

Promoting Civic Engagement With a Course on Local Politics

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Introduction

This paper argues that courses on local politics should be more frequently offered by political science departments. Such courses, I believe, are a good way to foster student engagement in the political process. The need to do so is widely apparent. America's youth are disconnecting from traditional forms of engagement in public life. Evidence is everywhere. Research has found that 18-24 year olds are:

- Less knowledgeable about politics.¹
- Less likely to express traditional forms of patriotism and citizenship.²
- Less likely to follow traditional news about government and public affairs.³
- Less likely to engage in traditional forms of political participation (such as participating in a campaign, attending a political event, contacting an elected official).⁴
- Less trusting of political institutions and processes.⁵
- Less likely to register with one of the political parties.⁶
- Less likely to register to vote.⁷
- Less likely to vote.⁸

The Harvard Institute for Politics reported that 18-29 year-olds are experiencing a five-year low in their trust in public institutions, while their cynicism about the political process has never been higher.⁹ Also, according to the Pew Research Center, "half of Millennials (50%) now describe themselves as political independents... These are at or near the highest levels of

¹ Institute of Politics, Harvard University: Survey of Young Americans' Attitudes toward Politics and Public Service: 25th Edition. 2014. See: http://www.iop.harvard.edu/sites/default/files_new/Harvard_ExecSummarySpring2014.pdf

² Katie Reilly, "A generational gap in American patriotism" Pew Research Center July 3, 2013 <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2013/07/03/a-generational-gap-in-american-patriotism>.

³ Young People and the News: A Report from the Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics, and Public Policy, JFK School of Government. Harvard University. July 2007. page 3. See http://shorensteincenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/young_people_and_news_2007.pdf

⁴ Millennials in Adulthood: Detached from Institutions, Networked with friends. March 7, 2014. See <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2014/03/07/millennials-in-adulthood/>.

⁵ "Low voter turnout likely, conservatives more enthusiastic, Harvard youth poll finds. See http://www.iop.harvard.edu/sites/default/files_new/Harvard_PressReleaseSpring2014.pdf.

⁶ The California Civic Engagement Project Policy Brief Issue 9, January 2015 http://explore.regionalchange.ucdavis.edu/ourwork/projects/copy2_of_UCDavisCCEPPolicyBrief92014YouthVote.pdf

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Institute of Politics, Harvard University: Survey of Young Americans' Attitudes toward Politics and Public Service: 25th Edition. 2014. See: http://www.iop.harvard.edu/sites/default/files_new/Harvard_ExecSummarySpring2014.pdf

political... disaffiliation recorded for any generation in the quarter-century that the Pew Research Center has been polling on these topics."¹⁰

2014 General Election

The 2014 general election suggests that things are getting worse. Only 8.2% of eligible California youth (18-24) turned out to vote. Furthermore, youth accounted for only 3.9 percent of all voters in this election even though they make up 14.5 percent of the eligible electorate.¹¹ Mindy Romero, the director of the California Civic Engagement project and the author of the report, said in a recent webinar (3/24/2015) that the findings matter for at least three reasons. First, voting is habit forming. If young people do not start voting in their teens, they are unlikely to vote as adults, with the result being an even more dismal turnout rates for the general population. Second, voting is connected to other forms of community engagement. Voters are more likely to care about their community and quality of life issues such as schools, environment, and the needs of future generations, and are more willing to engage in the long term conversations necessary to solve vexing problems. Finally, the fact that youth are so underrepresented has serious consequences for issues that affect young people-- such as access to education, affordable housing, and the environment. Today's youth will have to pay the bills being run up by current decision makers. How can their concerns about, say, climate change be addressed when the young are not at the table?

There is no shortage of explanations for the falloff in participation. Student debt and poor job prospects are forcing young people to put off the formation of new families. High housing prices are preventing young people from settling down and establishing roots in their community. Unsettled people are less likely to register and vote. Others say the media has "primed" the young to see politics as entertainment and not as a venue for serious problem solving. For example, Jody Baumgartner and Jonathan S. Morris argue that Jon Stewart's *The Daily Show* "drives down support for political institutions and leaders among those already inclined toward nonparticipation."¹² The blistering polarization of politics, negative campaigning, and policy gridlock have put off young people. In addition, conservatives and libertarians have demonized and discredited the public sector, arguing that the private sector and the market are the best ways to address the nation's problems. However, negative attitudes toward the political process are not the only reason people do not vote. According to the Center for Information and Research on Civic learning and Engagement at Tufts University, many

¹⁰ <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2014/03/07/millennials-in-adulthood/>

¹¹ http://www.regionalchange.ucdavis.edu/ourwork/projects/copy2_of_UCDavisCCEPPolicyBrief92014YouthVote.pdf.

