

# PARTICIPATION & POLITICAL REPRESENTATION IN AMERICA

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

## WHAT IS THIS COURSE ABOUT?

Political participation is revered in democratic theory as the means through which citizens express their preferences and hold representatives accountable. But many political scientists question whether political participation works as it should. Noting low levels of citizen knowledge in the United States, inequalities in participation, and unresponsiveness of government officials, some argue that the “folk theory of democracy” is rotten at the core.

In this course, we examine the relationship between political participation and representation in the United States. We ask: do citizens have meaningful policy preferences to share with government? Why do some but not others participate in politics? Under what circumstances, if ever, do government officials respond to citizen demands? We will use both normative theory and empirical political science to answer these questions and apply our answers to analyze policy cases including felony disenfranchisement, ballot initiatives, and election day reforms. Throughout, students will reflect on their role as members of a democratic polity and develop new skills for engaging in politics effectively.

## WHAT WILL I LEARN TO DO?

Students will engage with major theoretical debates on political participation and representation to build self-efficacy and awareness with respect to pressing political issues. Specifically, by the end of the course, students will be able to:

- *Identify contributions.* Annotate both empirical and normative political science texts to identify main ideas, research design, and analytical conclusions as relevant to democratic theory. Appraise quality of information and arguments.
- *Apply to “big ideas.”* Use evidence from multiple texts to answer big questions within the study of representation. Determine where ideas connect and diverge. Evaluate quality of evidence.
- *Design and execute political act.* Appraise pathways for learning about and engaging in politics. Justify an approach and implement it on a real-world issue of your choosing. Reflect on and refine approach.

## HOW WILL THE INSTRUCTOR KNOW IF I’VE LEARNED IT?

Course assignments are designed to assess your mastery of our learning goals. I expect it will take time and practice for you to build these new skills, and the assessment structure is designed accordingly. Three types of assignments, worth progressively more over the course of the semester and requiring you to implement progressively more learning goals at once, give you opportunities to practice, receive feedback, and try again as you work toward mastery. These assignments include: text annotations, concept maps, and the participatory act project.

## Course Information

PSCI 2267  
Fall 2022  
T/TH 1:15-2:30 PM  
Buttrick Hall 103

## Instructor Information

Professor Allison Anoll  
allison.p.anoll@vanderbilt.edu  
Office Hours:  
T/Th 3-4 PM  
Sign up on calendly:  
<https://calendly.com/allison-anoll/office-hours>  
Commons 365

## Teaching Assistant

Sara Kirshbaum  
sara.m.kirshbaum@  
vanderbilt.edu  
Office Hours:  
Wednesday 11AM-1PM  
Commons 301

## ASSIGNMENT DETAILS

Assignment	Description	Value	Relevant Learning Goal	More Resources
<b>Annotations</b>	Apply and demonstrate annotation skills on syllabus and early texts	Syllabus = 5% Reading = 5%	<i>Identify contributions</i>	Details on Brightspace
<b>Concept Maps</b>	Answer the unit question by visually organizing key concepts on a single piece of printer paper, noting where thinkers challenge and complement one another. 3 total maps.	Unit 1 = 12% Unit 2 = 15% Unit 3 = 18%	<i>Identify contributions</i> <i>Apply to "big ideas"</i>	Instructions, rubric, examples on Brightspace
<b>Participatory Act Project</b>	Students will analyze the unit's content to develop a process for engaging in politics and apply it to an issue of their choice. Project broken into 3 assignments that build on one another.	Part 1 = 12% Part 2 = 15% Part 3 = 18%	<i>Identify contributions</i> <i>Apply to "big ideas"</i> <i>Design and execute political act</i>	Instructions and rubric on Brightspace

### HOW WILL I BE SUPPORTED ALONG THE WAY?

Attending class is of utmost importance to your success---this is where most class content and assignment details will be discussed. But in addition, both the teaching assistant and instructor are available to you during office hours, by email, or during scheduled appointments. Students can use office hours to clarify assignment goals, follow-up about class content, seek feedback on early drafts, and discuss graded feedback. This is also a place for discussing concerns that may come up.

