

IDS 2338: Rethinking Citizenship Fall 2018

This is an Online course.

Instructor

Kevin M. Baron, Ph.D.

kbaron76@ufl.edu

Course Texts

There is no required or assigned textbooks or books for this course.

Texts will consist of scholarly articles, current news articles, policy papers, and online resources. These will appear in the online Canvas course shell. Scholarly articles are listed in the course schedule below, under the weeks for which they are assigned. All scholarly articles can be accessed through the [UF Libraries website](#), if you need help navigating the library website, [tutorials are available here](#). From your computer, you will need to be on the [UF VPN Network](#).

Course Goals

- Provide the background in U.S. History and Government for the context of understanding the individuals' role within a democratic republic
- Through critical thinking, analysis and evaluation, develop the skills to engage in productive civil discourse
- Construct and defend a policy stance concerning a current social, political, or economic issue through the use of basic academic research practices
- Reflect upon and evaluate methods of civic activism

Course Objectives

Beyond being a member of a nation or state, Merriam-Webster defines 'citizenship' as "the qualities that a person is expected to have as a responsible member of a community." What does citizenship mean to you within a democratic republic like the US? Being a citizen conveys responsibilities each individual must meet in order to keep any democracy healthy and functioning. Citizenship is not a passive notion, but a dynamic active experience. To fulfill one's role as a citizen, it requires an individual to be both informed and engaged.

While it may not be unusual to have a pessimistic view of politics, it is no excuse for lack of participation. Often, we are left to feel powerless or unsure of how to take action when it comes to advocating for those issues or policies we are concerned about the most. This course changes all of that by providing you the tools, skills, and perspective on how to get informed and be active in public life. The U.S. system of federalism provides opportunities to be involved in a multi-layered system of government that functions from the local to the national level.

Government is all around us, and that is not a bad thing. Policies are implemented every day at our local (city or county), state, or national levels that have impact on our lives. We as citizens have a duty to be vigilant and active in expressing our opinions and beliefs so as to have an

impact that benefits our communities. While political discussions tend to focus on Washington, DC, there are avenues of action right here in your city or county that you can play a role in changing. This course gives you the knowhow to know how to be a productive citizen.

Modules will function similar to an in-person course, where all work is assigned at the beginning of the Module and expected to be completed by the end of the Module week, with the exceptions of the Public Policy Case Study and the Civic Action Plan.

Assignments

Background Videos: these short (<15 min) videos provide in-depth background information on the selected topic of the Module. The videos offer insight into historical and contemporary policy debates, institutions, and democratic values and norms that support citizenship in the US. During 10 selected weeks (see the course schedule), you will take a short 10 question multiple-choice quiz on the topic of the week following each Background Video. The top 8 scores out of 10 quizzes will count toward your final grade. Percent of total grade: 17.5%

Class Discussion Forums: the forums will be central to the course, where you will provide analysis and discussion of the Module topic by synthesizing the readings, Background Video information, and any additional resources provided, by addressing and discussing a specific question with your classmates. You must offer an original response to the discussion question, as well as comment on your classmates' responses during the Module. Class Discussions will be alternated with the Weekly Assignments. Percent of total grade: 20%

Module Challenge Assignments: Non-Class Discussion Modules will have an assignment to reinforce the ideas and information presented in the Module. The assignment specifics will be provided in Canvas and will focus on the topic of that week. Each of these assignments will ask you to conduct research or interact with small groups of individuals in order to complete, as well as require you to reflect on how the assignment provided additional insight into making an impact in public or civic life. Percent of total grade: 20%

Public Policy Case Study Paper: This short essay (2 pages) will consist of a brief analysis on a specific public policy issue chosen from a list provided in Canvas. You will research one specific aspect of the issue, including finding resources, providing analysis, and making a policy recommendation. This brief paper will offer a summary, background, and analysis of this policy, as well as offer reflection on whether you believe the policy to be sufficient in solving the issue. This paper will be completed in the first half of the semester. SEE APPENDIX B FOR DETAILS. Percent of total grade: 17.5%

The Civic Action Plan: This report will challenge you to take a proactive position by choosing an issue facing our community, state, or country, then to research the issue, develop a policy solution, and construct a strategy on how you would seek to implement your solution. The Civic Action Plan will be graded according to the quality of your research, your analysis of a policy issue, and your construction and written defense of a policy proposal for the issue. SEE APPENDIX A FOR DETAILS. Percent of total grade: 25%

Background Videos.....	17.5%
Class Discussion Forums.....	20%
Weekly Assignments.....	20%
Public Policy Case Study.....	17.5%
Civic Action Plan.....	25%

Grades will be assigned based on the following scale:

A = 90%+	B- = 77-79	D+ = 64-66
A- = 87-89	C+ = 74-76	D = 60-63
B+ = 84-86	C = 70-73	D- = 57-59
B = 80-83	C- = 67-69	E < 56 (failing)

Grading Policy/Conduct

Assignments are expected to be turned in on the due date. One letter grade per day (not class days) will be taken off for late assignments unless you have obtained prior approval for a different date due to special circumstances or have a documented illness or family emergency. Please do not hesitate to let me know if you have some type of special circumstance, but you must do so before the due date unless it is an emergency. Communication is key. Attendance, assignments, and make-up work will adhere to UF policies and standards, available here <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

This course will offer a constructive environment in which students will be free to offer their opinions and perspectives on a host of current issues. As we will be discussing controversial issues about which many people have strong opinions and beliefs so mutual respect is critical for the success of the class. It is fine to challenge someone's ideas/positions, but not the person. Personal attacks will not be tolerated. Being an engaged citizen means understanding civil discourse, and this class is grounded in treating every student with mutual respect.

The easiest way to reach me is to come by during office hours or through e-mail. If my office hours are not convenient, I am always happy to set a time to meet. Please do not hesitate to ask me for a scheduled appointment. If you have any special needs, please let me know so that we can work together to make this class a success.

Students with Disabilities: If you have special needs, you must register with the Disability Resource Center, <https://drc.dso.ufl.edu/>, so that you can be provided the necessary accommodations to ensure your success. You must inform me at the beginning of the semester and provide me with a copy of your letter. I will work with you to be successful in this course. Please do not ask me specific questions about your assignments or grades outside of office hours. Federal privacy rules (FERPA) prohibit any discussion that can be heard by others. FERPA also prohibits me from sending grades through e-mail.

Honor Code of Conduct: UF students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic honesty. Requirements, expectations, and violations can be found here: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/1617/advising/info/student-honor-code.aspx>. It is your

Text: Tom Clark, (1974). "Separation of Powers." *Willamette Law Journal* 11(1), 1-9.

Scott Keeter, Cliff Zukin, Molly Andolina, Krista Jenkins. (2002). *The Civic and Political Health of a Nation* from CIRCLE at Tufts University.

- Background Video Lecture: Separation of Powers
 - Video Quiz
- Module Challenge Assignment: Generational Survey (you will survey 10 members across multiple generational groups and produce a short paper noting how common life experiences of different generations account for impacts on our public and political lives)

Week 5. September 17 – 23: Checks and Balances

Text: James Madison, Federalist No. 51. Feb. 8, 1788.

Matthew McCubbins and Thomas Schwartz. (1984). "Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols Versus Fire Alarms." *American Journal of Political Science* 28(1), 165-179.

EJ Dionne Jr., Thomas Mann, and Norm Ornstein (2017). "How Trump is helping to save our democracy." *Washington Post* (op-ed). <http://wapo.st/2hfsZCJ>

- Background Video Lecture: Checks and Balances
 - Video Quiz
- Week 5 Discussion Forum: Does oversight exist anymore, or are the checks checking and the balances balancing?

Week 6. September 24 - 30: Congress

Texts: Lawrence Dodd. (2012). "Congress as Public Mirror," Chapter 1 in *Thinking About Congress*

Garrett Harding. (1968). "The Tragedy of the Commons." *Science* 162(3859), 1243-1248.

- Background Video Lecture: Congress
 - Video Quiz
- Week 6 Discussion Forum: Collective action problems and Congress as representational

Week 7. October 1 - 7: The Presidency

Texts: George Edwards III and B. Dan Wood (1999). "Who Influences Whom? The President, Congress and the Media," *American Political Science Review*, 93(2), 327-344.

James Pfiffner. (2011). Federalist No. 70: Is the president too powerful? *Public Administration Review* 71: The Federalist Papers Revised for Twenty-First Century Reality, 112-117.

- Background Video Lecture: The Presidency
 - Video Quiz
- Module Challenge Assignment: Presidential Profile (write a short profile on one of our 44 presidents that provides background information and how/why they were or were not an effective public leader)

Week 8. October 8 - 14: The Legislative Process

Text: Barbara Sinclair. (2017). "How the Legislative Process Has Changed," Chapter 1 in *Unorthodox Lawmaking*, 1-9.

Robert Katzman. (1989). "The American Legislative Process as a Signal." *Journal of Public Policy* 9(3), 287-306.

- Background Video Lecture: The Legislative Process

- Video Quiz
- Week 8 Discussion Forum: Competing interests and influence in lawmaking
- Public Policy Case Study Paper DUE Oct. 15

Week 9. October 15 - 21: The Supreme Court

Text: Robert Dahl. (1957), “Decision-Making in a Democracy: The Supreme Court as a National Policy-Maker,” in *Journal of Public Law* 6(1), 279-295.