¹² <http://apr.sagepub.com/content/34/3/341.abstract>

young people don't vote because they weren't registered or didn't have enough flexibility in their jobs to get to the polls.¹³

Others say that all the horrible news about young people being disengaged and self-absorbed is wrong. In fact, according to Russell Dalton, young people are more engaged than ever before, but prefer "new patterns of citizenship" that favor direct action through volunteering for a cause--such as Hurricane Katrina relief-- rather than by working for a candidate or a member of Congress. This may be true; however, the fact remains that voting is the central responsibility of citizens in our democracy.¹⁴

The Education Community Responds

The education community has long recognized its strong civics responsibility. So it comes as no surprise that academics have been alarmed by the falloff in civic mindfulness. Across the nation, K-12 teachers have set about revitalizing civic education requirements.¹⁵ At the collegiate level, the response has been primarily in the form of service learning. Service learning "is an educational approach that balances formal instruction and direction with the opportunity to serve in the community in order to provide a pragmatic, progressive learning experience."¹⁶ Service learning programs have been widely adopted on high school and college campuses. For most political science departments, service learning takes place in the form of internships, but primarily in state and federal offices, usually accompanied by relevant coursework.¹⁷

¹³ Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement: Why (Some) Registered Youth Don't Vote. See: <http://www.civicyouth.org/2014-midterms-why-some-registered-youth-dont-vote/>12 Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement: Youth Voting.

¹⁴ Russell Dalton, *The Good Citizen: How a Younger Generation is Reshaping American Politics*, Revised Edition, Washington: Sage, 2008.

¹⁵ The California Task Force on K-12 Civic Learning: Revitalizing K-12 Civic Learning in California: A Blueprint For Action, 2014, See: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/documents/cltffinalreport.pdf>11.

¹⁶See "service learning" entry in Wikipedia.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Service-learning#What_is_Service-Learning.3F

¹⁷A comprehensive review of service learning in political science can be found at Richard M. Battistoni and William E. Hudson, editors, *Experiencing Citizenship: concepts and models for service-learning in political science*. American Association for Higher Education. Sterling, Virginia: Stylus publishing. 2006.

Local Government Courses: Missing in Action

A perfect place to connect service learning with political science is a course on local politics.¹⁸ Despite this, courses on local politics are neglected by most political science departments.¹⁹ For example, I received my bachelor's degree from the State University College of New York at Fredonia, located in the town of Fredonia, New York; my master's from the University of Texas at Austin; and my doctorate from Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana. There weren't any then nor are there now any courses on the politics of Fredonia (population 11,000), Austin (885,000), or Bloomington (80,000) offered by local political science departments. Other faculty I have spoken with had similar experiences.

However, social science requires more than a few cases to confirm a hunch. Data on courses, texts, and APSA conference panels was gathered. We examined course catalogs for the following: UCLA, UC Berkeley, Harvard, Sacramento State, University of Texas, University of Michigan, and NYU. Our cursory examination of these top schools did not find many courses specifically on local politics. Some, however, did include some elements of it. (See Appendix 1, Table 1) For example, local politics--actually the politics of large cities--is covered in courses on urban politics and courses on the rise of suburbia. It is also covered, though only fleetingly, in courses on state politics. A search on Amazon.com for books that focused solely on "local politics" generated about a half dozen citations (Appendix 1, Table 2). However, several of these were non-academic tracts, such as guides about how to run for office. Finally, a review of the programs from the last three American Political Science Association Conventions shows just a sprinkling of panels having to do with local politics.²⁰

Why is local politics ignored by political science?

