
COM 4930: Communication and Civic Engagement

Spring 2022

Time: T Period 4/ R Period 4-5

Location: Rolfs 314

Instructor: Dr. Amy Martinelli

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Office: Rolfs 403

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 9:30am-10:30am/Wednesdays, 10:00am-12:00pm, or by appointment

Remote Office Hours available at the same time as in person:

<https://ufl.zoom.us/j/3097483865> (Links to an external site.)

In a democratic society, civic engagement can consist of a great many things including social activism, speaking at a community meeting, or taking leadership positions in political organizations and even government institutions. If we are to believe the vast majority of news media and mainstream popular culture, civil civic engagement has reached a breaking point. Political discourse, in particular, is all-too-often categorized by incivility, indecency, and extremity on seemingly all sides of the political divide. Even the family dinner table has become a battleground associated with breakdowns in communication over political discussions. In this class, students will deepen their understanding of what it means to be a civically engaged citizen by critically engaging with historic methods of social movements, models of civic engagement (solidarity, advocacy, political activism, research public interests etc.), and theories regarding public (and interpersonal) discourses to better understand the most effective ways to be an engaged citizen. Students will learn about the ways that others have engaged with difficult topics and created social change and consider the ways that they can affect change in their own communities and/or personal lives.

UF ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS/REGULATIONS

Plagiarism: All submitted work during the course, written or oral, will be the student's personal, original work, with credit given to sources used. [Further, all documentation of absences will be honest representations.] If a student violates this understanding, evaluations of work must be affected accordingly and if necessary, adjudication will be processed by procedures approved by the University of Florida Honor Court. Please note the full UF Honor Code and conduct

policies here: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/1617/advising/info/student-honor-code.aspx>. More detail is attached at the end of this document.

Accommodations:

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodations. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester in order to allow us to provide the most effective support.

Students with any accommodations should arrange a meeting with the instructor during the first week of class (and ideally before the end of drop/add) to discuss how we can work together to meet the students' needs and still adhere to the essential elements/functions of the course in regards to attendance and class participation.

Plagiarism. A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

1. Quoting oral or written materials including but not limited to those found on the internet, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.
2. Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student.

Unauthorized Use of Materials or Resources ("Cheating"). A student shall not use unauthorized materials or resources in an academic activity. Unauthorized materials or resources shall include:

1. Any paper or project authored by the student and presented by the student for the satisfaction of any academic requirement if the student previously submitted or simultaneously submits substantially the same paper or project to satisfy another academic requirement and did not receive express authorization to resubmit or simultaneously submit the paper or project.
2. Any materials or resources prepared by another student and used without the other student's express consent or without proper attribution to the other student.
3. Any materials or resources which the faculty member has notified the student or the class are prohibited.
4. Use of a cheat sheet when not authorized to do so or use of any other resources or materials during an examination, quiz, or other academic activity without the express permission

of the faculty member, whether access to such resource or materials is through a cell phone, PDA, other electronic device, or any other means.

Prohibited Collaboration or Consultation. A student shall not collaborate or consult with another person on any academic activity unless the student has the express authorization from the faculty member.

1. Prohibited collaboration or consultation shall include but is not limited to:

a. Collaborating when not authorized to do so on an examination, take-home test, writing project, assignment, or course work.

b. Collaborating or consulting in any other academic or co-curricular activity after receiving notice that such conduct is prohibited.

c. Looking at another student's examination or quiz during the time an examination or quiz is given. Communication by any means during that time, including but not limited to communication through text messaging, telephone, e-mail, other writing or verbally, is prohibited unless expressly authorized.

2. It is the responsibility of the student to seek clarification on whether or not use of materials or collaboration or consultation with another person is authorized prior to engaging in any act of such use, collaboration or consultation. If a faculty member has authorized a student to use materials or to collaborate or consult with another person in limited circumstances, the student shall not exceed that authority. If the student wishes to use any materials or collaborate or consult with another person in circumstances to which the authority does not plainly extend, the student shall first ascertain with the faculty member whether the use of materials, collaboration or consultation is authorized.

