

INST 120: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND POLITICAL LIFE

Professor: Marcus E. Green
Office: Faculty Towers
Office Hours: M 11:30-12:30 | T 11:00-12:00
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Quarter: Autumn 2009 | Sep 14-Nov 25
Section #: 01
Schedule #: 40240
Class Time: TR 9:00-10:50
Location: Roush Hall 117
Website: access through Blackboard

Course Description

This class will focus on integrating the information, skills, and concepts necessary to provide each student with the tools to engage actively in the public sphere and political life from the local to the global level. While we often think of voting as the primary way we can become involved in politics, this course will investigate what it means to be a citizen and why politics seems to be part of our human nature. Intrinsic to our role as citizens is active participation which will take the form of service-learning in this course.

Course Objectives and Learning Goals

1. To develop a framework for becoming involved in social and political issues.
 2. To develop an understanding of citizenship and civic engagement.
 3. To understand the relationship between the US and the rest of the world
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Texts for Course

Required

1. Eric Greenberg and Karl Weber, *Generation We: How Millennial Youth are Taking Over America And Changing Our World Forever* (Pachatusan,2008). ISBN: 0982093101
2. Rick Shenkman, *Just How Stupid Are We?: Facing the Truth About the American Voter*. (Basic Books, 2008). ISBN: 0465014933
3. Kurt Finsterbusch, *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Social Issues*, Expanded, 15th edition, (McGraw-Hill/Dushkin, 2009). ISBN: 0078127505.

Supplementary Texts

1. Glenna S. Jackson and Andrew P. Mills, *Otterbein College Reader*. ISBN: 0697706397.
 2. Ann Pancake, *Strange as This Weather Has Been: A Novel*.
 3. Andrea A. Lunsford, *The Everyday Writer*, 4th edition. ISBN: 0312594577
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Grade Scale

The grading system for this course follows Otterbein College's four-point grade scale found in the College Catalog (<http://catalog.otterbein.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=213#Grading>). Grades for assignments and final grade averages will follow the Grade Scale in first column in the table below. This Grade Scale will be used to determine the final Letter Grade.

Grade Scale	Letter Grade	Grade Points	Description
3.85 – 4.00	A	4.0	Exceptional
3.7 – 3.84	A-	3.7	Excellent
3.3 – 3.69	B+	3.3	Above Average
3.0 – 3.29	B	3.0	Above Average
2.7 – 2.99	B-	2.7	Above Average
2.3 – 2.69	C+	2.3	Average
2.0 – 2.29	C	2.0	Average
1.7 – 1.99	C-	1.7	Below Average
1.3 – 1.69	D+	1.3	Below Average
1.0 – 1.29	D	1.0	Below Average
0.0 – 0.99	F	0.0	Failure

Assignments & Grading Criteria

Essays

Students are expected to write three essays for this course, each worth 20% of the final grade. There are no exams. Each essay is intended to address particular readings, issues, and concepts covered in a particular period. The essay assignments are designed for you to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of the material and issues under review and to provide a critical analysis of them. “Critical analysis” does *not* mean a dismissal of particular ideas or concepts. Rather, it entails a critical investigation of a set of ideas or issues in order to reveal the limits, flaws, and/or problems related to them. I will provide a list of recommended questions and detailed instructions for each essay assignment at least two weeks prior to the due date.

Required Cultural Events & Response Papers

As part of the Integrative Studies curriculum, this course requires that you attend a few cultural events on campus during the quarter. In particular, this term you will need to attend two such events and write a 1-2 paged, typed response paper for each event. Please note, it is your responsibility to attend two events and to turn in your response papers. Although hopefully you will enjoy going to these events, they are required and the response papers will be graded.

Events

- you need to attend cultural events which means choosing from things like special lectures, music performances, art exhibits, theater events, poetry readings, etc. A good place to learn about upcoming events is the on-line Otterbein College calendar that includes events color coded for INST curriculum related events.
- you may not count an event which is scheduled into one of your regular classes or which you are required to attend for another class.

Response Papers

- your response papers should be just that—your thoughts and observations on what you see and experience at this event. Although I want to hear what you thought about the event, your paper should be well written.
- you are required to turn in your responses in a timely manner. This means that these papers are due in class exactly one week after the event you attended (for example, you go to a performance on a Monday night, your paper would be due in class the following Monday). Response papers turned in later than what is described above will not be accepted.

- The “free day” late policy does not apply to Event Response Papers.