Why does political science ignore courses on local politics, especially when people like former Speaker Tip O'Neill say that "all politics is local," and most political actors at higher levels had their start in local politics? One answer is that student demand drives course offerings; it is hard for City Hall to compete with the spectacle of war and policy disagreements by marquee politicians that are featured on the evening news. Also, graduate (Phd) students wishing to get a college teaching job will wisely package themselves to appeal to as many potential employers as possible. This is not done by specializing in local politics. Finally, as Terry Christensen, the co-author of Local Politics, says: "I think courses on local politics are neglected

¹⁸ By way of definition, "local politics concerns the administration of civic affairs by the inhabitants of counties, cities, towns, districts municipalities. Local politics is the politics of communities in which most our universities are located. Included are the people, organizations and issues that animate the conversation." Retrieved from Wikipedia.

¹⁹ Despite Tip O'Neill's adage about all politics being local.

²⁰ Ronnie Kaufman, student assistant in the department of political science collected these data.

because most political scientists focus on national or international politics or political theory and they're a bit elitist about their subjects, overlooking the merits of a focus on local politics as a way to engage students in experiential learning laboratory.”²¹

Local Politics Course

The inspiration for this paper is a course on local politics (herein referred to as POSC 360) I have been teaching for the last decade at Chapman University. The course meets once a week for two hours and 45 minutes. Chapman is located in the city of Orange, which is in Orange County, California. The County of Orange is composed of 34 cities, each with its own city council. Orange County has 3.4 million people. It is presided over by a 5- person Board of Supervisors which provides public safety and other services to the cities and unincorporated areas. POSC 360 promotes civic engagement by getting students out of the classroom and into local politics and by bringing local political actors into the classroom. The course was developed by Terry Christensen, who taught the course for many years at San Jose State University. He is now retired.

POSC 360 focuses on local government and politics in the United States. Students are introduced to the basics of local politics, including the structure and organization of local government, intergovernmental relations, and nongovernmental elements (voters, interest groups, media, private power holders, race, and class). To the maximum extent possible, this is done using the cities in Orange County as a learning laboratory. Students also learn about local politics through a simulation, with students playing the roles of various actors in local politics. The goal of the course is to provide students with information, understanding, and critical insights as to how American communities function politically.

POSC 360 gets students out into the community and brings the community into the classroom. Students are required to write a series of papers that require community engagement. The city council paper requires attendance of at least two meetings of an Orange County city (student's choice) council. Students write a 6-page paper that analyzes what they observed with appropriate application of readings. Students also write a role model paper, which is a 3-page paper on a person like the one they will play in the city politics simulation, which takes place at the end of the term. Students pick a role and then find a local, real-life parallel. They research that person through public records, the Internet, newspapers, or interviews. The paper describes the person and his/her political activities and puts him or her in the larger context provided by

²¹ Personal correspondence from Terry Christensen.

the text and readings. The civic engagement paper requires students to participate in a voter registration project or in organizing a candidate forum or attending a neighborhood association meeting, or to volunteer for a city council campaign or other civic project. They then write about their experience. Students also take part in a political simulation in which they apply and test what they've learned about local politics by reading the text and observing local politics in action. The game requires students to play a role based on the role model paper they've written.

These assignments allow for direct, real time experience. In this way, I bring the community into the course through guest speakers, candidate forums, books, and videos about Orange County history. Courses on international politics or American political institutions do not afford this type of opportunity. Many of the students who've grown up in Orange County say this was a true "awakening" because, before this class, they had paid little or no attention to local politics. Most seemed thirsty for knowledge about the community many had grown up in. One, Connor Traut, successfully ran for a local office.²²

