

Political Science 496 – Political Participation
Professor Jake Bowers

Winter 2005

<http://www.umich.edu/~jwbowers/ps496.html>

10-12pm, Wednesdays, 3359 Mason Hall

This course offers students a chance to grapple with questions about the ways in which political participation of various kinds is good (or bad) for individuals and society and to learn about the theories that are commonly used to explain why people get involved in politics.

The required books are at Shaman Drum bookstore. Any reading that is not marked with an asterisk is available online (accessible through mirlyn). The required books are:

Becker, Howard S. 1986. *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article*. University of Chicago Press.

Green, Donald and Alan Gerber. 2004. *Get Out The Vote!* Brookings Institution Press.

McAdam, Doug, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly. 2001. *The Dynamics of Contention*. Cambridge University Press.

Goals and Expectations

One goal of this course is to read, think, and talk about political participation. There is not enough time to cover everything, but the readings I have chosen ought to provide a good introduction to the different ways that people have tried to understand political participation.

Quizzes and Reading

Nearly every class, I will hand out a quiz with a couple of questions about the readings. Everyone I know (professors and students) needs some incentives to get work done on time. These quizzes are not meant to be stressful, but they are meant to provide you with an incentive to do the readings.

The reading burden in this class will be relatively light compared to other seminars in the Political Science department. The point of assigning so little reading is to make sure that you can read it all and that you have a chance to think and talk about the readings before class each week. Another benefit of having less reading is to enable you to work on your papers — the second goal of this course.

Research Papers

As seniors, I assume that you have come to this course because there is something in particular about political participation that interests you. This course is an opportunity for you to pursue those interests in the form of a research paper. Some of you may publish later revisions of your papers. Or, some of you may use it as a writing sample for future work or school. This paper is not an exercise, but a real piece of scholarly work about something you care about.

I am also dedicating each of the last four class sessions to workshops for your papers. You will be required to present a draft of your paper to the class during this workshop, and everyone in the class will be required to provide written comments and constructive criticism to the presenters. I will grade the comments, and I will also read, grade and comment on the drafts.

Grades

Final grades will be based 60% on the paper and 40% on seminar participation. Part of the grade for the paper will be based on the quality of the draft that you present. The proportion of the paper grade based on the draft will vary, depending on when you present it. Earlier presenters, with less time to work on their drafts, will have less of their paper grade determined by their draft. Later presenters will have more. The precise breakdown will be: 15% of the paper grade for those who present their papers at the first workshop, 20% of the paper grade for second workshop, 25% for the third workshop, and 30% for the fourth workshop.¹

Quality seminar participation does not mean “talking a lot.” It includes turning in assignments on time; thinking and caring about the material and expressing your thoughts respectfully and succinctly in class. It also means doing well on quizzes and providing excellent and constructive written comments on the drafts of your colleagues’ work.

Extensions and Incompletes

I am willing to accommodate reasonable requests for extensions. It is, however, *your* responsibility to let me know about these kinds of conflicts *well in advance*. Most of the time I will require written confirmation of such conflicts and problems. This means that I will not grant extensions if you ask for them within 24 hours of the deadline. The university policy on the grade of “incomplete” will be followed in this course. It is not in your interest to have an incomplete.

Office Hours

I will be in 6648 Haven Hall (phone: 615-9117) for Office Hours from 2 to 4pm on Wednesdays. At most other times, I’ll be in my office in the Center for Political Studies (phone: 615-7276).

Schedule

Jan 5 — Introduction & Is Participation a Good Thing? Part 1

Notes Introduction to the course.

In class read and discuss:

Constant, Benjamin. 1819. “The Liberty of the Ancients Compared with that of the Moderns.” in *Political Writings*

Jan 12 — Is Participation a Good Thing? Part 2

Reading *Pateman, Carol. 1970. *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Chapters 1-2.

Madison, James. 1787. “Federalist 10: The Same Subject Continued: The Union as a Safeguard Against Domestic Faction and Insurrection.” in *The Federalist Papers*
<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/federal/fed.htm>

*Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee. 1954. *Voting*. Chapter 14

Becker, Chapter 8.