Participation Grade

Students are graded on class participation. In addition to the formal essay requirements, successful achievement of course objectives requires active class participation, which is an important and valuable aspect of the learning experience. Therefore, 20% of the final course grade is determined by class participation. This means that I expect you to contribute and participate in class discussions. You will only receive an acceptable grade for class participation if you attend class and participate in discussion. You should come to class prepared to discuss particular issues, topics, and readings.

To facilitate discussion, I will distribute discussion questions based upon the readings. Students are expected to answer particular questions in class. Your participation grade will be determined by the quality and quantity of your participation performance.

Participation Grade Breakdown

Participation Points	Grade
12	4.0
11	3.8
10	3.7
9	3.3
8	3.0
7	2.7
6	2.3
5	2.0
4	1.7
3	1.3
2	1.0
1	0.7
0	0.0

Participation grades will be determined by the quality and quantity of student performance. For each discussion question a student successfully answers, the student will receive one point. At the end of the semester, students’ participation grades will be calculated based upon their total raw participation points following the scale to the left. For instance, a student with 11 participation points, will receive a grade of 3.8 for participation.

Assignments & the Determination of Final Grade

Assignments	Date	Points	Grades
Essay 1 (3 - 4 pages)	Oct. 15	4	
Essay 2 (3 - 4 pages)	Nov. 3	4	
Essay 3 (3 - 4 pages)	TBA	4	
Two Response Papers (1-2 pp each)	varies	4	
Participation	n/a	4	
Total Possible Points		20	
Average		4	

Final Grade = average of assignments & participation

Calculation of Final Grade

The calculation of the final grade for the course is determined by the average of the three essay assignment grades, the two event response papers, and the class participation grade. The final grade recorded for the course follows the grade scale above. The final grade average must meet the minimum threshold of the grade scale for each corresponding grade. For example, to receive an A- in the course, a student’s final grade average must be 3.7 or above. In the case of a marginal final grade within .05 of a point, I will round up. For instance, if a student’s final grade average is 3.66, I will record the final grade as an A-, but a final grade average of 3.60 will be recorded as a B+.

Course Policies

Course Format

Class meetings will be divided between lectures and directed class discussions. The lectures are designed to provide students with a framework of meaning through which they are better able to understand and discuss the texts. Class discussions will be based upon readings from the required texts. The discussions shall provide students with a forum in which they can discuss and debate the key concepts of the texts under review with their classmates and the instructor.

Lectures and Readings

Students are responsible for knowing the material covered in the assigned readings and the material covered in lectures. Lectures will address information found in the readings as well as information not found in the readings. I do not distribute my lecture notes to students. Therefore, students are encouraged to attend class and to take notes.

Attendance

Attendance is required. You are permitted up to 3 absences without penalty. Each absence after your third will result in a penalty of .25 points to your final grade. A student missing 6 classes automatically fails the course. Your 3 absences include all university excused absences; if you will be required to miss more than 3 classes for university approved reasons, please see me to make arrangements. Sickness short of hospitalization or incapacitation does not constitute grounds for an excused absence in excess of the 3 permitted. I may make exceptions for truly unusual and unanticipated events, but such arrangements must be discussed with me. Colds, flus, hangovers, broken bones, dental work, doctors appointments, changes in work schedules, etc. do not count as either unusual or unanticipated; you are permitted an occasional absence to deal with such events.

Tardiness

Tardiness will be factored into your participation grade. If you are regularly late to class, I reserve the right to reduce your participation grade by .25 for each instance.

Classroom Environment

This course is designed to challenge your written and verbal communicative skills, which are, in my view, not only necessary to the learning process but vital to the development of democratic culture and citizenship. Just like writing, the public exchange of ideas requires skill. It requires a level of confidence to speak in front of others and a level of maturity and respect to listen to others. It can be said that this course is Socratic in the sense that our discussions are similar to workshops in which we workout different thoughts and ideas in coordination with one another. Because of this, I will work to make the classroom environment respectful and comfortable for all, and I expect you to do the same.

Blackboard

I will distribute course materials, including notes and outlines, on Blackboard. Therefore, it is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with Blackboard and to login periodically for course updates.

Submitting Essays

I require students to submit a hard copy of each paper and to submit an electronic copy through Blackboard. Make a copy of each paper before you turn it in. It is the responsibility of students to keep duplicate copies of their papers.

