

PSCI 2267; Fall 2021
T/Th: 11:10am-12:25pm
Professor: Allison Anoll
allison.p.anoll@vanderbilt.edu
Anoll OHs: M 12:30-2:30pm
Anoll Office: Commons 365

TA: Alex Lawhorne
alexander.f.lawhorne@vanderbilt.edu
Lawhorne OHs: Tue 1:30-3:30pm
Lawhorne Office: Commons 318

PARTICIPATION and POLITICAL REPRESENTATION in AMERICA

Department of Political Science
Vanderbilt University

Course Description

Political pundits often bemoan low turnout rates in the United States, lament inequalities in campaign giving, and celebrate historical mass movements and protests. But scholars of political science debate among themselves the degree to which the actions of everyday people truly influence the outcomes of American politics. Some worry citizens are simply too uninformed to engage meaningfully in democratic governance; others suggest political participation is itself the source of inequalities in policy outcomes; still others highlight how democratic institutions are surprisingly unresponsive to citizen demands.

In this class, we will wade into these debates, seeking to understand if and how members of a polity are able to successfully uphold the standards of representative democracy. Our course includes four units, each assessing a different component of the participatory process. Within each unit we will explore how representative democracy is supposed to work in theory, how it works in practice according to empirical political scientists, what can be done to change the current reality, if anything, and apply our newly acquired knowledge to analyze specific policy cases. Throughout, students will be asked to reflect on their role as members of a democratic polity and build a set of tools to engage in political participation effectively. Collectively, we will assess the health of America's democracy – its past, present, and possibilities – and determine what is required from the mass public if they are to govern themselves.

Learning Goals, Objectives, and Assessments

The goal of this class is to expose students to major theoretical debates about representative democracy, with a special focus on political participation, to facilitate their effective engagement as members of the democratic polity down the line. We will use “big questions” to learn about how political participation and representation works, then apply these principles to real-life issues in order to build participatory skills and frameworks that students can apply continually in the future.

To this end, students will be able to:

- *Content Acquisition.* Describe, organize, and connect key questions and concepts in the study of American political participation and representation.
- *Analytical Growth.* Develop and define one's sense of what it means to be part of a (democratic) polity; defend this definition by citing theoretical and empirical concepts.
- *Application.* Apply content knowledge to effectively participate in politics.

Course assignments are designed to assess your mastery of these learning objectives overtime. The first type of assignment, *concept maps*, assess your content acquisition. The second type of assignment, the *participatory act project*, assesses your analytical growth and ability to apply course material to real-world politics.

1. *Concept Maps. (Content Acquisition) 50%*

At the conclusion of Unit 1, 2, and 3 you are required to develop and bring to class a concept map for the unit. These concept maps can be organized in many ways - we'll discuss examples in class - but all should answer the unit question by imposing a theoretical structure on the unit's material that visually highlights key ideas and connects concepts, showing where ideas challenge or complement each other. These maps will contribute increasingly to your grade as the semester progresses, reflecting the idea that I intend for you to practice, receive feedback from the instructor, integrate that feedback into your next map, and through this process, improve in your map-making skills as the course progresses. A rubric, more details, and examples are available on Brightspace.

Unit 1 map = 12%; Unit 2 map = 17%; Unit 3 map = 21%

2. *Participatory Act Project. (Analytical Growth & Application) 50%*

Over three assignments, you will learn about an issue of your choosing, plan a participatory act designed to influence law on that issue, and complete a participatory act, reflecting on the experience. Throughout, you will be asked to apply course knowledge to defend your process and choices, developing your analytical skills in the application of our materials to a real-world setting. Details on each part of the assignment, including a rubric, is available on Brightspace. Again, each part of the assignment is worth progressively more, reflecting my expectation that you will practice, receive feedback, incorporate that feedback, and try again:

- Part 1, 12%. Learn about a political issue using a process you develop and defend
- Part 2, 17%. Plan a participatory act centered around your issue and explain its efficacy
- Part 3, 21%: Complete your participatory act and reflect on the process

University and Course Policies

Attendance.

I will not take attendance after the first few days of class, but it will be difficult for you to be successful in this course without regularly attending. Class time is when we consider how the disparate assigned readings fit together to answer "big questions" and much of our content comes up in discussion. With that said, you should not attend class if you are sick and no one with symptoms related to COVID-19 should come to class. Further, you are adults and should use your discretion regarding other (occasional) obligations that might arise around family, work, etc. I will make slides available to individual students upon request (they will not be regularly available on Brightspace) and you can work with your classmates to get missed notes. As a general rule: missing class more than once or twice will likely begin to affect your performance on assignments. If extenuating circumstances produce longer absences, reach out directly to Prof. Anoll to discuss accommodations.

Academic Honesty.

This course will follow Vanderbilt's high standards of academic honesty, available in detail in the University's Student Handbook: https://www.vanderbilt.edu/student_handbook/the-honor-system/

Reading and Materials.

You are not required to buy any books for this course. All materials will be available on Brightspace. You are, however, expected to print, read, and annotate all the assigned reading before each class and bring hardcopies on the assigned days. This interaction with the material is central to this course's construction and to your success. Assignments are designed to assess not only how well you know the material we cover, but how well you build your own ideas from the course content. And, we often work with readings directly in class. As a result, performing at an "A" level is possible only if you read the materials and come prepared to interact with it.

Technology in the Classroom.