#### *Questions and topics for the instructor.*

The instructor is responsible for the design of the course, course policies, major concerns that may affect your ability to meet course requirements, and the grading of the concept maps. All questions about the concept map assignment should be directed toward the instructor. Major illnesses or other concerns should also be directed at the instructor either by email or during office hours. Sign up for either a virtual or in-person office hours appointment here: <https://calendly.com/allison-anoll/office-hours>

#### *Questions and topics for the teaching assistant.*

The teaching assistant (TA) will be primarily responsible for grading the annotations assignment and the participatory act project. As a result, all questions about these two assignments (including possible extensions) should be directed at the TA. You can also meet with the teaching assistant to clarify class content, understand assignment goals, or voice concerns that may come up.

### WHAT ARE THE RULES AND NORMS OF THIS COURSE?

#### *Attendance.*

After the first few days of class I will not take attendance BUT it will be difficult for you to succeed in this course without regular attendance. Class time is when we consider how the disparate assigned readings fit together and how they relate to "big questions." Much of our content is explored through discussion, and in class we will cover the assignment goals and structure in detail. Missing more than 1-2 classes will likely begin to affect your performance on assignments.

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. 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/](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 read and annotate all the assigned reading before each class and bring hardcopies or annotated digital copies 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. Further, we often work directly with readings in class. As a result, performing at an "A" level is possible only if you read the materials and come prepared to interact with them. I suggest reading in the order listed.

### *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 are not allowed during class and cellphones must be turned to silent. I make only one exception to this technology-free policy: you can bring a digital writing or reading tablet to take notes or reference annotated readings but you **MUST** turn off wi-fi and notifications at the start of class (i.e., put it in airplane mode). I retain the right to change this policy at any point or revoke individuals' technology usage if it is distracting to the broader classroom environment.

### *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.

### *References + Letters of Recommendation.*

It is my policy that I only write letters of recommendation for students who have completed a full course with me and have received a final letter grade of "A." If you need a letter of recommendation or reference, please visit this webpage for information about timeline and process: <https://allisonanoll.com/references-and-recs/>

### *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 the expectations of this course, please come talk to Prof. Anoll or the TA. The earlier you do this, the easier it is to find a solution. 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](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?VanderbiltUniv&layout_id=20www.vanderbilt.edu/studentcarenetwork)

**COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics, Readings, and Assignments</b>
<p><u>Week 1</u> 8/25</p>	<p>Course introduction: overview and structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No readings</li> </ul>
<p><b>Unit 1: Does the Demos Know What They Should Know?</b></p> <p>In this unit, we will explore a question foundational to the rest of our studies – to what extent are humans capable of fulfilling their role as informed citizens of a democratic society?</p>	
<p><u>Week 2</u> 8/30</p> <p>9/1</p>	<p>Unit introduction: A sorry state of affairs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Delli Carpini &amp; Keeter (23p)</li> </ul> <p>Response 1: They know more than your studies show</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Delli Carpini &amp; Keeter, (4pg + skim tables)</li> <li>- Pérez (9pg)</li> <li>- Weaver et al (6pg)</li> <li>- <i>Syllabus annotation due 9/4 by 5 pm</i></li> </ul>
<p><u>Week 3</u> 9/6</p> <p>9/8</p>	<p>Response 2: They have tricks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lau &amp; Redlawsk (4pg)</li> <li>- Zárate, Quezada, and Armenta (6pg)</li> <li>- Kuklinski &amp; Quirk (21pg)</li> </ul> <p>Response 3: They can learn</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Eagan (3pg)</li> <li>- Elstubb (4pg)</li> <li>- Ackerman &amp; Fishkin (26pg)</li> <li>- America in One Room executive summary (6pg)</li> <li>- America in One Room briefing document (skim)</li> <li>- <i>Reading annotation due 9/11 by 5 pm</i></li> </ul>
<p><u>Week 4</u> 9/13</p> <p>9/15</p>	<p>Policy study: so, what about ballot initiatives?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tolbert &amp; Smith (7pg)</li> <li>- Adams (11pg)</li> <li>- Gerber (6pg)</li> <li>- Smith (7pg)</li> </ul> <p>Unit review (<i>Anoll at conference; Kirshbaum teaches</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No reading</li> <li>- <i>Bring draft of Concept Map 1 to class</i></li> <li>- <i>Concept Map 1 due 9/18 by 5 pm</i></li> </ul>