Late Essays (and “free days”)

I grant each student a five day extension for the whole term on the first two assigned essays. This means that you can turn a paper in five days late and still receive full credit. You can use the five days at different times and for different essays. For example, if you turn-in the first essay three days late, you will receive full credit, but you will then only have two extension days left for the rest of the term. After your five days are up, I will deduct .5 points (out of 4) each day the paper is late. If you plan to use any “free days,” you do not need to tell me; just submit a hard copy and an electronic copy of the paper when you are finished. Please note that I only count weekdays as “free days,” meaning weekend days are not counted. This is due to the fact that I do not accept emailed papers. I will consider papers “turned in” when I receive the hardcopy, not the electronic copy. The third essay cannot be turned in late.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

Otterbein policies regarding academic integrity will be strictly enforced. All submitted work must be your own, and it is the responsibility of all students to understand the methods of proper citation and to apply those methods in all written assignments. I will investigate indications of copied or plagiarized work, and I reserve the right to administer an oral exam and to question the student, if I suspect a student has submitted work that may be plagiarized.

According to the Otterbein Campus Life Handbook, “any use of the words or ideas of someone else as though they were the student's own words, constitutes plagiarism. This definition applies to the use of both printed and unprinted sources, including the work of other students or faculty.” (See: http://www.otterbein.edu/CLH/code_of_conduct_policies.asp#sec_4).

Plagiarism occurs when a writer reproduces the words of another author without acknowledgment or when a writer paraphrases the ideas or arguments of another author in such away as to lead the reader to believe that the ideas or arguments originated with the writer. Plagiarism can be intentional or unintentional. According to Andrea A. Lunsford in *The Everyday Writer* (4th ed): “If your paraphrase is too close to the wording or sentence structure of a source (even if you identify the source); if you do not identify the source of a quotation (even if you include the quotation marks); or if you fail to indicate clearly the source of an idea that you obviously did not come up with on your own, you may be accused of plagiarism even if your intent was not to plagiarize” (p. 191).

I will report violations of academic dishonesty to the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. According to Otterbein policy, students who violate standards of academic integrity are subject to disciplinary sanctions, which include the “failure on the given assignment or a failing grade for the course.”

Disability Accommodation

If you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, you should contact me to arrange an appointment as soon as possible. At the appointment we can discuss the course format, anticipate your needs and explore potential accommodations. I rely on the Disability

Services Coordinator for assistance in verifying the need for accommodations and developing strategies. If you have not previously contacted the Disability Services Coordinator (x1618 or LMonaghan@otterbein.edu), I encourage you to do so.

Email

Outside of my office hours, I can be reached via email, and I will usually respond within 24 hours. Note: In the subject, include the course number (INST 120), and in the body of the message, please include your first and last name.

Electronic Devices

Recording Lectures: In accordance with federal regulations, students may not make audio recordings of class lectures without the prior written consent of the instructor. Students who have registered and documented disabilities may make audio recordings with the consent of the instructor.

Cell Phones & iPods: Please turn off cell phone ringers during class, no texting, and no iPod listening in class.

Drop Dates & Withdrawal Policy

Students who wish to drop the course may do so using the regular procedures. It is not the responsibility of the professor to drop students from the course.

- Last day to drop classes with no grade recorded on transcript: October 19, 2009
- Last day to drop with “W” on transcript: November 2, 2009

Class Schedule and Readings. This is a tentative schedule and may change with notice.

Week	Date	Topic/Reading	Assignment Due Dates
Week 1	Tue Sep 15 Thu Sep 17	Introduction to the course 1. Andrew P. Mills, "What's So Good About a College Education?" in Otterbein Reader, pp. 2-12. 2. Michael Lind, "Why the Liberal Arts Still Matter" (handout).	
Week 2	Tue Sep 22 Thu Sep 24	<i>Generation We</i>	
Week 3	Tue Sep 29 Thu Oct 1	<i>Generation We</i>	
Week 4	Tue Oct 6 Thu Oct 8	<i>Generation We</i>	
Week 5	Tue Oct 13 Thu Oct 15	<i>Just How Stupid Are We?</i>	Essay 1 due Thu, Oct. 15
Week 6	Tue Oct 20 Thu Oct 22	<i>Just How Stupid Are We?</i>	
Week 7	Tue Oct 27 Thu Oct 29	<i>Just How Stupid Are We?</i> <i>Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Social Issues</i>	
Week 8	Tue Nov 3 Thu Nov 5	<i>Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Social Issues</i> No class	Essay 2 due Tue, Nov. 3 No class Nov 5
Week 9	Tue Nov 10 Thu Nov 12	<i>Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Social Issues</i>	
Week 10	Tue Nov 17 Thu Nov 19	<i>Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Social Issues</i>	
Week 11	Mon Nov 23 Tues Nov 24 Wed Nov 25	Exam Week	Essay 3 Due Date TBA