

**DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY  
FIRST YEAR SEMINAR  
FALL 2001**

**Professors' Information:**

Professor Katy J. Harriger  
C309 Tribble Hall  
Department of Political Science  
Phone: 758-5450  
Email: [harriger@wfu.edu](mailto:harriger@wfu.edu)  
Office Hours : Tuesday 2-4  
Thursday 5:30-6:30  
And by appointment

Professor Jill J. McMillan  
313 Carswell Hall  
Department of Communication  
Phone: 758-5407  
Email: [mcmillj@wfu.edu](mailto:mcmillj@wfu.edu)  
Office Hours : M/W 5-6  
T/Th 2-3  
And by appointment

**SEMINAR DESCRIPTION:** American citizens are increasingly alienated from the political process. This attitude is revealed through declining voter turnout, increased cynicism about the motives of politicians, and a greater likelihood that citizens will lack confidence in the ability of government to solve social problems. A growing number of scholars believe that the solution to this troubling trend is to rebuild civil society through a renewed focus on citizen participation in public policy debates. People like Benjamin Barber, Harry Boyte, James Fishkin, and Amy Gutman argue that we need a “stronger” democracy in which citizens “join in public work and deliberate over conflicting moral claims” about how the government should pursue the public interest.

This seminar is designed to explore this theory of deliberative democracy and to practice the skills involved in such an approach to citizen involvement in politics. Democratic deliberation involves the “consideration of a diversity of perspectives, a habit of listening, and a careful weighing of trade-offs.” The imagined outcome of such an exercise is “the discipline to keep an open mind, the willingness to stand in someone else’s shoes, the capacity to change, and the ability to make decisions with others.” (David Mathews, *Creating More Public Space in Higher Education*, p. 2)

We will explore this concept through in-class deliberation exercises, on-line discussion with other students, and research and writing about public policy issues.

**READINGS:**

1. Xeroxed readings for which you will be asked to pay the cost of reproduction.
2. *Public Schools: Are they Making the Grade?* (National Issues Forum, 1999).
3. *Racial and Ethnic Tensions: What Should We Do?* (National Issues Forum, 2000).
4. *Politics for the Twenty-First Century: What Should Be Done on Campus?* (Kettering Foundation, 1992).

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

1. **Writing Portfolio:** Over the course of the semester you will write 5 essays of varying lengths about the topics listed below. You will have the opportunity to rewrite each of them if you want to. At the end of the semester, you will turn in all of the essays as part of a portfolio. This portfolio will make up 55% of your grade. The

essays submitted in the portfolio can be rewrites or the original if you were satisfied with that work. The essays will include:

- A. A 3-5 page personal reflection on your personal attitudes toward politics and participation (10%)
  - B. 3 Issue Research Papers of approximately 5 pages for Deliberative Exercises (15% each for a total of 45% of your final grade)
2. Preparation/Participation in **Deliberative Exercises** (In-Class and On-Line) (35%)
- A. During the semester we will be conducting **in class** deliberative exercises where we consider policy options available on issues including race relations, public education, and the role of the university in preparing students for citizenship. In order to have informed discussion about these issues you will be expected to do the assigned readings and write an issue paper with additional research prior to the actual deliberations. During the deliberations we will follow a particular method of discussion that is **not the usual pro/con debate**. Instead, we will engage in an effort to consider all alternatives, weigh the competing values at stake in each option, think about the tradeoffs involved in different choices, and search for common ground on the issue. In other words, in addition to learning about the public policy issue, we will be learning a **method** of discussing policy that is different from what most of us experience in political debate.
  - B. In addition to our own class deliberation on racial and ethnic tensions, we will be joining a number of students from universities around the country on-line for the same discussion. This will occur in October. You are expected to participate in this discussion as well. We will give you more details as they become available.
3. **Final Take-Home Essay Exam** assessing the prospects for a more deliberative democracy and your role in it. (10%)

**ATTENDANCE POLICY:** We expect you to be in class unless you have an illness, family emergency, or are representing the university in some capacity such as athletics or debate. For the latter kind of absence at least one of us must be informed ahead of time with a schedule from your coach or advisor. Please note that 35% of your grade is based on your preparation and participation in class. On days when you have an unexcused absence you will receive a 0 for that day's work. Obviously then, unexcused absences will have a negative impact on your final grade.

