DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO

POLIS 9532B

Democratic Engagement

Winter 2018

INSTRUCTOR: Cameron D. Anderson
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OFFICE LOCATION: SSC 4217
OFFICE HOURS: Wednesday 11:30am-1pm or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will explore the topic of democratic engagement. Largely through the analytical lens of political behaviour, we will address questions of what is democratic engagement, what explains various aspects of democratic engagement, and consider the influences of additional factors including institutions, knowledge, non-conscious factors and sources of inequalities. Lastly, we assess the relationship of engagement with representation in democracies.

COURSE READINGS:


GRADE DISTRIBUTION:

25% Participation
30% Weekly Reading Summaries
45% Analytic Papers (3 x 15%) or a research paper
DISCUSSION OF COURSEWORK:

a) Class Participation - As this is a graduate seminar course, there will be no lectures and students are expected to actively participate each week. The participation grade will be based on the quality of comment, evidence of preparation, willingness to challenge accepted ideas and concern for the views expressed by others. If unable to attend, please inform the instructor in advance. Students will be given a preliminary grade for participation in the seventh week of the course. The final participation grade may change based on whether performance improves, declines or stays the same.

b) Reading Summaries - All students will be required to complete reading summaries for each of weeks two through twelve. These summaries should be used as a means of preparing for each week’s class and are intended to provide you with an opportunity, in advance of class, to read, interact with and comment on the readings. The summary should be composed of three parts. The first part should state, in your view, the most important two or three themes arising from that week’s readings. The second part should outline two or three insights gained from these readings. This is to say, what did you learn that you didn’t previously know or understand? The final part of the summary should articulate questions that were generated from the readings. The summaries should not be longer than two double-spaced pages and will be due at the beginning of each class. Each week three students will provide a very brief oral report of their reading summary at the beginning of each class. Late summaries will not be accepted. Summaries will be graded on a ‘check system’. Acceptable summaries will receive a ‘√’. Unacceptable or late summaries will receive a ‘√-’. On occasion, an unusually perceptive summary may receive a ‘√+’. For the term, an average of ‘√’ will be equivalent to an ‘A-’ grade of 80%.

c) Analytic Papers (or a research paper) – You are required to write 3 analytic papers: one from each of Weeks 2 and 3, Weeks 4 to 8 and Weeks 9 to 12. These papers should keep summary of the readings to a minimum and instead focus on articulating a coherent response to issues, arguments and ideas raised in the readings. You may choose to highlight how common themes are addressed throughout the readings; you might take issue with the central argument of certain authors; you might pose questions that deal with core issues of the readings or you might criticize one author based on the arguments of another and/or your own analysis. These papers will be graded on how well you interact with and develop your response to the readings. The papers should be 7-8 (double-spaced) pages long. These papers are due January 31 (Weeks 2 and 3), March 21 (Weeks 4 to 8) and April 18 (Weeks 9 to 12). This paper cannot be written on the same week’s material that you present. Alternatively, in lieu of the 3 analytic papers, you may choose to write a substantive research paper of 20-25 pages on a topic agreed in consultation with the professor. The research paper will be due on the date of the third analytic paper.
IMPORTANT COURSE POLICIES

Submission of Assignments:
Assignments (both reading summaries and analytic papers) are due at the beginning of class. The third analytic paper and research paper will be due at 12pm on April 18.

Academic Offences:
Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf.

Late penalty:
Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 5% per day. Assignments that are more than 1 week late will not be accepted for grading.

Extensions:
Extensions are not given. However, when there are genuine and unavoidable family or medical circumstances an extension may be granted at the discretion of the professor.
Part I Introductory Topics

Week 1. January 10 - Political Behaviour
Required readings:


Suggested Readings:
Available online: http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199235476.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199235476

Week 2. January 17 - What is Democratic Engagement?


Available online: http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199545636.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199545636

Available online:
Part II Sources of Democratic Engagement

Week 3. January 24 - Democratic Attitudes and Values


Week 4. January 31 - Turnout


**Week 5. February 7 - Parties and Partisanship**


**Week 6. February 14 - Voting and Elections**


******** February 21 - No Class - Reading Week ********

**Week 7. February 28 - Protest Politics**


**Part III Additional Considerations**

**Week 8. March 7 – Institutional Effects**


Available Online: 

******** March 14 - No Class ********

**Week 9. March 21 – Knowledge, Information and Competence**


**Week 10. March 28 – Biological and Non-Conscious Factors**


**Week 11. April 4 – Inequalities - Gender and Race**


IV Concluding thoughts

Week 12. April 11 - Engagement and Democratic Representation


