesday/Thursday 1:00-2:00

You are welcome to meet with me about the class or your professional development at any point during the semester. To facilitate meeting with me, please go to <https://ondercin.youcanbook.me/> and select an available time. You must do this at least 24 hours before you wish to meet with me.

Course Description

The last line of Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg address states "this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom – and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth." Individuals are fundamentally entwined with the U.S. political system. While we commonly focus on voting and elections, there are a variety of ways individuals can be politically engaged. This class will examine the interaction between individuals and government beyond the voting booth.

We will start by considering what we expect of citizens in the United States and the implications of these expectations for our government. We then will examine the levels of participation before focusing on factors that influence levels of political participation, from one's socio-economic status to the homes where we grew up. We will also examine how levels of political participation are unequally distributed across the population in the United States. Finally, we will examine how policies and what government does shape our engagement with politics.

Course Objectives

- Through classroom learning and discussions, assigned readings, writing assignments, and exams students will analyze the role political participation plays in the U.S. political system.
- Through classroom learning and discussions, assigned readings, writing assignments, and exams students will think critically about why individuals engage (or fail to engage) in politics in the United States.

- Through classroom learning and discussions, assigned readings, writing assignments, and exams students will analyze contemporary research in political science and other social sciences to develop a deeper understanding of political participation.

What You Can Expect of the Course and What I Expect of You

The class meets twice a week. I expect you to be there at **all times**. A large portion of your grade is based on participation in class discussion and you are not able to participate if you are not in class. Material not covered in the readings will be covered in class. There is no other place to gain this information other than being in class.

You can expect a mixture of lecture, class discussion, small group projects, and individual projects. At all times, my aim will be to help you achieve a deep understanding of the material. Since so much of what I want you to learn will be dealt with only in class, it is important that you attend. Two things are very important to the success of this class: 1) your participation in every class; and 2) that you have completed the readings **before** the class in which we will discuss them. You cannot learn from each other, and I cannot learn from you, if you are not prepared for class. I encourage you to ask questions you may have about lectures, class discussions, readings, and things you see in the news. Do not be passive; class will be much more interesting and you will learn the material better if you are an active participant.

I expect you to observe common courtesy when you are in class. Please come on time: lateness is very rude! Please turn off cell phones and pagers. Please leave the newspaper, crossword puzzles, and other work at home. **NO LAPTOPS ALLOWED.** I do not teach in your bedroom; therefore, please do not sleep in my classroom. I expect you to be mentally present as well as physically present in class; this is the best way to ensure that you learn the course material. If I see you using electronic devices or engaging in inappropriate classroom behavior you will lose 1 point of your participation grade. If this happens more than 3 times you will receive a 0 for participation.

In this class we will engage in discussions about politics and policies. During our discussions I want everyone to feel free to share their opinions. Each of us brings a unique perspective to the class and we can all learn from this diversity. In order to make this possible you need to be respectful of other people's opinions, even if they are the direct opposite of your own beliefs. I will not tolerate personal attacks on one another or the use of disrespectful language. There is no room for an atmosphere of intimidation, and I will not tolerate it in this class. If there are any issues that you feel uncomfortable with please feel free to talk to me.

Moodle and Campus E-mail. This course will largely rely on Moodle for me to distribute assignments, to post course announcements, and to post supplemental readings for the course. Please check the site regularly. You will submit all assignments via Moodle.

You are expected to login to Moodle by the second day of classes to make sure you can navigate the site. I will return assignments via Moodle. You are responsible for checking your Wooster email account daily for important class communications.

A note about email communications: Please do not hesitate to email me with any questions or concerns you may have. However, two things about e-mail communications. First, I will make every effort to respond to your e-mail in a timely manner. But I will not respond to e-mails after 5pm and on weekends. Second, please be professional in your emails. Just like a written letter, be sure to open your email with an appropriate greeting like, “Dear Dr. Ondercin” or “Professor Ondercin.” Please make sure to identify who you are and what class you are taking from me in the body of the e-mail. Before sending an email, please make sure you cannot easily get the answer from another source (e.g., from the syllabus or other class documents). In addition, in many cases I may request you meet with me to discuss your question rather than engage in a series of back-and-forth emails.

Meeting with the Professor. I strongly encourage you to meet with me during office hours. You must schedule your meetings during office hours at <https://ondercin.youcanbook.me/>. I encourage you to come to me with any questions or concerns.