DR. MARTINELLI'S CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

Email Etiquette: Questions and concerns can be addressed in person during my office hours listed above. I would also be happy to respond to questions and concerns through email – *within reason*. Please include the course title (COM 4930) within the subject line of your email. I expect an appropriate personal address to begin your email, as well as an appropriate signature with your complete name at the end. Please proofread and punctuate your emails to represent the professionalism that is expected through all written correspondence. I will try my best to respond to emails with the above criteria completed in an appropriate time frame. Finally, I find that most questions inquired through email can be sufficiently answered by referencing the syllabus. Please consult your syllabus prior to inquiring through email. I reserve the right to respond to such inquiries with the appropriate page and line number as referenced on the syllabus.

Attendance. I treat each student as a responsible adult. Part of being a responsible adult is that you attend class, on time, every time. Documentation is required for all excused absences. Excused absences include (a) personal illness or injury (b) a death in the family (c) a university sanctioned activity (with appropriate accompanying documentation *prior* to your absence). Documentation is required in all cases, regardless of reason.

Attendance Policy Students will be allowed up to **three unexcused absences** during the semester without incurring any consequences—besides missing class materials and information. These three absences will be treated as “no questions asked” and as separate from excused absences. If a student misses class beyond three their final score will be docked 20 points per hour of class missed. Please note that our class meets for two hours on Thursdays and therefore those days do count for two classes. Students will be expected to sign in during each class period after drop/add week.

Cell Phones, Sleeping, Etc. Please respect your classmates and their learning experience (and yourself and your learning experience!). Turn off the ringer on your cell phone, stay focused on and engaged in the class discussion, and do not disrespect the contributions of your classmates by sleeping, texting, Facebooking, Pinteresting, etc. Failure to provide these and similar courtesies may result in your being asked to leave class. Additionally, if you are “checked out” of class, your instructor reserves the right to mark you as absent for the day. This may happen without you being verbally informed of your recorded “absence.”

Participation. You are expected to participate actively in the course. In order to do so, you should prepare yourself by reading assignments before class and thinking critically about the material. You are encouraged to challenge ideas, and when you do so, you must show respect for people who share differing viewpoints in support of a climate that encourages deliberation and constructive conversation. In this class, we won’t shy away from topics that will vary in degree of difficulty and discomfort—as such, we will take great care to construct our own expectations for decorum in the classroom. Participation means that you are actively engaged, listening, and above all *respectful* to your classmates and your instructor. Dominating the conversation and class discussion can be distracting. Remaining silent during class discussion, however, does not represent an active public speaking engagement in the course and course concepts. Be respectful, be engaged, and be mindful of your contribution in relation to that of your classmates.

Deadlines. Meeting deadlines is very important and a mark of professionalism and respect in a community. Late assignments will be docked 20% of the total points possible for every calendar day they are late, beginning the minute after the assignment date and time. Several assignments will be turned into Canvas and will have a posted time an assignment is due. Course assignments turned in during class will be due at the beginning of class time. Those assignments not turned in with the collection of assignments at the beginning of class will be counted late and result in a grade deduction. Assignments will not be accepted more than four calendar days past the due date. In the event of a missed speech, you will not be able to make

up the speech except in the case of verified illnesses, funerals, or university-supported activities and I have been contacted before the beginning of class the day of the scheduled speech.

Written Work. The work you turn in should reflect your professionalism. All written assignments must be typed and proofread for errors. Handwritten work will not be accepted. All written work must be double spaced and typed in size 12 Times New Roman font. Documents with more than 1-inch margins will result in a grade deduction. All work must include your full name, course name (COM 4930), and assignment title in the one-inch header of a document. Page lengths are expected to be complete pages.

Hint: Check your margins, and make sure that your spacing after paragraphs is not providing additional spaces.

24/7 Rule. In the event that you receive a grade that you would like to discuss, please wait 24 hours to raise your concerns. This time is provided for you to carefully review all comments that I made and develop your thinking before we talk. After 24 hours but within seven days of receiving your grade, please make an appointment with me or visit my office hours to discuss your concerns and ways to help improve your work on future assignments. An appeal for any grade assigned in the course must be submitted in writing no later than seven days after receiving your grade. After seven days, all grades are final.

ASSIGNMENTS

Civic Identity Autobiographical Poster (Individual) 100 points

- *Poster Presentation:* In this poster session, you will consider and express your “civic identity” by relating your experiences (or lack thereof) with civic engagement. More information will be provided. You will be expected to talk to students in the class as well as guests (faculty members, other students, etc. about your civic identity.” Students will develop a short, elevator speech to explain their poster during the session.

