
IDS 2935: Communication and Civic Engagement

Time: T Period 4/ R Period 4-5

Fall 2023

Instructor: Dr. Amy Martinelli

Office Hours: Office location, Zoom Link, Instructor Email, and Phone contact are available on the course Canvas page.

Course Description: 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 considering the pressing question: How can communication enhance civic engagement in an ever-changing society? They will do so 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) rhetoric 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 how they can affect change in their own communities and/or personal lives.

Course Delivery: This course will consist of interactive lectures, discussions, activities, case studies, and guest lectures. Attendance is required and lectures will not be recorded for the convenience of student schedules. As this is a class that requires discussion, it is expected that students be on time and in class, every time. I do not plan to regularly record lectures, although I may do so from time to time for evaluation purposes. I will not distribute a recorded version of lectures to ensure the sanctity of the academic information and to protect student privacy.

Required Text:

Palczewski, C.H., Ice, R., Fritch, J. (2016). *Rhetoric in Civic Life* 2nd Edition. (ISBN 9781891136375)
State College, PA: Strata Publishing Inc.

Other Assigned Readings and Videos will be provided on the Canvas Website for registered students.

Weekly Course Schedule

This schedule provides an overview of the course material, but more detail is available on the Canvas website for this course for registered students.

This calendar is subject to change for pedagogical or logistical reasons. To the extent possible, students will be notified in advance of these changes.

WEEK ONE: Creating a Classroom Community

Thursday, August 24

Introduction to course details, syllabus, rules, and regulations

WEEK TWO: Civic Engagement—Where Do We Stand?

Tuesday, August, 29

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

Thursday, August 31

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.

WEEK THREE:

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

Tuesday, September 5

Reading—Hart et al. Civic Identity

Activity—Cultural Iceberg and Civic Identity.

Thursday, September 7

Introduction to the first assignment: “Civic Identity Autobiographical Poster”; Students will use class time to work on their “Civic Identity Autobiographical Poster.”

WEEK FOUR:

Civic Identity

Tuesday, September 12

Objective—Students will cultivate a foundational understanding of the rhetorical concepts that underpin the ways that we create ideas about civic life.

Reading: *Rhetoric in Civic Life* Chapter 1: Rhetoric and Symbolic Action

Thursday, September 14

Objective—Students will continue to expand their knowledge of the rhetorical concepts that intersect with civic engagement.

Reading: *Rhetoric in Civic Life* Chapter 2: Language and Chapter 3: Visual Rhetoric

WEEK FIVE: Civic Identity, Continued

Tuesday, September 19

Objective—Students will learn about the “Civic Engagement Workshop” assignment. This will form the basis for the final presentation in the class.

NOTE: VERY important to be in class on this day.

Thursday, September 21

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 SIX: Argument and Audiences

Tuesday, September 26

Exam One

Thursday, September 28

Reading: *Rhetoric in Civic Life* Chapter 4: Argument; Chapter 5: Narratives

WEEK SEVEN: Rhetoric and Social Movements

Tuesday, October 3

Reading: *Rhetoric in Civic Life* Chapter 6: Rhetors

Thursday, October 5

Social Movement Spotlight

WEEK EIGHT: Rhetoric and Social Movements

Tuesday, October 10**Reading:** Rhetoric in Civic Life Chapter 7: Audiences**Thursday, October 12**

Social Movement Spotlight

WEEK NINE: Rhetoric and Social Movements

Tuesday, October 17**Reading:** Rhetoric in Civic Life Chapter 8: Rhetorical Situations**Thursday, October 19**

Social Movement Spotlight

WEEK TEN: Rhetoric and Social Movements

Tuesday, October 24

Social Movement Spotlight

Thursday, October 26**Reading:** Rhetoric in Civic Life Chapter 9: Publics and Counterpublics

In-class time to work on Civic Engagement Workshop

Due: Social Movement Rhetorical Analysis

WEEK ELEVEN: The Utility and Futility of Civility

Tuesday, October 31

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, November 2**

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=m7hdllneypE>

WEEK TWELVE: Deep Civility in Practice

Tuesday, November 7

In class Dialogues: Deep Civility in Practice

Thursday, November 9

In class Dialogues: Deep Civility in Practice

WEEK THIRTEEN: INDEPENDENT STUDY

Tuesday, November 14

Independent Study for Civic Engagement Workshop

Thursday, November 16

Thanksgiving, No Class

WEEK FOURTEEN: Final Presentations

Tuesday, November 21

Independent Study for Civic Engagement Workshop

Thursday, November 23

No Class--Thanksgiving

WEEK FIFTEEN: Final Presentations

Tuesday, November 28

Civic Engagement Workshop Presentations

Thursday, November 30

Civic Engagement Workshop Presentations

WEEK SIXTEEN:

Tuesday, December 12

Final Reflection due by 5pm

Evaluation of Grades:

Requirement	Total Points
Civic Identity Autobiographical Poster	150
Civic Innovators Project	250
Social Movement Rhetorical Analysis	200
Dialogues: Deep civility in practice	100
Exams (2)	300 (150 each)
Total Points	1000