Late Work. Late work is not tolerated in this course. Think of the deadline as the time that an airline flight takes off. Just as you arrive at the airport with plenty of time, so too should you submit your assignment with plenty of time. Once the flight takes off or the deadline passes, you will receive a zero. Try Firefox as your browser or contact IT - if you're having issues with Moodle. I am skeptical of any excuses for late work that involve computer failure, thus you should be sure to save your work often and to back it up in another way.

Attendance Policy. Since this course requires active participation in the classroom you are expected to attend all class meetings. It is your responsibility to sign in at the beginning of class to verify your attendance. You are responsible for whatever happens in class, such as announcements, group work, and handouts. For each absence over three, excused or unexcused, you will lose one point of your participation grade. You do not need to e-mail me if you will be missing class. If you have a college related absence (i.e., traveling with a college sports team, attending a conference) it is your responsibility to arrange written notification of the absence BEFORE you are absent and make arrangement for any missed work. All assignments will be due before anticipated absences.

Incompletes. Incomplete coursework is a major inconvenience for students and professors. I expect you to do everything in your power to avoid this situation. Legitimate excuses include verified illnesses and family emergencies. No incompletes will be given unless a legitimate excuse is verified and you have a prior written agreement with the professor. As per College of Wooster policy, any unfinished work resulting in an “Incomplete” must be submitted by the first week of the following semester.

I will not discuss or send grades via e-mail. E-mail is not a secure form of communication, meaning anyone can read your messages. In order to protect your privacy I will not e-mail you your grades. However, I am happy to discuss your grades with you in person during office hours or by appointment.

Required Readings

All required readings are outlined below. You will be able to find them on Moodle.

Grading

Grades for the class will be based on participation, researching your world assignments, writing assignments, and two exams. A total of 100 points are available. Below you will find a description of each of the factors that go into the final grade, the due dates, and the grade distribution.

Table 1: Assignments and Due Dates

	points available	percent of total grade	due dates
Participation	15	15%	continually assessed
Researching Your World	20	20%	see due dates below
Writing Assignments	10	10%	see due dates below
Midterm Exam	25	25%	October 5 th
Final Exam	30	30%	December 13 th 2:00 pm
	100	100%	

Participation Participation is worth 15% of your final grade. You are expected to be engaged in class discussions, ask questions, and contribute to group work. Participation is not simply about quantity or quality. You should participate on a regular basis in a meaningful way. You cannot make-up work completed in class if you are absent.

Researching Your World These activities are worth 20% of your final grade. These activities are designed to build connections between your world and the academic readings we will be completing in class. They will require you to do a little independent research on a subject matter and then report your findings to class. Description of these assignments can be found on Moodle.

Writing Assignments. There are two short writing assignments that are designed to apply what we learn in the classroom to contemporary U.S. politics. For each assignment you will write 3-5 pages, double spaced in 12 point Times New Roman font or equivalent, and with standard 1 inch margins. All assignments are due on the date listed in the tentative course

schedule. Descriptions of each writing assignment can be found on Moodle.

Exams. There will be two exams in the class. The midterm exam is worth 25% of your final grade. The final exam is worth 30% of your final grade. Exams will be a mixture of short-answer and short-essay questions. You will need to bring a blank blue book to class. While grammar and spelling are not graded in the exam you will be expected to write clear, complete, and legible sentences. Make-up midterm examinations are only authorized for documented reasons involving personal, medical, or family emergencies. Ideally students need to inform the instructor of such events before the scheduled exam. If advance notification is impossible, then the student must inform the instructor as soon as reasonably possible. If such notification and documentation is provided, it is up to the instructor's discretion to grant a make-up exam. If a make-up exam is approved by the instructor, its content and format may significantly differ from the scheduled exam.

Grade Appeal. I will not discuss changes in grades on exams or papers for 24 hours after a paper or exam has been handed back. If you feel that I missed an important point that you made or there is some other problem with your grade, after 24 hours you may submit a grade appeal. Your appeal should be a typed argument for why your grade should be changed. It should be no longer than 1 page. You will need to hand the appeal and the original paper or exam back into me for review. I will then ask you to schedule a time to meet or come in during office hours to discuss the appeal. Appealing the grade does not mean that I will automatically increase your grade.