Katy Harriger. (2011). “Judicial Supremacy or Judicial Defense? The Supreme Court and the Separation of Powers.” *Political Science Quarterly* 126(2), 201-221

- Complete Background Video Video: The Supreme Court
 - Video Quiz
- Module Challenge Assignment: Supreme Court Case Study (you will offer analysis on an historical Supreme Court case/decision)
- Assign Civic Action Plan

Week 10. October 22 - 28: Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

Texts: Gibson, J.L. (2008). “Intolerance and Political Repression in the United States: A Half Century after McCarthyism.” *American Journal of Political Science* 52(1), 96-10.

Video: *Lest We Forget: The Birther Lie* from Bill Moyers.

- Background Video Lecture: Civil Rights, Civil Liberties
 - Video Quiz
- Module Challenge Assignment: Complete Power Profile (you will profile a prominent non-elected public leader on what makes them effective)

Week 11. Oct. 29 – Nov. 4: The Media

Texts: Leticia Bode (2016). “Political News in the News Feed: Learning Politics from Social Media.” *Mass Communication and Society* 19:1, 24-48.

Gordon Pennycook and David Rand, “Crowdsourcing judgments of news source quality.” https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3118471

Elle Hunt, “What is fake news? How to spot it and what you can do to stop it.” *The Guardian*, Dec. 17, 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2016/dec/18/what-is-fake-news-pizzagate>

- Background Video Lecture: The Media
- Week 10 Discussion Forum: The Media, “fake news” and how we make sense of where we get our information

Week 12. November 5 – 11: Campaigns and Elections

Texts: Pippa Norris (2001) “Do Campaign Communications Matter for Civic Engagement? American Elections from Eisenhower to G.W. Bush.”

<https://sites.hks.harvard.edu/fs/pnorris/Acrobat/Farrell&Schmitt-Beck%20Chapter%209.pdf>

Anthony Downs (1957) “An Economic Theory of Political Action in a Democracy,” *Journal of Political Economy* 65(2), 135-150.

- Background Video Lecture: Campaigns & Elections
- Watch interview video with Debbi Wasserman Schultz

- Module Challenge Assignment: Campaign interactions and the electorate (brief essay examining if campaigns are impactful and influence public decision-making. Included will be campaign finance issues).

Week 13. November 13 – 18: Political Parties

Texts: Sean Theriault and David W. Rohde (2011) “The Gingrich Senators and Party Polarization in the U.S. Senate” *The Journal of Politics* 73(4), 1011-1024.

Stephen Nicholson and Gary Sugura. (2012). Who's the party of the people? Economic populism and the U.S. public's beliefs about political parties. *Political Behavior* 34(2), 369-389.

- Background Video Lecture: Political Parties
 - Video Quiz
- Week 13 Discussion Forum: Political Parties and how partisanship has come to dominate public discourse

Week 14. November 19 - December 2: Political Participation

Texts: Ronald La Due Lake & Robert Huckfelt (1998), “Social Capital, Social Networks, and Political Participation” *Political Psychology* 19(3), 567-584.

William A. Galston (2004), “Civic Education and Political Participation,” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 37(2), 263-266.

- Complete Background Video: Political Participation
- Module Challenge Assignment: Is the Information Free? (you will research an issue and file a Freedom of Information Act request to demonstrate your understanding of citizen oversight)

Week 15. December 3 - 10: Final Reflections

Final reflections: The student will critique established institutions and challenge assumptions about public life.

Texts: Theda Skocpol (1997) “The Tocqueville Problem: Civic Engagement in American Democracy,” *Social Science History* 21(4), 455-479.

Rodney Hero (2003) “Social Capital and Racial Inequality in America” *Perspectives on Politics* 1(1), 113-122.

- Week 15 Discussion Forum: How do you better understand your role within public society?
- Civic Action Plan DUE Dec. 10

APPENDIX A: Civic Action Plan

Step 1. Pick an Issue. This is important. Pick an issue that interests you. Think about what is impacting your local community or state, and choose an issue that you would like to research and address. Think about this as being something you could actually have an impact on.

- Many issues are large. For example, climate change is an issue that impacts everyone on the planet. However, it is likely that there are facets of this issue that can be addressed locally. As climate change encompasses many environmentally focused topics when it comes to solutions or actions, what could your city or county do to address one of these aspects? Another example – homelessness is a national problem, but it is also a problem in Gainesville and Alachua County. What could our city or county do to better help those homeless living among us?

