

INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

Political Science 131 SL: SERVICE LEARNING SECTION

Section B - SL (9:30-10:45 T,Th. CLA 1- 209)

Spring 2002

For updates and important information, go often to the course webpage:
<http://faculty.quinnipiac.edu/polsci/po131sl.htm>

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Office hours: Tuesdays, Thursdays 3:30-4:30; Wednesdays, 2-4 Other office times are available -- please call or email for appointment, or drop in if the door is open!

OVERVIEW:

Since the attacks of 9/11, the meanings of "community" and "citizenship" have taken on a significance not seen since the 1940s. We will explore how the concepts of democracy, power, justice and freedom affect practical politics in the post-9/11 world. The course is designed to introduce students to key dilemmas in American politics including racial/ethnic harmony, urban poverty, citizen disengagement and education reform.

This course is a special **SERVICE LEARNING** section of "Introduction to American Government." Every student in the section is required to participate in a community action project intended to give hands-on experiences in community issues and politics. After mid-semester, the class will meet on campus once per week, and meet in the field on the other day of the week. There is some choice in service learning projects, listed below.

What is "service learning?" At Quinnipiac "Service Learning" (SL) is defined as "the process of integrating volunteer community service combined with active guided reflection into the university curriculum in ways that enhance and enrich student learning of course material, and provides real benefits to the community"(Quinnipiac Service Learning Committee). The instructor and community partners design the course jointly. It is a learning experience different from an internship or volunteerism.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

--Rimmerman, *The New Citizenship* (2nd ed.)

--Wharton & Roe, *From Welfare to Work: Who Should We Help, and How?*

--Hinds, *Public Schools: Is There a Way to Fix Them*

In addition to these texts, a subscription to *The New York Times* or *Washington Post* is strongly suggested. Reading these newspapers every day on the internet is an attractive option for some. Reading. Discussion plays a large role in this course.

GRADING POLICY AND REQUIREMENTS

10 % Class Participation/Discussion

20 % Field Journal

20 % Research Paper -- due April 9

25 % Midterm Exam -- March 7

25 % Final Exam

Academic Honesty Statement:

Students are reminded to observe general standards of academic honesty and integrity on all written work. I encourage you to discuss the readings paper topics with other students. All work submitted for a grade should be the work solely of the individual under whose name it is written. College rules governing academic honesty as written in the QU Student Handbook will be strictly applied to all written work in the course. Work that is found to violate these principles will be receive an automatic F grade, and violators will be reported to university authorities for possible further disciplinary action.

COMMUNITY SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECTS PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

Students will be required to select one of the following projects after the first week of classes. Please choose what interests you most and fits your schedule. Everyone will be placed with a group for the project. Due to the need for group work in the projects, transportation issues and conflicting schedules, no one is guaranteed any particular time slot or project. However, every effort will be made to accommodate student choices.

Once you make your choice of service project and are placed with a group, there will be an orientation and training session around the fourth week of classes. You will receive information on supervisors, locations and driving directions. Starting in the fifth or six week of class, students are required to do service ONE DAY per week, for roughly 90 minutes. However, those wishing to serve more hours are encouraged to do so or even continuing your involvement beyond this semester.

Being on time and professional is a basic requirement. You MUST sign in at the service site or you will not insure that you will get course credit for the activity. Failure to appear for service at your scheduled time will negatively affect your grade. Trying to "make it up later" for an absence will not improve your course grade. Why? Because our community partners need you and are prepared for you at the time you are scheduled. If you know in advance that you need to re-schedule your service, you must work it out with the community partner in advance, not with the instructor.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS AND PROJECTS (Note that service times are subject to change during the semester)

Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen: Tuesdays 5:45-7:15pm.

The D.E.S.K. is the project of several Christian and Jewish organizations. Dinner is served nightly at different church in the heart of downtown New Haven. Students are needed to serve food, act as "hosts" for the soup kitchen customers, and help clean up afterwards.

Highville Mustard Seed Charter School: Thursdays 9:15-10:30; Wednesdays 2:30-4pm

The Mustard Seed School is "chartered" by the state of Connecticut to develop "experimental" forms of education for children from disadvantaged neighborhoods. Mustard Seed school uses an international education approach. Students are needed to help coach the children for their upcoming "Model United Nations" event. Students are also needed to tutor children and assist in playground supervision.

Keefe Community Center -- Housing and Education Project: Wednesdays 10-11:30 am

In the City of Hamden the Keefe Center, located in Hamden on Dixwell Avenue, operates job training, food/fuel assistance and welfare tutoring, daycare. Quinnipiac students are taking part in a research project to locate and classify available housing for low-income workers. There is currently a shortage of low-income family housing and severe shortages of family shelters in the region. The project may also include some direct interaction with clients.

St. Ann Soup Kitchen: Wednesdays/Thursdays 11:15 - 12:45 pm.

Father Kenneth Bonadies runs a lunch hour soup kitchen in the basement of his church on Dixwell Avenue. Students who select this field site will be required to help prepare and serve soup, and remain to clean up the kitchen.