Table 2: Grade Distribution

A	100 – 93
A–	92–90
B+	89–87
B	86–83
B–	82–80
C+	79–77
C	76–73
C–	72–70
D	69–60
F	59 and below

Other Important Policies

Academic Integrity. Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in College of Wooster courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair

advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own, can result in disciplinary action. The complete policy can be found at: http://www.wooster.edu/home/Academic_Policies.php. The College policy suggests that a student will not give, offer, or receive aid other than that specifically allowed by the professor on any course work or examination; knowingly represent the work of others, including materials from electronic sources, as his/her own; falsify data; submit an assignment produced for a course to a second course without the authorization of all the instructors involved; deny other students access to necessary documents/materials by stealing, misplacing or destroying those materials; copying or paraphrasing from any source without proper citation, going beyond what is allowed in a group project, fabricating excuses and lying in connection with your academic work, give false reasoning to a faculty member or Dean when requesting an exam change or an extension on a paper/project. You should cite your sources to avoid plagiarizing ideas and text. Particular attention should be directed to the appropriate use of materials available on-line through the Internet. It is important that you read and understand the ethical use of information (<http://library.wooster.edu/services/instruction/ethics/ethics.php>). Whether intentional or not, improper use of materials can be considered a violation of academic honesty. Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty will be assigned a penalty up to and including an "F" or "N" for the course.

Policy on Harassment. The College of Wooster has a harassment policy which is detailed in the Handbook of Selected College Policies. According to this policy, harassment of both employees and students based upon race, color, creed, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, or political affiliation will not be tolerated. Further, the policy suggests that "Any behavior, whether verbal or physical, which exhibits a negative animus toward any person on account of a protected characteristic may be considered illegal harassment."

Title IX. The College of Wooster and its faculty are committed to ensuring a safe and productive educational environment for all students. In order to meet this commitment and to comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and guidance from the Office for Civil Rights, the College has developed policies and procedures which prohibit discrimination, sexual harassment/misconduct, and retaliation. Any member of the College community (faculty, staff, students, visitors, and third party vendors) who believes that they have been a victim of sexual harassment/misconduct, domestic violence, dating violence, bullying, cyber-bullying, stalking and/or gender-based discrimination is encouraged to file a report with the College's Title IX Coordinator (Angela Johnston - ajohnston@wooster.edu; 330-263-2141). Reports can be filed in person, via email, or online at <http://wooster.edu/offices/discrimination/sexual/>. In order to ensure student safety and address the well-being of students, the College requires all employees, including faculty members, to report incidents of sexual and gender-based violence shared with them by students to the College's Title IX Coordinator. Exceptions are situations where students are unlikely to expect that a disclosure would trigger a reporting obligation such as in a class writing

assignment. A faculty member reporting to the Title IX Coordinator does NOT mean that the student will be obligated to participate in any formal proceedings; that decision remains at the discretion of the student unless the information indicates that one or more students are at risk of further harassment. Information regarding the Colleges non-discrimination policy (including bias-related harassment), sexual assault/sexual misconduct, Title IX, and filing a report can be found at <http://wooster.edu/offices/discrimination/>.

Resources

Academic Resources. The College of Woosters Learning Center offers services designed to help students improve their overall academic performance and to assist them in achieving their academic goals. You can go to the Learning Center for help with things like time management, improving your test preparation skills, or to improve your reading skills. The office is also designated with the responsibility for determining reasonable accommodation according to the Americans with Disabilities Act and for maintaining confidential records documenting disabilities. Please contact them if you have a disability that may affect your ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. The Learning Center is located in the Rubbermaid Student Services Building at 554 E. University Avenue. Call -2595 on campus to schedule an appointment. The complete College policy regarding student disabilities is at: http://www.wooster.edu/Learning_Center/handbook/full_manual.pdf.

The Writing Center. I encourage all students to take advantage of the campus Writing Center. You can get on-on-one guidance, resources and support with regard to your writing skills. The Writing Center is located on level 1 of the Andrews Library. You can call them at extension 2205, e-mail them at writing_center@wooster.edu, or visit their website at www.wooster.edu/writing_center.

Course Outline¹

Week 1: Introduction to Course and Overview

- Thursday, August 24th
 - Syllabus

Week 2: The Role of Participation in Democracy

- Tuesday, August 29th
 - Pateman, Carole. 1976. *Participation and Democratic Theory* Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1 and 2.

¹Any changes to this schedule will be announced verbally in class. It is the student's responsibility to note changes and adhere to the new schedule.

- Thursday, August 31st
 - Teorell, Jan. 2006. “Political participation and three theories of democracy: A research inventory and agenda.” *European Journal of Political Research* 45 (5):787-810

Week 3: What does it mean to be a “good citizen”?