### Unit 3: Does the Demos Participate How They Should 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><u>Week 10</u> 10/25</p> <p>10/27</p>	<p>Unit introduction: searching for three theories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Verba et al (32pg; skim pages 15-23)</li> <li>- Fraga (3pg)</li> <li>- Campbell (4pg)</li> </ul> <p>Variable 1: Not all can</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Keyssar (7pg)</li> <li>- Amendments document</li> <li>- Fraga (13pg)</li> <li>- Watch: John Oliver Episode</li> <li>- Uggen &amp; Manza (18pg)</li> </ul>
<p><u>Week 11</u> 11/1</p> <p>11/3</p>	<p>But for those who can... a framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Anoll (9pg)</li> </ul> <p>Office Hours Meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Full class does not meet – sign-up for one-on-one virtual meetings</li> <li>- <i>Participatory Act 2 due 11/6 by 5PM</i></li> </ul>
<p><u>Week 12</u> 11/8</p> <p>11/10</p>	<p>Variable 2: They think it matters (B)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Brunk (9pg)</li> <li>- Soss (29pg)</li> </ul> <p>Variable 3: The costs are surmountable (C)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Berinsky (11pg)</li> <li>- Markovich &amp; White (8pg)</li> </ul>
<p><u>Week 13</u> 11/15</p> <p>11/17</p>	<p>Variable 4: The selective benefits are high (D)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- McClendon (10pg)</li> <li>- Anoll (27pg)</li> </ul> <p>Policy study: so, should election day be a national holiday?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- News article pack (6pg)</li> <li>- Addonizio et al (5pg)</li> </ul>
<p><i>Thanksgiving break – 11/22 &amp; 11/24 – No class</i></p>	
<p><u>Week 14</u> 11/29</p>	<p>Unit review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No reading</li> <li>- <i>Bring draft Concept Map 3 to class</i></li> <li>- <i>Concept Map 3 due by 5 PM 12/4</i></li> </ul>

12/1	Choices, choices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Young (18pg)</li> <li>- Hogan (10pg)</li> </ul>
<u>Week 15</u> 12/6	Talking and organizing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cohen et al (8pg)</li> <li>- Broockman &amp; Kalla (5pg)</li> </ul>
12/8	So.... now what? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No reading</li> <li>- <i>Bring Concept Maps 1-3 to class</i></li> </ul>
<u>Exam Week</u>	<i>Participatory Act 3 due by 5 PM 12/13</i>

**COURSE GRADING SCALE**

93 and above	A
90-92.99	A-
87-89.99	B+
83-86.99	B
80-82.99	B-
77-79.99	C+
73-76.99	C
70-72.99	C-
67-69.99	D+
60-66.99	D
0-59.99	F

	Tuesday	Wed	Thursday	Sunday (5pm)	Pages	
8/25			Intro course		0	
8/30	Intro unit 1: Knowledge		Response 1	Syllabus annotation	42	
9/6	Response 2		Response 3	Reading annotation	76	
9/13	Policy study: Ballot initiatives		Review, unit 1 (draft map)	Map 1	31	
9/20	Intro unit 2: Responsive		Legislators		49	
9/27	Executives		Bureaucrats	Part Act 1	51	
10/4	Courts		Local		32	
10/11	Panel of experts		Fall break		0	
10/18	Policy study: Felony disenfranchisement		Review, unit 2 (draft map)	Map 2	29	
10/25	Intro unit 3: Participation		Variable 1: Not all can		78	
11/1	For those who can..		Virtual office hours	Part Act 2	9	
11/8	Variable 2 (B)		Variable 3 (C)		57	
11/15	Variable 4 (D)		Policy study: National holiday for voting		48	
11/22	Holiday		Holiday		0	
11/29	Review, unit 3 (draft map)		Choices, choices	Map 3	28	
12/6	Talking & organizing		So...now what?	12/13: Part Act 3	13	
<b>key</b>	<i>Class</i>	<i>No class</i>	<i>Virtual class</i>	<i>Deadline</i>	<i>Average pages:</i>	40