²² My name is Connor Traut, and I am a 20-year-old Junior at Chapman University enrolled as a double major in Political Science and Economics, am an Eagle Scout, and in November of 2014 I was elected to serve the Centralia School District as their Trustee. The District serves students and their families in the cities of Anaheim, Buena Park, Cypress, and La Palma. The Local Politics course at Chapman University combined theory and practicality well enough to motivate myself and other classmates to seek a career in serving their neighborhoods. This course mentored me on how to set your priorities based on the needs of those you serve, in that if you are interested in serving in public office, run to do something instead of to be something – let your policies drive your politics. The course motivated and prepared me with opportunities to advance in my civic engagement, which stemmed from the City Council simulation and papers that expanded my realistic imagination of my ability to create a real and lasting impact in my own community. The course introduced me to individuals that taught how to run a successful campaign, how to build consensus, how to work with community groups, and how to deal with the media. The course inspired me to pursue a career in public service, and set me on the positive path to making a real-world impact. Since having learned from the course, I have worked to become an expert of my community. I currently serve as Juvenile Justice Commissioner for Orange County and as a Board Member with a local chapter of Head Start Early Childhood Education, Cops for Kids, the Arts Council, and the Boys and Girls Clubs. I followed the methods taught in the Local Politics course that relied heavily on getting to know the neighborhoods you plan to serve. During the campaign, I walked door-to-door every day for over five months, having visited families at over 8,000 homes in my District. Since being elected, I have applied my enlightened way of realistic political thinking to my own actions on the Centralia School District Board of Trustee. To highlight one specific action, the course taught me about the By-District election system and what it can do to create a stronger voice for our neighborhoods. My District has since adopted a place to establish this new system, and from what I learned in this course, I was able to further implement the opportunity for our community to have the opportunity to participate in the drawing of their maps. I believe that I am an even more effective public servant because of the lessons and long-term relationships I have built as of direct result from the Local Politics course. Chapman University has given me access to a larger world of opportunity through the Local Politics course.

John Dewey

POSC 360 is animated by the thinking of the philosopher John Dewey. As opposed to memorizing and recalling facts for exams, Dewey felt that "students tend to learn and retain information more effectively when they learn through a cycle of action and reflection... He understood that learning and doing are intimately connected and that allowing students to personally experience what they are learning greatly improves the quality of their learning experiences." ²³ Dewey and other "pragmatists" argued that "knowledge is useless to students unless they can directly apply it to the new situations they encounter. In short, knowledge without action is worthless. Therefore, teachers should present new information in the context of situations to which it applies and give their students ample opportunity to practice actively applying that new knowledge to concrete, real-world situations. Pragmatists believed that this approach would greatly increase the value of students' education by making their knowledge relevant, practical, useful, and actionable in real-life situations." ²⁴

Promoting Engagement

Michael X. Delli Carpini argues that people choose to become engaged in public life when they have the motivation, opportunity, and ability to do so. "The motivation to participate derives from a number of sources: a sense that it is your responsibility to do so; the satisfaction that comes from participating with others for a common purpose; the identification of a public problem that affects you or those you care about; and the belief that your involvement will make a difference...Citizens must [also] have the opportunity to become involved in public life in meaningful ways... Finally, citizens must have the ability to take advantage of the opportunities that are available. The specific abilities... can include... certain kinds of organizational, communications, and leadership skills."²⁵

POSC 360 does well based on these criteria. The course motivates students. Students were stimulated to meet the people who animate local politics. Guest speakers include city managers, council persons, labor leaders, community activists, reporters, city planners, and city attorneys. I have them in about two thirds of the classes. They speak for 30 minutes and take questions for another 30 minutes.

²³ Retrieved from Wikipedia, section on service-learning, Progressive and Pragmatism, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Service-learning#What_is_Service-Learning.3F.

²⁴ Retrieved from Wikipedia, section on service-learning, Progressive and Pragmatism, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Service-learning#What_is_Service-Learning.3F.

²⁵ Michael X. Delli Carpini, Gen.Com: Youth, Civic Engagement, and the New Information Environment. 2000. University of Pennsylvania Scholarly Commons. Retrieved from: http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1350&context=asc_papers

The course also provides the opportunity for students to become involved in public life. Several students have continued on with their civic engagement projects by maintaining contact with the council candidates they worked with during the campaign. Others are planning to get MPA degrees following their graduation from Chapman, so they can work in local government. Consistent with Dewey's notion of democratizing the classroom, a premium is put on student choice. *Students* choose their engagement project, the role they play in the political simulation, the subject of their role model paper, and the city council meetings they wish to attend.

In addition to being motivated and having opportunities, students acquire the necessary knowledge and skills necessary to engage in local politics. They are required to speak at a council meeting. They learn who the local political actors are and what different city departments and local political organizations do; they learn about local issues and the vocabulary of local politics. This knowledge and experiences give them the confidence to learn more and help equip them to participate in the democratic process.