- Tuesday, September 5th
 - Dalton, Russel J. 2016. *The Good Citizen How Younger Generation is Reshaping American Politics*. CQ Press. Chapters 1-3.
- Thursday, September 7th
 - Rimmerman, Graig A. 2011. *The New Citizenship* Westview Press. Chapters 1 and 4.

<p>Researching Your World 1: Citizenship among Your Generation Due Today</p>
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Week 4: What does it mean to be a “good citizen”? Critics and Resistance.

- Tuesday, September 12th
 - Fowler, James. 2008. “The Colbert Bump in Campaign Donations: More Truthful than Truthy” *PS: Political Science & Politics*. 41: 533-539
 - Watch: Colbert at the White House Press Corps dinner.
- Thursday, September 14th Should we always follow the law?
 - Martin Luther King, Letter from a Birmingham Jail.
 - Solomon E. Asch, “Opinions and Social Pressure.” *Scientific American*, 1955.
 - Thomas Blass. 1999. “The Milgram Paradigm After 35 Years: Some Things We Now Know About Obedience to Authority.” *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 29(5):955-978.

Week 5: Knowledge about Politics

- Tuesday, September 19th
 - Delli Carpini, Micheal X. and Scott Keeter. 1997. *What Americans Know About Politics and Why it Matters*. Yale University Press. Chapters 1 and 2.
 - <http://www.people-press.org/2015/04/28/what-the-public-knows-in-pictures-words-maps-and-graphs/>

- Thursday, September 21st

- Nyhan, Brendan and Jason Reifler. 2010 “When Corrections Fail: The Persistence of Political Misperceptions” *Political Behavior* 32(2): 303-330.
- Hidden Brain: When It comes to Vaccines, Science Can Run Into a Brick Wall [http:// www.npr.org/2014/03/04/285580969/when-it-comes-to-vaccines-science-can-run-into-a-brick-wall](http://www.npr.org/2014/03/04/285580969/when-it-comes-to-vaccines-science-can-run-into-a-brick-wall) **BB**
- Writing Assignment 1 Due.

Writing Assignment 1 Due Today

Week 6: Political Tolerance and Trust

- Tuesday, September 26th

- Sullivan, Marcus, Feldman and Piereson, 1981 “The Sources of Political Tolerance: A Multivariate Analysis.” *The American Political Science Review*
- Charles M. Judd, and Bernadette Park. 2009. “Diverging Ideological Viewpoints on Pathways to More Harmonious Intergroup Relations” in *The Political Psychology of Democratic Citizenship* ed. Borgida, Federico and Sullivan. p207-227
- Donald P. Green, and Janelle S. Wong. 2009. “Tolerance and the Contact Hypothesis: A Field Experiment” in *The Political Psychology of Democratic Citizenship* ed. Borgida, Federico and Sullivan. p 228-246

- Thursday, September 28th

- Chanley, Virginia, Thomas J. Rudolph, and Wendy M. Rahn. 2000. “The Origins and Consequences of Public Trust in Government: A Time Series Analysis.” *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 64(3): 973-988.
- Albertson, Bethany and Shana Kushner Gardarian. 2015. *Anxious Politics: Democratic Citizenship in a Threatening World*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 4.
- Beyond Distrust: How Americans View Their Government <http://www.people-press.org/2015/11/23/beyond-distrust-how-americans-view-their-government/>

Week 7:

- Tuesday, October 3rd
 - Wrapping Up and Review
- Thursday, October 5th
 - Exam 1

Week 8: Fall Break

Week 9: Political Participation: Levels and Causes

- Tuesday, October 17th
 - Chapters 2 and 3 Voice and Equality

Researching Your World 2a: Levels of Participation Bring. *Computers to class.*

- Thursday, October 19th
 - Henry E. Brady; Sidney Verba; Kay Lehman Schlozman. 1995. “Beyond SES: A Resource Model of Political Participation” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 89(2): 271-294.

Researching Your World 2b: Presentations.

Week 10: Campaigns, Money, and Mobilization

- Tuesday, October 24th
 - Movie: Citizen Koch
- Thursday, October 26th
 - Rosenstone, Steven J. and John Mark Hansen. 1993. *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America* chapter 6
 - Gerber, Alan S. and Donald P. Green. 2000. “The Effects of Canvassing, Telephone Calls, and Direct Mail on Voter Turnout: A Field Experiment.” *American Political Science Review* 94 (3): 653-663.

