Representative Syllabus

POLS 4392-001

Civic Engagement, Civil Society and Community

\*\*\*Note: this is a general description of this course only. The actual “day one” syllabus will be provided no later than the first day of the course.\*\*\*

***Course Description:***

Imagine in your mind’s eye a “healthy community.” What are its characteristics? In addition to the physical spaces (parks, schools, shopping, public spaces, roads, *etc.*), imagine the people. What are they doing? How are they using their free time? Are they coming together in groups or living their lives in a solitary fashion? If they form groups, what do those groups look like – are they primarily based on shared interests or are they formed around an issue or topic that affects the community?

Now think about the “engaged person” – that man or woman who attends community meetings, works on behalf of causes or groups, who volunteers his or her time, perhaps runs for elected office or volunteers for appointed positions. What explains why these people choose to spend their time in this fashion? What difference does it make if a community has more or less of these people? What impact do they have on society? How do their activities involve (or not involve), affect or not affect public policy?

This course will explore these issues using the city of Arlington as a case study. Students will learn what scholars have to say about civic engagement and its relationship to political behavior (like voting, working on campaigns or donating money), what civil society is and what community means. We will explore civic engagement and civil society both at the level of the community (what are the characteristics of a “healthy” or “engaged” society) and at the individual level (what does it mean for a person to be civic minded or to be “engaged” in their community). We will learn from local organizations, elected officials and civic leaders as well as our own observations about the communities in which we live.

***Requirements and Prerequisites***

Students must have taken POLS 2311 and POLS 2312. The course is designed for political science majors and minors. Additionally, students in related fields (sociology, anthropology, social work, business, nursing) are welcome.

***Readings***

Please contact Professor Deen for an updated list of required texts. **Do not purchase texts without contacting Dr. Deen (deen@uta.edu).** At minimum, we will read:

* Baiocchi, Gianpaolo, Bennett, Elizabeth A., Alissa Cordner, Peter Taylor Klein, Stephanie Savell. 2014. *The Civic Imagination*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers
* Putnam, Robert. 2001. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Touchstone Books by Simon & Schuster.
* Wuthnow, Robert. 1998. *Loose Connections: Joining Together in America's Fragmented Communities*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

There may be other books to purchase and there will be additional readings provided on Blackboard.

***Assessment and Grading***

Grades will be assessed through a variety of assignments, possibly including: exams, projects/papers, in-class activities, participation and quizzes. See the “day one” for more details.

**Class Policies**

No *makeup* will be scheduled for the exam or the final except for medical reasons or extreme circumstances. Instructor must be notified in advance of the exam to schedule such a make-up. Written documentation of the extreme circumstance may be required and students should expect documentation to be verified.

*Late assignments* Assignments are due at the beginning of class the day indicated, unless otherwise notified by the instructor.

*Incompletes* No incompletes will be given unless you provide a signed doctor’s statement indicating you are too ill to complete the course. Student should expect this documentation to be verified.

*Drop Policy* Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance. Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://wweb.uta.edu/aao/fao/>).

*Americans with Disabilities Act* The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Any student requiring an accommodation for this course must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter certified by the staff in the Office for Students with Disabilities, University Hall 102. Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

*Title IX* The University of Texas at Arlington is committed to upholding U.S. Federal Law “Title IX” such that no member of the UT Arlington community shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. For more information, visit [www.uta.edu/titleIX](http://www.uta.edu/titleIX).

*Academic Integrity*  Students enrolled all UT Arlington courses are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington’s tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.

I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.

UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code as they see fit in their courses, including (but not limited to) having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System Regents’ Rule 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university’s standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student’s suspension or expulsion from the University.

*Electronic Communication*  UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

*My policy on email* Email is a primary method of communication in this class, including Blackboard announcements sent as an email. Any assignments sent via email will be confirmed as received by the instructor. Students should seek this confirmation and if it is not sent should assume the instructor did not receive the email. I will generally respond to email within one business day. If I haven’t responded, please resend as the message may not have gotten through.

Email etiquette tip: begin your email with a salutation (i.e., “Dear Professor Deen”), sign your name and indicate in the subject line and body of the email the main reason for the message. These tips apply to professional communication, even when we send email from mobile devices.

*Student Feedback Survey*  At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as “lecture,” “seminar,” or “laboratory” shall be directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student’s feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington’s effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

*Final Review Week* A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week unless specified in the class syllabus. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

*Emergency Exit Procedures*  Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit, which is located on the south side of the hallway. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities.

*Student Support Services* UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to resources@uta.edu, or view the information at [www.uta.edu/resources](http://www.uta.edu/resources).

*Writing Center*  The Writing Center, 411 Central Library, offers individual 40 minute sessions to review assignments, Quick Hits (5-10 minute quick answers to questions), and workshops on grammar and specific writing projects. Visit [https://uta.mywconline.com/](https://owa.uta.edu/owa/luket%40exchange.uta.edu/redir.aspx?C=jqplelmmw0KcvkWv1pRv_rHS8ofUUtFIXl_CWZTLffEmCPyZf3x4ncUbBmD9p3gSPROCbhSJj7U.&URL=https%3a%2f%2futa.mywconline.com%2f) to register and make appointments. For hours, information about the writing workshops we offer, scheduling a classroom visit, and descriptions of the services we offer undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty members, please visit our website at [www.uta.edu/owl/](http://www.uta.edu/owl/).