Conclusion

The civic engagement crisis is real and poses a threat to democracy. Democracy requires citizens to be eternally vigilant regarding abuses of power by government officials. The violence in the city of Ferguson, Missouri (population 21,000) and the scandal in Bell, California (population 40,000) are cautionary tales of what happens when citizens do not do the job that democracy requires of them. In Ferguson, a "for-profit" and racist police department unconstitutionally targeted black citizens in order to feed the city budget. This injustice culminated in the violence that followed the shooting of Michael Brown, an 18 year-old black man.²⁶ In Bell, a disengaged electorate resulted in city officials ripping off the community for millions to pay for their outrageously high salaries and benefits packages. The city manager, for example, received \$1.5 million per year in compensation in a city of working-class people and first generation immigrants. Bell also had a "for-profit" police department that targeted Latinos. In both Ferguson and Bell, turnout in local elections is typically in the teens.²⁷ A more informed and participatory electorate is necessary to avoid future "Fergusons" and "Bells." This is why

²⁶ Richard Perez-Pena, "The Ferguson Police Department: the Justice Department Report, Annotated." [The New York Times](#). March 4, 2015. Retrieved from:

http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/03/04/us/ferguson-police-justice-department-report.html?_r=0

²⁷ John Fund, "Increase Voter Turnout in Ferguson", [The National Review](#), August 24, 2014. Retrieved from <http://www.nationalreview.com/article/386167/increase-voter-turnout-ferguson-john-fund>. Also, see Tom Hogen-Esch, "Bell corruption lessons" in [California Progress Report](#). June 20, 2011. Retrieved from <http://www.californiaprogressreport.com/site/bell-corruption-scandal%E2%80%99s-lessons>

educators are taking steps to promote political engagement by students. An approach that I found to be successful promoting such engagement is the offering of a course on local politics.

APPENDIX I

TABLE 1: Sample Local Government Courses

School	Course Title	Course Number	Course Description
UCLA	Metropolitan Governance	143B	Examination of how political, social, economic, and cultural factors influence metropolitan governance in both U.S. central cities and suburban areas. Study of some major issues in metropolitan governance through classic and contemporary readings on political power, political economy of cities, and racial/ economic segregation, as well as political incorporation and racial/ethnic coalitions.
UCLA	Politics of American Suburbanization	143C	Examination of political, social, and economic evolution of American suburbs, particularly in post-WWII era. Dominant themes focus primarily on historical patterns and implications of U.S. racial/ethnic inclusion and exclusion; class conflict and gender roles; classic and contemporary theories of metropolitan governance; and civic/political implications of American suburbanization. Select topics and case studies include housing, schools, and taxes; immigrant and ethnic minority suburbanization; suburban sprawl and uneven growth; suburban decline; and regionalism
UC Berkeley	California Politics	171	This course provides an overview of California politics, with a focus on contemporary issues and an analysis of who wields power and why. Specifically, the course will focus on : the demographic, social and economic forces that shape the State's politics- the three official branches of state government (executive, legislative and judicial)- the three unofficial branches (the media, lobbyists and interest groups)- campaigns (candidates, initiatives, consultants, pollsters, political parties and money), local government, the state budget and education policies.

UC Berkeley	The Politics and Policies of Metropolitan America	175A	The politics and policies that govern urban areas in the United States are among the most important forces shaping American life. Home to two-thirds of all Americans, large cities and their suburbs generate 75 percent of our gross domestic product. Metropolitan areas display extremes of wealth and poverty; they also highlight the racial and ethnic diversity of America. This course will examine the politics and policies that have given American cities their distinctive features. We begin by analyzing the variation in patterns of urban politics, including struggles over jurisdictional boundaries; the emergence of political machines and reform governments; and strategies of community-based organizing. We then examine key areas of metropolitan policy including economic development, anti-poverty efforts, and education. The final section of the course considers three challenges facing metropolitan areas: proposals for a more sustainable city; strategies to influence inequality; and current efforts in the Obama administration to revamp federal policies toward the American metropolis.
UC Berkeley	Power and Prosperity in Urban America	191	Over the past twenty years, many American cities have experienced comebacks: growing numbers of upper-income residents have relocated to cities; downtowns have been transformed into lively arts and entertainment districts; and crime has fallen. This course will examine the causes and implications of these recent upswings in urban fortunes. The questions we will consider include: How did cities achieve these transformations? Why were some cities much more successful than others? How has the revitalization of cities affected the urban poor? The course will also examine the impact of the recession on cities. Does the recession jeopardize recent gains in urban prosperity? How have cities coped with the fiscal strains presented by reduced tax revenues and limits on state and federal assistance?
Sacramento State	California State and Local Government	GOVT 180	California state, city and county politics and government. Comparisons with governments in other states.
Sacramento State	Introduction to Urban Politics	GOVT 184	Problems of urban areas and proposed solutions; politics and government.