Notes Draft paper topics due (minimum 10 appropriate scholarly citations)

Jan 19 — Is Participation a Good Thing? Part 3

Reading *Putnam, Robert D. 2000. *Bowling alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community.*, Chapters 1,2,15-22.

*Fiorina, Morris P. 1999. “Extreme Voices: A Dark Side of Civic Engagement.” In *Civic Engagement in American Democracy*, ed. Theda Skocpol and Morris P. Fiorina. pp. 395-425.

Notes Final paper topics due (minimum 20 appropriate scholarly citations).

Draft paper production plans due.

¹In calculating the grade based on the quizzes, I’ll drop your lowest score. We all have bad days sometimes.

Jan 26 — Why Participate? Selective Incentives and Free Riding

Reading *Olson, Mancur. *The Logic of Collective Action*. Chap 1-3.

Becker, Chapter 1

Notes Final paper production plans due. Sign up for Workshop Date.

Feb 2 — Why Participate? The Bystander Effect and Helping Behavior

Reading *Darley and Latane. “Bystander intervention in emergencies: Diffusion of responsibility.” 1968, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 8, 377-383.

*Darley and Latane. “Group inhibition of bystander intervention in emergencies.” 1968, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 10, 215-221.

*Caporeal, Dawes, Orbell, and van de Kragt. 1989. “Selfishness examined: Cooperation in the Absence of Egoistic Incentives.” *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 12, pp. 683-739.

Becker, Chapter 2

Notes Paper production report #1 due.

Feb 9 — Participation and Social Movements

Reading McAdam, Tarrow, Tilly. Chap 1-6, 10

Becker, Chapter 3

Notes Bring model paper to class. Be prepared to talk about it.

Feb 16 — Social Movements and Social Psychology

Reading *Ferree, Myra. “The Political Context of Rationality: Rational Choice Theory and Resource Mobilization” in *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*

*Gamson, William. “The Social Psychology of Collective Action.” in *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*

Klandermans, Bert. 1984. “Mobilization and Participation: Social-Psychological Expansions of Resource Mobilization Theory.” *American Sociological Review*.

Klandermans, Bert and Dirk Oegema. 1987. “Potentials, Networks, Motivations and Barriers: Steps Towards Participation in Social Movements.” *American Sociological Review*.

Becker, Chapter 4

Feb 23 — How to Get Out The Vote

Reading Green and Gerber.

Notes Paper production report #2 due.

March 2 — No Class — Spring Break

March 9 — The Private Roots of Public Action

Reading Burns, Scholzman and Verba. *The Private Roots of Public Action*. Chap 1, 3-5, 13-14

Becker, Chapter 9

Notes Paper production report #3 due.

March 16 — Participation in Context

Reading *Oliver. *Democracy in Suburbia*. Chapter 4.

*Burns and Kinder. 2003. “Conviction and its Consequences”

Notes Drafts for first paper workshop due to class by 4pm, Friday, March 18.

March 23 — Workshop 1

Melissa Seaman
Shuba Chakraborty

Notes First Paper Workshop. Comments on first round of drafts due in class.

Drafts for second paper workshop due to class by 4pm, Friday, March 25.

March 30 — Workshop 2

Jeffrey Chen
Kate Gallagher
Abby Slovin
Lauren Szczerba
Charles Hwang

Notes Second Paper Workshop. Comments on second round of drafts due in class.

Drafts for third paper workshop due to class by 4pm, Friday, April 1.

April 6 — Workshop 3

Holly Barocio
Natasha Cervi
Amy Schaldenbrand
Irene Chung
Jay Huerta

Notes Third Paper Workshop. Comments on third round of drafts due in class.

Drafts for fourth paper workshop due to class by 4pm, Friday, April 8.

April 13 — Workshop 4

Ashley Atwater
Ryan Ladley
Bill Duryea

Notes Fourth Paper Workshop. Comments on fourth round of drafts due in class.

April 20 — No Class — Final Papers Due