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Civic Identity Autobiographical Poster (Individual) 150 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. 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.
 - *For this assignment, students will be asked to engage with theories of identity and civic participation in order to **reflect** on their **personal identity** in relationship with their civic life. In other words, students will critically observe their behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes as members of a civil society. They will present these to other observers with the expectation of being able to describe their civic identity based on these reflections.*

Civic Engagement Workshop (Group) 250 points

- In groups of 3-5, students will participate in some kind of civic engagement together throughout the semester. This could take many forms. For example, groups could attend remote meetings of a school board, city commission meetings, or UF Student Government meetings that as a group, they could take up a civic cause and create a campaign around it, or many other possibilities that the students envision. Students must account for public health and safety when choosing their civic participation, and

should not do anything like promote a large social gathering for a cause, etc. Students will report at the end of the semester about their experience getting involved in some form of civic engagement, address the ways that communication facilitated their involvement, and offer up analysis of the experience.

- *Group Presentation:* Each team will be responsible for presenting a coherent and cohesive report of the semester's activities and what they learned from doing it.
- *Group and Self Reflection:* Each group member will be asked to write a short reflection of their experience working in their groups and with the community partner.

Social Movement Rhetorical Analysis (Individual) 200 points

- 2000 word research paper: Students will construction a rhetorical analysis of a social movement with high social relevance. 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 movement that illuminates both its internal development and historical exigencies that inspired it.
 - Identify a minimum of *three* distinct rhetorical strategies the movement used, 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 require the use of APA style guidelines for all citations of outside sources.

Dialogues: Deep Civility in Practice Conversations (Group) 100 points

- *Written Materials:* You will be expected, in your groups, to determine a socially salient and "difficult" topic that you will facilitate. In your groups, you'll be asked to:
 - Write a one page abstract that justifies the need for dialogue about the topic you've selected.
 - Provide questions that will lead the dialogue.
- *Dialogue Facilitation:* In groups, you will facilitate a dialogue on the topic of your group's choosing. You will be expected to:
 - Conduct a dialogue for approximately 40 minutes.
 - Devote at least half of the time to entire group discussion.
 - Facilitation of dialogue means that in addition to writing guiding questions you and your group will use effective dialogue techniques to get the most out of the experience.
- *Critical Reflection:* After participating in all of the group dialogues, students will write a 2-page reflection of what they learned about themselves as civic communicators. Allow the following questions to guide your reflection:
 - *In what ways did you struggle to communicate my true thoughts while participating in the dialogues?*
 - *When did you feel most comfortable participating in the dialogues?*

- *In what ways did the content of the conversations facilitate or inhibit you from speaking up or shutting up when participating in the dialogue?*
- *Given your experience with the dialogue, what hurdles remain that might prevent you from participating in a public dialogue or deliberation?*

Exam One 150 Points

- Mid-term—In-class exam with short answer and essay questions.

Final Exam 150 Points

- Final—take-home exam with one essay that will serve as a synthesis of the accumulation of knowledge and understanding gained throughout the semester.

GRADING SCALE

Score	Percent	Grade	Grade Points
943-1000	93.4-100	A	4.00
900-933	90.0-93.3	A-	3.67
867-899	86.7-89.9	B+	3.33
843-866	83.4-86.6	B+	3.00
800-833	80.0-83.3	B-	2.67
767-799	76.6-79.9	C+	2.33
734-766	73.4-76.6	C	2.00
700-733	70.0-73.3	C-	1.67
667-699	66.7-69.9	D+	1.33
634-666	63.4-66.6	D	1.00
600-633	60-63.3	D-	0.67
0-599	0-59.9	E	0.00

A minimum grade of C is required for general education credit. More information on grades and grading policies can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Paper Grading: Grading rubrics can be helpful in distinguishing the quality of the ideas and content presented from the quality of the writing style presented. This will be provided to students prior to written assignments.

UF ACADEMIC POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Attendance and make-ups:

A student is allowed to miss **three hours** of class material without incurring a penalty. You can use your 3 'unexcused' hours for any reason, but after that, penalties start to accrue. If all your absences are due to documented emergencies and exceed three, you should communicate with your instructor in a timely manner.

For **each** 'unexcused' hour missed beyond the three allowed hours, a total of **20 points** will be deducted (i.e. 4 hours absent= -20pts; 5 hours absent= -40pts). If the penalty exceeds the 100 participation points, the 20 points per absence will then come off the total grade out of 1000 in the class.

For 3-hour block courses, being absent from one 3-hour block would constitute all allowed absences for the semester; and then each hour missed after that day would be -20 per hour (and -60 for a 3 hour block)

The Dial Center exempts from this policy **only** those absences involving university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, and religious holidays. Absences related to university-sponsored events must be discussed with the instructor **prior** to the date that will be missed.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

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.

Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code

(<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conducthonor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Counseling and Wellness Center

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

The university's honesty policy regarding cheating, plagiarism, etc. suggested wording:

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In-Class Recording:

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or guest lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.