Sacramento State	Urban Politics	GOVT 284	In-depth exploration of the socio-economic problems of urban and metropolitan areas and an evaluation of proposed political and governmental solutions.
Harvard	Presidents, Governors, and Mayors: Chief Executive Power in Comparative Perspective	Government 94fg	Analyzes the foundation, development, and exercise of chief executive power at the national, state, and local levels of government in the United States. Examines the applicability of different political science theories of presidential power to the broader exercise of chief executive power. Explores the sources and limits of executive authority, the roles and responsibilities of political chief executives at different levels of government, and the way in which institutions affect the exercise of chief executive power.
NYU	Urban Government and Politics	POL-UA 360	Study of politics and politicians in the contemporary American city. Evolution of local party organizations, the rise and fate of party "bosses," and the predicament of the ordinary citizen in the urban community. Patterns of city politics against the background of American social and cultural history, including the impulse toward reform and the effects of reform efforts on the distribution of power in the community. Conceptions of effective leadership in urban politics and the role of the police, the press, and "good government" groups in local political life.

TABLE 2: SAMPLE LOCAL GOVERNMENT TEXTS

Local Government Textbook Title	Author	Year Published	ISBN	Publisher
State and Local Government: The Essentials	Ann O'M. Bowan and Richard C. Kearney	2014	1285737482	Cengage Learning
Local Government	Howard Elcock	1994	415101670	Taylor & Francis
State and Local Government: 2014-2015 Edition	Kevin B. Smith and Jayme L. Neiman	2014	1483374262	Congressional Quarterly, Inc.
Understanding Local Government	Sandra Stevenson	2009	1422473317	LEXISNEXIS
Local Government Law, Cases, and Materials	Lynn Baker, Clayton Gillette	2010	1599414201	Foundation Press
State and Local Government: Politics and Public Policies	David Saffell and Harry Basehart	2008	73526320	McGraw Hill
State and Local Governments: Sustainability in the 21st Century	Christopher Simon, Brent Steel, and Nicholas Lovrich	2010	0199752001	Oxford University Press
State and Local Government by the People	David Magleby, Paul Light, and Christine Nemacheck	2013	205962823	Pearson

APPENDIX 2 COURSE SYLLABUS

POSC 360 Local Politics Fall, 2014

Instructor: Dr. Fred Smoller

Email address: smoller@chapman.edu

Office Location: Roosevelt 207B

Office hours: MW 9-11, and by appointment.

Office phone: 714-516-4582

Catalog Description:

This course focuses on local government and politics in the US. You'll be introduced to the basics of local politics, including the structure and organization of local government, intergovernmental relations and nongovernmental elements (voters, interest groups, media, private power holders, race, and class). To the maximum extent possible, this will be done using the cities of Orange and Irvine and the surrounding area (Orange County) as a learning laboratory. We'll also learn about local politics through a simulation, with students playing the roles of various actors in local politics. The goal of the course is to provide students with information, understanding and critical insights as to how American communities function politically.

(Offered: Fall semester.) Credits: 3

Prerequisites: None

Program Learning Outcomes:

- Demonstrate an appreciation for the possibilities and responsibilities of national and global citizenship, including understanding opportunities for political participation and an ability to use critically the many sources of information about politics to make political choices and solve political problems.
- Identify political principles and theories connected with democratic citizenship.
- Demonstrate the habit of accessing sources of political knowledge and the skill to critically interpret, assess and apply evidence.

Student Learning Outcomes

- To understand, participate in and affect politics in your own community – as a journalist, involved citizen, or public or private sector professional.
- to get the information you need to deepen your knowledge of your current and future communities.
- to apply social science theories to real-life politics.
- to synthesize ideas from varied sources to enhance your understanding of local politics.
- to think critically and analytically about local politics and politics more generally.

Required Texts:

Terry Christensen and Tom Hogen-Esch, Local Politics, 2nd Ed. ME Sharpe, 2006.
(abbreviated LP in syllabus)

Gustavo Arellano ,Orange County. Scribner, 2008. (Abbreviated OC in syllabus).