Civic Engagement Project—This assignment is a semester long project that involves multiple components. The following assignments all relate to the Civic Engagement Project:

Community Issue Brief 150 points

- *Paper (1000-1250 words):* You will create an issue brief on a community or public issue that is of importance to you. The issue brief is a short, neutral summary of what is known about a particular issue or problem. It is widely used in government and industry. A policy issue brief is about a public problem, one that may or already does affect, or is affected by, government. Analysts prepare such briefs for educated generalists (legislators, managers, etc.), who may know little or nothing about the topic, but need to have a general background, quickly. The issue brief distills or synthesizes a large amount of complex detail, so the reader can easily understand the heart of the issue, its

background, the players (“stakeholders”) and any recommendations or even educated guesses about the future of the issue. It may have tables and graphs; it usually has a short list of references, so the reader knows something about the sources on which it is based, and where to go for more information.

- *Small Group Discussion:* In groups of about 3 students, participants provide an overview of their issue and discuss the intersections of their issues and how each person might expand upon their issue.

Advocating for Change: Writing and Op Ed 50 points

- *Paper (500-750 words):* An op-ed, or opinion editorial, is a narrative essay that presents the writer’s opinion or thoughts about an issue. Op-eds can raise awareness about a particular topic or aim to persuade others, and can substantiate the writer as an expert on a subject. Op-eds are most commonly published in daily newspapers. They are typically 600-700 words, but can be shorter. Some op-eds are written by newspaper staff or syndicated writers. Many are submitted by the publication’s readers.
- *Small Group Discussion:* IN groups of about 3 students, participants provide an overview of what you are advocating for and discuss the intersections of their advocacy ideas and how each person might expand upon their issue.

Community Issue Rhetorical Analysis 150 points

- Using both visual and written evidence, you will construction a rhetorical analysis of your community issue to convey its significance deeply. In other words, this assignment asks you to connect the discrete community issue with broader issues and social movements. An effective execution of this assignment, at minimum, will:
 - Clearly identify a discrete social movement with high social relevance
 - Provide a concise, though thorough, history of the social issue that illuminates both its internal development and historical exigencies that inspired it.
 - Identify a minimum of *three* distinct rhetorical strategies advocates have used to discuss/present the issue, providing clear examples of each (i.e. direct quotations, images, videos, etc.)
 - Draw on materials inside and outside of class to frame your analysis.
 - Effectively use visual/audio/and written materials to frame your analysis
- This assignment will be turned in as a visual representation with written components. More detail will be provided.

Bringing it all together: Final Presentation 150 points

- In your final presentation, you will draw from all parts of the Civic Engagement Project to present to the class your work. 8-10 minutes, must use a visual aid.

Dialogues: Deep Civility in Practice Conversations 50 points

- We will spend a week of class utilizing the lessons we learned about how to have meaningful conversations about difficult topics by engaging in dialogue. Dr. Martinelli will moderate discussions and all students are expected to participate and provide a one-page reflection of the experience.

Exam One 150 Points

Final Take Home Exam 150 Point

Participation and Attendance 50 Points

GRADING

Scale for Final Grades:

A	93-100%	930-1000 points
A-	90-92%	900-929
B+	87-89%	870-899
B	83-86%	830-869
B-	80-82%	800-829
C+	77-79%	770-799
C	73-76%	730-769
C-	70-72%	700-729
D+	67-69%	670-699
D	63-66%	630-669
D-	60-62%	600-629
E	0-59%	0-599

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE*

WEEK ONE: Creating a Classroom Community

Thursday, January 6

Introduction to course details, syllabus, rules, and regulations

Reading: “Willing to Be Disturbed” Margaret Wheatley (this will be provided in class):

https://ncs.uchicago.edu/sites/ncs.uchicago.edu/files/uploads/tools/NCs_PS_Toolkit_DPL_Set_B_WillingDisturbed.pdf

In Class Activity: Collaboratively Creating a Classroom Community: Our Standards and Expectations for Participation

WEEK TWO: Civic Engagement—Where Do We Stand?

Tuesday, January 11

Objective—Students will consider the concept of “Civic Religion” presented in Eric Liu’s Ted Talk.

Video: “How to Revive Your Belief in Democracy,” by Eric Liu (we will watch together in class but it is a good idea to watch on your own before class so that you are already familiar with the content):

https://www.ted.com/talks/eric_liu_how_to_revive_your_belief_in_democracy/transcript?language=en

Thursday, January 13

Objective—Students will take stock of the current state of civic life to assess civic engagement in society writ large and in their own lives.