Week 11: Civic Organizations and Recruitment to Politics

- Tuesday, October 31st
 - Putnum, Robert. 2000. *Bowling Alone*, Chapter 1
 - Skocpol, Theda. 1999. “How Americans Became Civic” in *Civic Engagement in American Democracy* ed Theda Skocpol and Morris P Fiorina. Brookings Institute: Washington DC.
- Thursday, November 2nd
 - Calhoun-Brown, A. 1996. “African American churches and political mobilization: The psychological impact of organizational resources.” *The Journal of Politics* 58(4), 935-953.

Researching Your World: Civic Health in Wooster Due Today

Week 12: Social Movements, Collective Action, and Identity

- Tuesday, November 7th
 - “Will Black Lives Matter be a Movement that Persuades?” <http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/09/will-black-lives-matter-be-a-movementthat-persuades/407017/>
 - “The Failure of Occupy Wall Street” http://www.huffingtonpost.com/andy-ostroy/the-failure-of-occupy-wal_b_1558787.html
 - Simon, Bernd, Michael Loewy, Stefan Stuermer, Ulrike Weber, Peter Freytag, Corinna Habig, Claudia Kampmeier, and Peter Spahlinger. 1998. “Collective Identification and Social Movement Participation.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 74:646-658.
 - Langner, Carrie, Jill S. Greenlee and Grace Deason. “Identity and Activism in the Era of Politicized Motherhood.” In *Mothers and Others: The Impact of Family Life on Politics*. Ed. Melanee Thomas and Amanda Bittner. University of British Columbia Press, 2017 (forthcoming)

- Thursday, November 9th

- Wright, Stephen C., Donald M. Taylor, and Fathali M. Moghaddam. 1990. “Responding to Membership in a Disadvantaged Group: From Acceptance to Collective Protest.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 58(6):994-1003.
- Green, Donald Philip; Jonathan A. Cowden. 1992. “Who Protests: Self-Interest and White Opposition to Busing” *The Journal of Politics* 54(2): 471-496.
- “Three Surprising Facts about the Protestors at the Republican National Convention” by Shan-Jan Sarah Liu, Patricia Posey, and Kevin Reuning
- “Who were the Protestors at the Democratic National Convention this week?” by Shan-Jan Sarah Liu, Patricia Posey, and Kevin Reuning

Week 13: Inequality in Politics

- Tuesday, November 14th

- Verba, Sidney. 2003. “Would the Dream of Political Equality Turn Out to Be a Nightmare?” *Perspectives on Politics* 1(4):663-680.
- Schlozman, Kay Lehman, Sidney Verba, and Henry Brady. 2012. *The Unheavenly Chorus: Unequal Political Voice and the Broken Promise of American Democracy* Chapter 5

- Thursday, November 16th

- Schlozman, Kay Lehman, Sidney Verba, and Henry Brady. 2012. *The Unheavenly Chorus: Unequal Political Voice and the Broken Promise of American Democracy* Chapter 6
- Schlozman, Kay Lehman, Sidney Verba and Henry Brady. 2010. “Weapon of the Strong? Participatory Inequality and the Internet.” *Perspectives on Politics* 8(2): 487-509

Week 14: Legal Constraints? Voter ID Laws

- Tuesday, November 21st
 - Berinsky, A. J. 2005. “The perverse consequences of electoral reform in the United States.” *American Politics Research*, 33(4), 471-491.
 - Voter Id Laws
 - * Background <http://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/voter-id.aspx>
 - * ACLU position <https://www.aclu.org/other/oppose-voter-id-legislation-fact-sheet>
 - * Impact https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/wp/2017/05/30/do-voter-id-laws-help-or-hurt-voter-turnout/?utm_term=.3c5a40e2f191
- Thursday, November 23rd Thanksgiving

Week 15: Running for Elected Office

- Tuesday, November 28th
 - Shames, Shauna L. 2017. *Out and Running*. New York University Press. Chapters 2 & 5.
- Thursday, November 30th
 - Shames, Shauna L. 2017. *Out and Running*. New York University Press. Chapters 6 & 7.

Researching Your World 4: What about Running for Office Due Today

Week 16:

- Tuesday, December 5th
 - Mettler, Suzanne and Joe Soss. 2004. “The Consequences of Public Policy for Democratic Citizenship: Bridging Policy Studies and Mass Politics.” *Perspectives on Politics* 2(1): 55-73.

Writing Assignment 2 Due Today

- Thursday, December 7th
 - Soss, Joe. 1999. “Lessons of Welfare: Policy Design, Political Learning, and Political Action.” *American Political Science Review* 93(2): 363-380.