Online Articles.

RECOMMENDED:

Joe Mathews and Mark Paul, California Crackup: How Reform Broke the Golden State and How We Can Fix It. University of California Press, 2010.

I will also post articles regarding local politics on Blackboard. Check under documents and resources each week.

Also, it is important to read VOICEFOC.com, The Orange County Register, especially the Local section, and editorial page, each day, The Los Angeles Times, and the political articles in OC Weekly. Both are available for free on campus and on-line at ocregister.com and ocweekly.com. Here are a number of blogs that cover Orange County will be useful for your papers that you read from time to time.

Red County at <http://www.redcounty.com/orange-county/>

Total Buzz at <http://totalbuzz.freedomblogging.com/>

Orange Juice at <http://orangejuiceblog.com/>
The Liberal OC at <http://www.theliberoloc.com>.

Instructional Strategies:

Attendance

You are required to attend every class. Failure to do so may result in a drop from the course.

Participation

A large part of your grade (see below) is based on your participation in class discussions. Further, more so than most classes, you will only get out of this class as much as you put in. The success of the class absolutely *depends* on the contribution of the students. Be prepared to show up and say smart things.

Midterm and Final Exam

The midterm and final will include short answer and essay questions. It will stress the readings, lectures, and course discussions. The final exam covers the entire semesters' work.

Quizzes

A quiz regarding the reading and speaker at the start of class will be given each week with the exception of Week 1. The quiz will be taken on your laptop. The quizzes will consist of multiple choice and one short answer question. Quizzes may only be taken in class; there are no makeups.

Papers

The city council paper will require attendance of at least two meetings of an Orange County city council and a 6-page paper analyzing what you observe with appropriate application of readings. See final page of syllabus for more details.

The role model paper will be a 3-page paper on a person like the one you will play in the city politics simulation (you'll get a list of roles soon). Once you've picked a role, you must find a local, real-life parallel and research that person through public records, the Internet, newspapers or interviews. Your three page paper should describe the person and his/her political activities

and put them in the larger context provided by the text and readings, which should be cited in footnotes.

Civic engagement paper requires that you participate in a voter registration project or in organizing a candidate forum or attend a neighborhood association meeting or volunteer for a city council campaign and write about your experience being sure to apply the text. If you choose the voter registration or candidate forum options, you'll work in a team on these projects and you'll apply Chapter 9 of the text when you write your paper. If you choose the campaign option, you'll volunteer for a couple of evenings or a Saturday for one of the candidates in local races in the November election, also applying Chapter 9 of the text in your paper. If you choose the neighborhood association option, you may choose to attend any neighborhood association meeting. Note how many, what sorts of people attend, what issues they discuss and how they make decisions. Apply Chapter 10 of the text. Is this a NIMBY group? What interest group tactics do they use or discuss? Why are people there? Your paper should be 3 pages.

The city politics simulation (10% of course grade) will be played at the end of the semester. A course handout will provide details. Grades will be based on attendance, participation and written evaluations by participants.

Class Participation: You will be expected to keep up with the readings and to actively participate in class discussion. Attending class and doing the readings is necessary, but it isn't enough. Members of the class are strongly urged to share their ideas, raise questions, suggest new alternatives and explore the implications of ideas presented--in short, to take an active part in their own learning experience. Those who offer ideas in class, particularly if their comments show an understanding of the readings and lectures and some original thinking as well, will not be forgotten when grading time comes around. Students will also be expected to participate in the discussion board section of Blackboard.

Evaluation

The course grade will be determined by the following formula:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| 1. City Council Paper | 15% |
| 2. Civic Engagement Paper | 10% |
| 3. Role Model Paper | 10% |

4. Participation/Simulation	10%
5. Weekly Quizzes	15%
6. Midterm	20%
7. Final	20%
Total	100%

Important: If you are taking this course Pass/No Pass you must make at least a ‘C’ in order to receive a “pass”. The following cutoffs will be used in determining final grades:

Students with Disabilities

In compliance with ADA guidelines, students who have any condition, either permanent or temporary, that might affect their ability to perform in this class are encouraged to contact the Disability Services Office. The Disability Services Office will work with the appropriate faculty member who is asked to provide the accommodations for a student based on the documentation and the individual student needs. The granting of any accommodation will not be retroactive and cannot jeopardize the academic standards or integrity of the course.