Reading: *Bowling Alone* Chapter 1 <http://movies2.nytimes.com/books/first/p/putnam-alone.html>; *Bowling Alone, Revisited* <http://stevebarrera.com/bowling-alone-revisited/>; *Public Trust Reboot: Unleashing the Millennial Civic Spirit*

https://ssir.org/articles/entry/public_trust_reboot_unleashing_the_millennial_civic_spirit#

WEEK THREE:

Intro to Rhetorical Concepts in Civic Engagement Continued & Constructing your Civic Identity

Tuesday, January 18

Students will use class time to work on their “Civic Identity Autobiographical Poster.”

Thursday, January 20

Objective—Students will participate in a poster session to display and explain their “Civic Identity Autobiographical Poster” to the class and guests. We will conduct a dialogue immediately following the poster session.

DUE: “Civic Identity Autobiographical Poster”

WEEK FOUR: Civic Identity

Tuesday, January 25

Exam One: Covers information from the first six weeks of class.

Willing to Be Disturbed, Bowling Alone readings, Civic identity

Thursday, January 27

IMPORTANT DAY, DO NOT MISS: Today in class, Dr. Martinelli will provide details about the multi-part Civic Engagement Project.

WEEK FIVE: Civic Identity, Continued

Tuesday, February 1

Reading: Rhetoric in Civic Life (RCL) Chapter 1: Rhetoric as Symbolic Action

Thursday, February 3

Reading: RCL Chapter 2: Language and Chapter 3: Visual Rhetoric

WEEK SIX: Argument and Audiences

Tuesday, February 8

Reading: RCL Chapter 4: Argument

Thursday, February 10

RCL: Chapter 5: Narrative and Chapter 6: Rhetors

DUE: Community Issue Brief and Discussion

WEEK SEVEN: Rhetoric

Tuesday, February 15

Reading: RCL Chapter 7: Audiences

Thursday, February 17

Reading: Chapter 8: Rhetorical Situations

WEEK EIGHT: Rhetoric

Tuesday, February 22

DUE: Community Issue Op-Ed and Discussion

Thursday, February 24

Social Movement Spotlight

WEEK NINE: Social Movement Spotlight

Tuesday, March 1

Due: Community Issue Rhetorical Analysis—Come prepared to share your work in small groups.

Thursday, March 3

Independent Work Day

WEEK TEN: Spring Break No Class

Tuesday, March 8 and Thursday, March 10: No class—Spring Break

WEEK ELEVEN: The Utility and Futility of Civility

Tuesday, March 17

Students will grapple with the historic call for civility and the ways that can constrain difficult conversations and forward progress.

Readings: William H. Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina and the Black Struggle for Freedom*; ZZ Packer, “When is Civility a Duty, and When is it a Trap?”; Thomas W. Benson, “The Rhetoric of Civility: Power, Authenticity, and Democracy.” (All readings available on Canvas)

Thursday, March 19

Readings: A.N. Woodson, “Defining and Practicing Deep Civility on College Campuses,” <https://www.higheredtoday.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Defining-Practicing-Deep-Civility.pdf>

Watch: Teresa Behan: “Is Civility a Sham?” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m7hdlIneypE>

WEEK TWELVE: Deep Civility in Practice

Tuesday, March 22

In class Dialogues: Deep Civility in Practice

Thursday, March 24

In class Dialogues: Deep Civility in Practice

WEEK THIRTEEN: Work on Civic Engagement Project

Tuesday, March 29

Dr. Martinelli will be out of town working at the national speech tournament. You will be expected to use this time out of class to finalize your Civic Engagement Project.

Thursday, March 31

Dr. Martinelli will be out of town working at the national speech tournament. You will be expected to use this time out of class to finalize your Civic Engagement Project.

WEEK FOURTEEN: Final Presentations

Tuesday, April 5

Dr. Martinelli will be out of town working at the national speech tournament. You will be expected to use this time out of class to finalize your Civic Engagement Project.

Thursday, April 7

Final Presentations

WEEK FIFTEEN: Final Presentations

Tuesday, April 12

Final Presentations

Thursday, April 14

Final Presentations

WEEK SIXTEEN:

Tuesday, April 19

Final Presentations

FINAL TAKE HOME EXAM

Due: Wednesday, April 27 at noon