Pedagogical research on teaching and learning shows that students learn and retain more when they handwrite their notes and are free from technological distractions like laptops, phones, and tablets. As a result, this is a technology-free classroom. Laptops or tablets are not allowed during class unless they are an app-free/internet-limited writing or reading tablet. Please remember to turn cellphones off before the start of each class.

Late Work.

Late work puts an unnecessary burden on the graders of your assignments and as a result, is subject to a penalty. An assignment submitted one day late is subject to a 5% penalty; two days late is a 10% penalty; three days late is a 15% penalty. Work will not be accepted after three days from its due date. Extenuating circumstances should be discussed with Prof. Anoll or the TA directly.

Students with Disabilities.

If you need course accommodations due to a disability, please make an appointment with Prof. Anoll or the TA. We will work together along with the University's EAD Department to meet your needs: <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/student-access/>

The Stuff of Life.

Inevitably, things come up during the semester that can make it challenging for some students to follow the policies outlined above. If at any point you are struggling to fulfill your expectations in this course, please come talk to Prof. Anoll or the TA. The earlier you do this, the easier it is to find a solution for the challenge. Further, here is a list of resources that can help:

- Title IX and Student Discrimination Office: <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/title-ix/>
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex Life resources: <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/lgbtqi/resources>
- For students dealing with harassment, assault, and/or stalking, Vanderbilt Project Safe has resources (<https://www.vanderbilt.edu/projectsafe/>).
- For students dealing with anxiety, depression, distress, or other concerns, the University Counseling Center (615) 322-2571 offers resources: <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/ucc/>
- To go to the intake form to be scheduled with a counseling professional: https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?VanderbiltUniv&layout_id=20www.vanderbilt.edu/studentcarenetwork

Course Schedule and Readings

Week	Date	Topic	Read for class	Assignment Due
Week 1	8/26	Introduction	- None	None
Unit 1: Does the Demos Know What They Need to Know? In this unit, we will consider whether members of the American polity have stable and meaningful preferences that allow them to engage effectively in representative governance.				
Week 2	8/31	Unit intro: The demands	- Delli Carpini & Keeter, 23pg	None
	9/2	Knowledge + preferences	- Delli Carpini & Keeter, 4pg + Table 2.2 – 2.7 - Healy et al 4pg	None

Week 3	9/7	Response 1: They know more than your measures show	- Pérez, 9pg - Weaver et al, 6pg - Lau & Redlawsk, 4pg	None
	9/9	Response 2: They can learn	- Luskin et al 22pg	None
Week 4	9/14	Policy: ballot initiatives	- Lupia & Matsusaka, 4pg - Adams, 7pg - Gerber, 29pg - Smith 7pg	None
	9/16	Unit review	- None	Concept map 1
<p>Unit 2: Does the Demos Participate How They Are Supposed to Participate? In this unit, we will explore the types of and patterns in political participation. We will try to figure out what produces these patterns and how they might change.</p>				
Week 5	9/21	Unit intro: Defining political participation	- Verba et al, 12pg	None
	9/23	Not all do	- Fraga, 3pg - Verba et al, 19pg	Act project I
Week 6	9/28	Not all can	- Fraga, 13 pg - Keyssar, 7pg - Uggen et al, 5pg - <u>Watch</u> John Oliver episode	None None
	9/30	Does it matter?	- Uggen & Manza, 18pg - Leighley & Nagler, 17pg + tables	
Week 7	10/5	Can we change things? (Part 1)	- Berinsky, 11pg - Markovich & White, 8pg	None
	10/7	Can we change things? (Part 2)	- McClendon, 10pg - Addonizio et al, 5pg	None
Week 8	10/12	Panel of experts (Zoom)	- None	None
	10/14	No class: Fall Break	- None	None
Week 9	10/19	Policy: national holiday	- News articles, 6pg	None
	10/21	Unit Review	- None	Concept map 2

<p align="center">Unit 3: Do Government Officials Respond?</p> <p align="center">In this unit, we will consider theories of “representativeness” and determine if various governmental institutions are “representative” and under what conditions.</p>				
Week 10	10/26	Unit intro: “Good” representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eulau & Karps, 8pg - Disch, 7pg - Manza & Cook, 3pg 	None
	10/28	Legislators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Manza and Cook, 4pg - Lee & Oppenheimer, 12pg - Kalla and Broockman, 10pg 	None
Week 11	11/2	Executives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gillion, 33pg 	None
	11/4	Bureaucrats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dwindar, 12pg - Friedman & Ponomarenko, 18pg 	None
Week 12	11/9	Courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collins, 5pg - Harris & Sen, 10pg 	None
	11/11	Local politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Baycheck, 7pg - Anzia, 10pg 	None
Week 13	11/16	Policy: Quotas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clayton, 11pg - Mansbridge, 24pg - Murray, pg tbd - Lawless, pg tbd 	Act project II
	11/18	Unit Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - None 	Concept map 3
11/23 & 11/25: NO CLASS				
<p align="center">Unit 4: What does this all mean...for me?</p> <p align="center">In this final unit, we will reflect on the content of our course to consider how to move forward – as a scholar and member of the polity.</p>				
Week 14	11/30	Choices, choices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Young, 18pg 	None
	12/2	Lessons from the past	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hogan, 10pg 	None
Week 15	12/7	Talking and organizing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cohen et al, 8pg - Broockman & Kalla, 5pg 	None
	12/9	Course review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - None 	None
<i>12/14 by 5pm: Act Project III</i>				