

Reclaiming Democracy

Fall 2011
Wednesdays, 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.
Elon University School of Law
Room 207
www.reclaimingdemocracy.us

Course Instructors

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<p>We thank the faculty and students who were part of past teaching teams and continue to influence how we think about Reclaiming Democracy: <i>Ellen Bateman, Gwendolyn Bookman, Eric Ginsburg, Karla McLucas, Larry Morse, Isabell Moore, and Wendy Poteat.</i></p>

Course Description

Reclaiming Democracy draws on multiple academic disciplines to examine and model democracy. The course brings together students from Bennett College, Elon University, Greensboro College, Guilford College, North Carolina A & T State University, the University of North Carolina, Greensboro and the greater Greensboro community. To understand what we mean by “democracy,” we explore the different traditions that drive public policy, governance, and citizen engagement. As we turn our gaze toward democracy in Greensboro more specifically, we consider the city’s rich history in civil rights and economic justice, as well as the even more powerful desire for civility that has impacted our ability to have deep, community-wide discussion of the area’s struggles. Participants in the class learn together within a large classroom and also in smaller study groups. We use interactive technology to stimulate pre-class questions and discussions for that week’s readings. To set the tone for communal engagement, we augment traditional academic learning with other experiences within music, stories, film, and creativity of other sorts.

Reclaiming Democracy

Course Readings

Chafe, W. (1980) *Civilities & Civil Rights*

Articles as assigned

Course Questions

- What is democracy?
- In what ways is Greensboro democratic/undemocratic?
- What is the role of education in a democratic society?
- What is the role of democracy in education?
- What do these considerations require of us?

Course Goals

- Develop an understanding of democracy that is responsible to all members of the community.
- Critically examine the theories and concepts that inform our contemporary and historical understandings of democracy.
- Explore the role of stories and public narratives in democracy.
- Identify barriers to democracy at personal, systemic, institutional, and cultural levels.
- Co-create a model of teaching and learning that embraces democracy.
- Create a vibrant and productive dialogue about community issues.
- Study the discourses, decision making and community action relevant to key community issues.
- Develop and deepen an understanding of what democracy requires of us.
- Explore the ways a person's social identity impacts his or her relationship to the issues and concepts we are studying in class.

Course Grading

Please hand in two copies of each written assignment. All faculty abide by a common grading rubric. Students wishing to contest any grade will follow a process that includes providing a written argument with ample evidence to persuade a team of not less than two faculty members why a grade should be modified. The instructor of record (the

one affiliated with the student's home institution) will be the final arbiter.

Grading Scale

A—90 –100
B—80 – 89
C—70—79
D—60 – 69
F—below 60

Course Assignments—Details for each of these is provided on the separate assignment sheet for the class.

Your Education Ethnography—A reflection on your educational experience up to this point in your life. **10 points**

Weekly blog entries on course readings and class discussions to be maintained in a course portfolio.

Self-assessment of your blogs and responses to them. **15 points**

Final blog evaluation **15 points**

Participation—Since a democracy is dependent upon citizen involvement, we expect you to participate in every weekly class. We also recognize some absences are unavoidable due to illness, family emergency, etc. In those cases, contact your course instructor in advance. **10 points**

Civic Discourse Research Paper--To see our democracy in action, you will view elected and/or appointed public officials as they deliberate about local concerns. **10 points**

Community Project--In collaboration with your small group, you will develop a final project that answers the course questions and satisfies the course goals as stated in the syllabus. There will be three short assignments leading to the final project: Stakeholder Assignment, Power Analysis, and Final Project Draft **30 points**

Reclaiming Democracy

Final Reflections—Your vision of what you believe education ought to be in the 21st century, considering the influence of and impact on democracy. **10 points**

Late Assignments—Late assignments may not be accepted. If accepted, all late assignments will receive point reductions.

Course Policies and Expectations

1. Do not expect this course to be easy. The readings and the discussions are designed to challenge you. To be prepared, you need to read the required text and/or articles in advance of each week's discussion.
2. Attendance is necessary to ensure rich discussion in small groups and in the larger class. We value the learning that occurs from interaction, and recognize that democracy itself depends upon collective engagement. Any time you are absent, you will need to stay up with the readings in order to keep up with the class.
3. Ask questions and be curious. Faculty are available during office hours to address specific questions and concerns.
4. Watch for emails and updates.
5. BE ON TIME. We will be taking breaks during the evening, but we expect to start and finish on time. Also, PLAN TO STAY until the end of each session out of courtesy to your colleagues.
6. We will accommodate fall break schedules.
7. We ask that everyone leave laptops closed and cell phones off during class and as these devices have a way of separating people from one another.
8. We encourage the kind of active reading that includes circling things, highlighting main points, expressing outrage and agreement in the text itself, etc. This practice leads to successful learning.
9. Students are expected to abide by their home school's academic integrity policy. See each school bulletin or web site for details.

Students with Disabilities--If you have any special needs that require accommodation, please alert your reclaimingdemocracy.us 8.22.11

instructor of record the first week of the semester. A plan will be developed to meet your learning needs. If you have a disability, you will need to provide the proper documentation as required by your school.

Course Schedule

- August 31** All School Introductions
Required Readings:
Jean Anyon article
Paulo Freire chapter 2
Lisa Delpit excerpt
Suggested Readings:
Freire, chapter 1
Due: Education Ethnography
- September 7** Theories & Models of Democracy
Required Reading:
Cornel West chapters 1 & 2
Suggested Readings:
Galtung chapter, Iris Marion Young chapters 1 & 2
- September 14** Theories & Models of Democracy
Required Readings:
Westheimer & Kahne article
Read Stout, Chapter 18
- Sept. 21** Theories of Change & Organizing
Required Reading:
Gene Sharp excerpt
Read Warren chapter
Suggested Readings:
Core Dilemmas of Organizing (from web-site)
Due: 1st Civic Discourse Research
- Sept. 28** Civilities & Civil Rights, Introduction
Required Reading:
Chafe to p. 70
Due: Blog Self-Assessment
- October 5** Greensboro's Past & Present
Intl. Civil Rights Museum Tour (?)

Reclaiming Democracy

Required Reading:

Chafe to p. 130

Due: Stakeholder Analysis (Part one

of

Final Project)

Due: 2nd Civic Discourse Research

November 23 No class, Thanksgiving Break

November 30 Conference Preparation

Dec. 2 & 3 Conference at A & T

Community Projects Due

Note: Students will receive communication from their home instructor regarding additional class meetings before August 31 and/or after December 3.

October 12 Greensboro's Struggles Continue
Required Reading:
Chafe to p. 180
Greensboro Massacre Presentation
Guest Speakers: Nelson & Joyce
Johnson (tentative)
Due: Power Analysis (Part two of
final
project)

October 19 Resistance & Action
Required Reading:
Chafe to p. 202
(Note: Guilford College on Fall
Break)
Due: 3rd Civic Discourse Research

October 26 Education in Greensboro
Readings: TBA
Guest speakers: Parents Supporting
Parents (tentative)
Due: Final Project Draft (Part three
of final project)

November 2 Education: Local, National,
Internat'l.
Readings: TBA
Due: 4th Civic Discourse Research

November 9 To Solutions: Organizing for Change
Readings: TBA

November 16 An Alternative Vision ; Democ.
Theory
Readings: TBA
Due: 5th Civic Discourse Research

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