READINGS AND DISCUSSION TOPICS

Students are expected to complete assigned reading before the date listed. Please note the class will only meet on Tuesdays in the classroom after the Spring Break.

I. Introduction: Community and Theories of American Politics

Jan. 24: *New Citizenship*, chaps. 1-2

Jan. 31: Madison, Federalist Paper #10 (in *New Citizenship*, pp. 127-132.)
New Citizenship, chapt. 3

II. Social Movements and Civic Indifference

Feb. 7: *New Citizenship*, chapt. 4

Feb. 14: *New Citizenship*, chapt. 5

III. Public Policy Issues 1: Welfare Reform

Feb. 21: *From Welfare to Work*, complete.

Feb. 28: Reading to be announced.

March 7: **MIDTERM EXAM**

SPRING BREAK MARCH 11-15

Class no longer meets on Thursdays. Community Project Groups will meet in the field.

IV. Public Policy Issues 2: Public Education Reform

March 19: *Public Schools: Is There a Way to Fix Them?* complete

March 26: JOURNAL REVIEW #1. Up-to-date journal due in class.

V. Public Policy Issues 3: National Service

April 2: Reading to be announced.

April 9: Research Paper Due, in class

April 16: *New Citizenship*, Chapter 6 JOURNAL REVIEW #2. Up-to-date journal due in class

April 23: Boyte & Farr, "The Work of Citizenship" -- to be handed out in class.

April 30: Course Conclusions

FINAL FIELDWORK SESSIONS week of April 30- May 3

May 3: FINAL JOURNAL REVIEW, noon, CLA 3, # 308.

***Make sure your completed Journal includes an up-to-date entry on final field experience AND a final Journal Entry evaluating the overall experience. Guidelines found at the course website.

FINAL EXAM WEEK. Date of final exam to be announced.

RESEARCH PAPER -- Due April 9 in class.

Purpose: Your assignment is to investigate a current U.S. or international issue, relating it to the service project you are engaged in during this semester. "Research" does not mean gathering up the work done by others. A research paper not a mere collection of facts. The purpose of this assignment is for the student to interpret and analyze political issues, bringing relevant facts to bear when relevant, and to make a clear link to the fieldwork for the course.

Some Potential Topics: These are general examples ONLY. You must do the job of focusing your paper on the specifics and current aspects of something having relation to the field project.

- hunger / malnutrition
- some aspect of poverty relief or welfare
- some aspect of education reform
- international: study of another country relevant to field work
- economic urban development
- women's issues
- impact of volunteerism and community service

The Professor has collected a number of good internet-based research resources at the course web page: Please visit this often.

Format:

The research paper must be at least five double spaced pages in length and no more than eight pages. It must contain multiple research sources (5 minimum) and be directly related to some aspect of the community service fieldwork project. It must properly document and refer to sources and must have a "References" page at the end. It must have a title page with appropriately descriptive title.

After the introduction, the paper should begin with a little background on the issue and explain why it is important. (For example: What's the recent history of the issue? How does the issue affect people? What's at stake? Who are the key players? How does it relate to the topics of the course or to issues related to the service project?). The body of the paper should look at key facts and the debates around the issue. (For example: What are the options? How does the issue get processed in the political or social system?) In the conclusion, reflect on the issue and what your research says are the likely future prospects.

A Note on Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity means giving credit to the sources of all facts and quotes used in the paper. Integrity requires that work done by others, which appears in your research paper -- a quote, an idea, a chart or data -- must be given credit and the source clearly cited in your paper. Academic dishonesty is a major problem on American campuses today. To claim or even imply that you are the source when you are not is the essence of dishonesty and the equivalent of theft. Failure to adhere to standards of academic integrity will lead to automatic failure of the assignment and further disciplinary action. If you are unsure about how to uphold honesty in your paper, please ask me!

References and Sources:

1. Fully document the source of ALL facts and quotations used in the paper, including news articles, personal interviews, internet sources, class textbooks.
2. Limit your use of internet articles from unknown sources or from organizations trying to influence policy. You are definitely encouraged to use "biased" sources, so long as you identify the source and that you present and discuss "the other side" and analyze the debate.
3. Identify sources in the text of your paper using parentheses with author name and page number. The reference must correspond to the entries in the References page at the end of the paper.

Follow this basic format for references.

Single space entries. Double space between each entry. For each entry, indent every line after the first line (see below)

For books, include: author/editor name in full; year of publication; title in full (in italics); place of publication; name of publisher (for 20th century books).

For periodicals, include: author's name; year of publication; title of article (in quotation marks); title of periodical (in italics); volume number (if magazine), issue number and/or date (not year), and page number (s).

For web-page based articles, same as above but add the web address at the end between arrows (" $< >$ "). NOTE: Many web-based sources are not "academic" and often are inaccurate as well intended to persuade for political purposes. Also, there have been numerous problems with students plagiarizing (copying) internet works by other authors and claiming them as the student's own work. To protect yourself from inaccuracy and any accusation of academic dishonesty, make sure to follow the rules for ethical use of sources.