Equity and Diversity

Chapman University is committed to ensuring equality and valuing diversity. Students and professors are reminded to show respect at all times as outlined in Chapman’s Harassment and Discrimination Policy: <http://tinyurl.com/CUHarassment-Discrimination> Any violations of this policy should be discussed with the professor, the Dean of Students, and/or otherwise reported in accordance with this policy.

Chapman University Academic Integrity Policy

Chapman University is a community of scholars, which emphasizes the mutual responsibility of all members to seek knowledge honestly and in good faith. Students are responsible for doing their own work, and academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated anywhere in the university.

Further Ground Rules

1. No paper will be accepted after the day on which it is due. I do not give makeup exams.
2. Lateness. Please be on time to class.
3. You may bring water, but no food to class.

4. Daily attendance will be taken at the start of each class period. More than three absences will result in a lower grade.

5 Plagiarized papers will result in an "F" for the course. Students are expected to understand what plagiarism is, and why it will not be tolerated. Please see

<http://www.chapman.edu/library/plagiarism> if you have any doubts about what plagiarism is.

WEEK ONE:

Sep. 3:

Topic: Introduction and Organization

Reading: LP, Chapter 1; Prologue; OC, Introduction

Question: Why should we care about local politics?

Guest: "Steve Rocco"

WEEK TWO:

Sep. 10:

Topic: The Environment of Local Politics:

Reading: LP, Chapters 2; OC, pages 1-22

View: "Saigon, USA"/ Mendez v. Westminster

WEEK THREE:

Sep. 17:

Topic: The Evolution of Urban Places: Where People Live & Why.

Reading: LP, Chapter 3; OC 23-42.

Guest: Supervisor John Moorlach

WEEK FOUR:

Sep. 24:

Topic: The Intergovernmental Environment of Local Politics

Reading: LP, Chapter 4; OC, pages 63-82.

Guest: Orange City Council Candidates

WEEK FIVE:

Oct 1:

Topic: Forms of Government: Machines and Reform

Reading: LP, Chapter 5; OC, pages 83-102

Guest: Doug Willmore, Bell City Manager

WEEK SIX:

Oct. 8:

Topic: The Council Manager Form of Government

Reading: LP, Chapter, 6; OC, pages 103-122.

Guest: Gustavo Arellano

MIDTERM EXAMINATION

WEEK SEVEN:

Oct. 15:

Topic: Legislators and Executives

Reading: LP, Chapter 7; OC, pages 122-146.

Guest: Orange City Manager, John Sibley

WEEK EIGHT:

Oct. 22:

Topic: The Bureaucracy

Reading: LP, Chapter 8; OC, pages 147-166.

Guest: Nick Berardino, OCEA

WEEK NINE:

Oct. 29:

Topic: Elections and, Campaigns

Reading: LP, Chapter 9; OC, pages 167-188

Raising money, getting endorsements, strategies for winning.

District versus at large elections? Does it make a difference?.

Guest: Tom Tait/Mike Houston

WEEK TEN:

Nov. 5:

Topic: The Media

Reading: LP, Chapter 10; OC, pages 189-210

Smoller: Zsa Zsa and Me

Is media coverage of local politics comprehensive? Fair? If not, why not?

Guest: Jeff Rowe

CITY COUNCIL PAPER DUE

WEEK ELEVEN:

Nov. 12

Topic: Community Power Structures and land use planning

Reading: LP, Chapter 11; OC, pages 211-228

How are land use decisions made? What role do developers play in land use decisions? What is the growth coalition?

Guest: Jennifer Le, City of Orange Planner.

ROLE MODEL PAPER DUE

WEEK TWELVE:

Nov. 19

Topic: Local Government Issues: The Great Park.

Reading: LP, Chapter 12-13; OC, pages 229-248.

City Politics Simulation

WEEK THIRTEEN:

Nov. 26:

Topic: NO CLASS THANKSGIVING

WEEK FOURTEEN:

Dec 3:

Topic: Metropolitan Regional Politics: The Future of Local Government.

Reading: LP, Chapter 14-15; OC, pages 249-264

WEEK FIFTEEN

Dec 10.

Topic: City Politics Simulation

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PAPER DUE

FINAL EXAM December 17th at 7pm.