Step 2. Begin researching your issue. This will require reading, so please start reading. You will need to create a reading list with 5 to 7 sources. These sources need to include peer-reviewed articles or books, journalistic sources, and online resources. Compile these resources into an easy to reference list or annotated bibliography.

- The best starting place to find resources for your plan is through the UF Libraries - <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/> or through Google Scholar (login on the [UF VPN](#) network prior to searching). News articles, op-eds, websites, and online resources like advocacy organizations are good to use as well. You should have a variety of source materials.

Step 3. Write your issue introduction. This is a one page statement that identifies the issue, explains its importance, provides historical context, identifies competing views, and states your position.

- Yes, this is a lot for one page – BE CONCISE!
- Again, your one-page issue introduction should
 - identify the issue,
 - explain why the issue is important,
 - provide some historical context for the issue,
 - identify competing views, and
 - state your stance.

Step 4. Develop a policy solution to the issue you have identified. This is a statement of your goal for the issue that identifies a policy outcome you would like to see enacted. This would include what level of government – local (city; county) or state. You will provide your rationale for why you wish to see this policy goal achieved. Your policy goal is a recommendation or solution that is specific to and targets the issue you have chosen to address.

- Use evidence from your resources and source material. Make sure to cite your sources (use whatever citation style you prefer, but be consistent).
- Write the statement in your own words, but you can include brief quotes from your sources if appropriate.
- Be cognizant of past and recent policy actions taken on this issue at the level you are proposing. In this way, your policy goal can coordinate with ongoing efforts, or change

existing policy, depending on how you chose to frame it and what past policy actions exist.

Step 5. Develop a strategy for how you would seek to achieve/implement your solution in the real world. An effective strategy can make all the difference, and this course has helped you develop your citizenship skills, so what effective strategies would you take on to achieve your goal. For example, think about coalition building (see Step 6), use of media – online and traditional, fundraising, issue awareness, research/reports/polling or survey data and analysis – how would you seek to convince policymakers your idea has merit?

- You should have 4 or 5 distinct strategy steps/goals at minimum.

Step 6. Discover Allies and Opponents. For this section, you will identify a minimum of 3 allies and 3 opponents that you will face in your quest to enact your policy goal. Knowing who you can count on for support, and who you are up against is important in any public policy fight. Provide a brief description of each of your Allies and Opponents, which includes why you see them as an ally or opponent, and how you would collaborate with them or neutralize their ongoing efforts to oppose yours.

Step 7. References. Provide a bibliography of all of your sources, using whatever citation style you choose, so long as you are consistent in style throughout.

RECAP: When finished, your Civic Action Plan will be 8-10 pages, 12pt Times New Roman font, double spaced, 1 to 1.5 inch margins. The paper will include:

1. Issue Introduction
2. Statement of Policy Goal
3. Strategies
4. Allies and Opponents
5. References

APPENDIX B: Public Policy Case Study

For this assignment, you will examine a specific policy issue from the list provided in Canvas. Then you will write a brief essay – 2 pages – that provides the background and history of the policy, the current policy in place, an analysis of the current policy, and your recommendations on improvement. Structure your essay based on the sections detailed below.

How to Write a Public Policy Case Study:

- The first section of any policy case study should provide the background and context for why the policy was needed, made, and implemented in the first place. This section is grounded in research showing the problem of the issue and how the policy is supposed to fix that issue.
 - For example: No Child Left Behind Act was developed as a means of updating the Elementary and Secondary Schools Act to address such educational issues of school inequalities, disadvantaged students, as well as establish standards-based education reforms as a means of assessment. Why were these reforms needed? What were the political arguments for and against them at the time? That is what this section will address. Focus on the arguments being made in favor of this policy, and what the critics were saying.
- The second section will offer a description on the specifics of the policy. This delves into what issues the policy was developed to address.
 - For example: with the No Child Left Behind Act, what were the specific reforms? How did this policy change what already existed, meaning, how was this different from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act? Specifically, you can focus on how the standardized testing reshaped public education. For this portion, focus on a specific part of the policy, like the standardized testing.
- The third section provides an analysis of the current policy, meaning, has this policy achieved the goals it was designed to or has it fallen short in some way? Base your response on the two previous sections that detailed the issues and politics surrounding the need for the policy and what the policy was designed to do.
- The final section is where you offer your own analysis and perspective on the policy and issue. Do you think the policy was good or bad? What recommendations would you make? Can the current policy be fixed or should it be scrapped completely? If you were to fix or design a new policy, what would it be and why?

Your source material should be a mix of academic sources, government documents or web-based resources, news stories, advocacy organizations or think tanks. There will be plenty of source material on any of the policy issues listed in Canvas, so make use of a wide range of material.