(example of Reference Page)

References

Powers, James F. 2001. "Frontier Justice." *U.S. News and World Report* 84 (April 1): 66- 70.

Stafford David. 2001. "Polls and Puppy Dogs" *New York Times*. April 1: A22.

Jackson, Andrea. 2001. "Internet and Welfare Reform." MSNBC, March 23. $<http://MSNBC.com>$

FIELD JOURNAL

The Field Journal is an essential component of this course. It is the main way that you will be evaluated for your fieldwork. It is intended as a challenge to reflect on the meaning of the field experience and to make explicit connections between field experience and classroom/text reading/news.

The Journal is a tool of discovery and reflection. It is NOT A DIARY, and it is NOT RECORD OF WHAT YOU DID. Get beyond description and your internal feelings and reflect intellectually on what occurs and what you feel. Make links between readings and experiences; analyze. It can be neatly handwritten. You

should use "bullet points" to describe your basic activities and save your energy for showing effort on reflections. Make sure you date each entry and label each part of the entry.

Each week your entry should cover all seven of the following points. There is no set minimum or maximum length for each entry, but keep in mind that you are being graded based on your efforts and successes in reflecting on the experience in the field and making good connections to other parts of the course in a way that demonstrates critical, independent thinking.

1. Learning Objectives

State what you hope to learn and what you expect to learn, see, and do. Discuss your expectations. This is where you can take an idea from the classroom lecture/discussion, or part of the class reading, or a speaker's remarks, and discuss the extent to which the learning that has taken place so far has advanced your learning objectives.

2. Perceptions and Observations

You are in a community setting. You are in a place different from what you are normally accustomed to. What are you observing about the culture of the neighborhood or places here? What generalizations can you make about the people, political interaction, policies that make this place different from your usual environment?

3. Feelings and Reactions

Describe your emotional reactions to your community service and what occurs there. Also, take into consideration your reactions to class discussions, readings, or conversations.

4. Sound Bite of the Day/Week

Listen carefully to discussion, speakers, and readings. Identify any particular expression, saying, generalization or quote that seems to epitomize what this course, this community experience is all about. Here's an example: "All politics is local."

5. New Language and Concepts

Make a list with some brief definitions of any new words or acronyms or jargon that you encounter in the news, in class, in readings or in the field. You'll find that this can be a big help when you review for the exams in the course.

6. Questions

State any questions that you have asked (or would like to ask) of community people, policy professionals or the professor. This is really a way to demonstrate your thoughtfulness and reflection on the community experience.

7. Faculty Question

The Professor will occasionally pose a question of the week for the class. This is where you should discuss your responses and reflections on that question. Be a little neater and a little more reflective of the connections between classroom and the fieldwork on these. Usually the question will be given to you orally. However, there are three formal questions plus a final journal entry to do at this stage. They are listed below. They should be 1 to 3 paragraphs in length, and your very best reflections. They should be clearly marked in your Journal should be neatly written. They can be typed or neatly handwritten.

First Journal Entry

For your first formal journal entry, write a description of what you see at your service site when you make your first visit.

1. Try to describe the surroundings and the people:
 - a. What was the physical setting (e.g. building, room, the way it looks)
 - b. What did the people do? How did they behave?
 - c. Who were these people (children, volunteers, staff, visitors)?
 - d. How did the people interact?
 - e. How was the operation organized? What were the rules?
 - f. Anything else you found significant?
2. At the end of this description, write about your personal reactions to the experience, how you felt or what you thought -- on the way, while you were there, after you left.

Journal Entry #2

A. Have a 5 or 10 minute conversation with another volunteer at the site (preferably one not from Quinnipiac but you may have no other choice). What are his/her concerns and/or expectations? How are your own concerns and/or expectations similar or different?

B. Have a 5 to 10 minute conversation with one of the full-time staff (preferably your main supervisor) at the site.

1. Consider what the written and unwritten rules and expectations are at the service site for you, for the community and for the professionals who run things there.
2. At this point, how do you see yourself fitting into that set of goals?

Journal Entry #3

Read "The Work of Citizenship and the Problem of Service Learning" and Rimmerman, Chapter 6 carefully. Then respond to this question:

"How well does the course (including the readings, lectures and fieldwork) measure up to Rimmerman's idea of critical education for citizenship, or Harry Boyte's description of public work? How does your experience in the course differ from traditional civics and from philanthropic ideas of volunteerism?"

Final Journal Entry

The Final Entry should be in the form of an essay on the connection between your experiences in the field and the overall course. Please do not bring random, unrelated or unorganized thoughts into it. Bring your thoughts to life by referring to specific examples from your experience this semester.

***Now that you have had this experience, what is your perspective on the debate over Service-Learning in U.S. universities?

**In what specific ways has your experience of doing the Project, in combination with traditional classroom work helped you (or not) to re-examine your personal values, or expectations about service, or preconceptions of social classes or other nationalities?