**HONOR SYSTEM:** Wake Forest is a community that lives by the honor code. This means all work that you represent as your own must be your own. We take the code seriously and we expect you to as well. Honor violations will be reported to the Honor and Ethics Council. If you are uncertain as to what constitutes plagiarism, please visit the English Department web page. You can find its "Statement on Plagiarism" by clicking on Writing Resources, then Academic Writing at WFU, then the Statement.

## **COURSE OUTLINE AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE**

All readings should be completed for the class period to which they are assigned.

### **I. THINKING ABOUT DEMOCRACY AND THE PUBLIC VOICE**

Aug. 30: Introduction to the Course

Sept. 4: Diagnosing the Problem

Read: “College Students Talk Politics”

Sept. 6: Historical Perspective: What is the role of the people?

Read: Federalist #10 and Essay by “Brutus”

Sept. 11: Historical Perspective on the American Experience

Read: Excerpt from Alexis de Toqueville Democracy in America

Sept. 13: Changes in American Politics: How Democratic Are We?

Read: Excerpt from James Fishkin The Voice of the People

#### **Sept. 13: PAPER DUE: ATTITUDES ABOUT POLITICS**

Sept. 18: Debating Deliberative Democracy

Benjamin Barber, “Deliberation, Democracy, and Power”

Iris Marion Young, “Communication and the Other”

James Bohman, “Deliberative Democracy and Its Critics”

Sept. 20: Deliberation As a Democratic Skill

Video : A Public Voice

Read: David Mathews, “The Power of Choice”

Sept. 25: Contrasting Debate and Deliberation

Read: “Communicating in Groups”

“Deliberation and Debate: Not One or the Other”

“Some Key Characteristics of Debate.....”

Sept 27: Workshop at Library- Learning Research Skills

Oct. 2: Workshop- Learning Deliberative Skills

Oct. 4: Workshop – Learning Deliberative Skills

II. THINKING ABOUT PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES

Oct. 9: Public Schools: Are They Making the Grade?

Panel Discussion (**Note time change: 11:00-12:00**)

Read: Issue Book on Public Education

**Oct. 11: ISSUE PAPER DUE**

Oct. 11, 16,18: Deliberative Exercise #1: Public Schools

Oct. 23: Racial and Ethnic Tensions: What Should We Do?

Video: Racial and Ethnic Tensions: What Should We Do?

Read: Issue Book on Racial and Ethnic Tensions

Oct. 25,30, Nov. 1: Deliberative Exercise #2: Racial and Ethnic Tensions

**Oct: 25: ISSUE PAPER DUE**

Nov. 6: Politics for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: What Should Be Done On Campus?

Panel Discussion (**Note time change: 11:00-12:00**)

Read Issue Book on Politics for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Nov. 8, 13, 15: Deliberative Exercise #3: Politics for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

**Nov. 13: ISSUE PAPER DUE**

III. FRAMING ISSUES FOR PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Nov. 20: Introduction to Issue Framing

Read: Xeroxed issue booklet Alcohol: Controlling the  
Toxic Spill

Nov. 22: NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING

Nov. 27,29, Dec. 4: Issue Framing Workshop

Read: Excerpts from “Framing Issues for Public Deliberation”

**DEC. 4: FINAL TAKE HOME ESSAY ASSIGNED**

IV. RETHINKING DEMOCRATIC POLITICS

Dec. 6: Imagining a Different Politics

Read: Excerpts from “College Students Talk Politics” and

“Seeing the Problems of Politics Anew: Redefining the Challenge”

**DEC. 10: FINAL TAKE HOME ESSAY DUE**