90750-A2  Civic Engagement as a Community Process

Semester: Fall Mini-2   Year: 2019
Dates: October 21 to December 2
Meeting Times: Monday evenings, 6:00 - 8:50 PM
Location: 1007 Hamburg Hall
Units: 6   Section: A2
Prerequisites: None
Co-requisites: None

Syllabus
October 21, 2019 v1

Instructor’s Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Stephen Quick FAIA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contact Information</td>
<td><a href="mailto:squick@andrew.cmu.edu">squick@andrew.cmu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Hours</td>
<td>Available upon request</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canvas Site</td>
<td><a href="https://canvas.cmu.edu/courses/XXX">https://canvas.cmu.edu/courses/XXX</a></td>
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Course Description

This course will explore Civic Engagement as community and neighborhood issues which are often unstated but form the basis for community tension and lack of trust in the participatory process. Through readings, presentations, and discussions, the goal of the course is to engage with real community concerns so that students will understand the complexity of engagement issues, responsibilities, and practices necessary for community decision- and policy-making.

The course will cover a variety of topics that cities and citizens are struggling with to achieve a level of trust and respect fundamental to a civil society. Students will learn why the engagement process is valued in a democratic society, practiced at the local level, and how it is currently transforming to be more effective. While there are no right answers to effective civic engagement, the content and participatory role-playing will introduce students to methods, tools, and hands-on facilitation experience currently practiced by professionals to achieve better outcomes for citizens and the communities in which they live and work.

New topics will be introduced on a weekly basis through student-led presentations and facilitated discussions. All students will be responsible for weekly reading and annotation assignments, selecting and leading at least one topic presentation and discussion, and submitting in-depth research and analysis based on their presentation topic as an end-of-term final paper. Assessment of individual performance will be based on weekly reading and
annotation assignments, class participation, topic presentation and discussion facilitation, and the final paper. There will be no final exam.

**Deliberative Discourse**

The course will generally follow the methodology of civic engagement practiced as deliberative discourse, often referred to as deliberative democracy.

Before deliberating a topic of civic interest, increasing one’s knowledge of the subject is essential. In a typical engagement, this may be handled by distributing educational material prior to a public engagement and/or by giving a non-partisan topic presentation and answering questions at the beginning of the engagement. Sometimes neutral “experts,” who have a deeper knowledge of the subject, are also present to answer questions and offer different perspectives.

After the presentation and answering of questions the audience may have, a facilitated discourse (deliberative discussion – “a careful consideration”) takes place where the audience is encouraged to contribute their insights, experiences, and often personal positions about the topic. The facilitator encourages each responder to explain the reasoning behind their contribution so that the others can understand how and why the responder came to that thought or position. The premise behind the discussion is not to reach a consensus, a decision, or have a debate where there is a winner, but to conduct a civil discourse about a common issue to further increase the knowledge of every participant.

From the facilitator’s perspective, the discourse is a means to begin an understanding of the values held by members of the audience so that whatever is eventually proposed—be it a project or a policy—will have a sound foundation built upon what is valued by their audience. Typically, a number of deliberative discussions are conducted that involve a variety of audience types to make sure a particular topic is well covered before any recommendations are put forward.

While the course will not be putting forward recommendations or policy, it will be simulating both the non-partisan education and deliberative aspects of engagement. To explore the “values” aspect, each topic will be deliberated from three perspectives by students and topic presenters:

- Individual citizens,
- A community or neighborhood, and
- Local government.

These hands-on class sessions are intended to explore the complexities of “hot-button” topics and begin an understanding of how civic engagement can be a useful tool to develop public policy that will be valued and endorsed.

**Skills-Based Learning Objectives**

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

- **Describe and discuss major engagement issues and concerns** that often underlie citizen involvement and community values.

- **Research and analyze complex civic engagement topics** to understand the conditions that precipitated their relevance and how they are (or not) being addressed.

- **Plan and prepare an in-class presentation** that fosters students’ individual presentation and group-based facilitation skills.
• Lead a topic presentation and deliberative discussion that educates and elicits discourse.

• Plan and lead civic engagement sessions in a manner that respects citizen participation in the decision-and policy-making process.

Learning Resources

Required Textbooks to Purchase:

None. All readings will be available on Canvas. Blogs and some Internet articles may not have reproduced correctly, and students are encouraged to directly access the website address when needed.

Helpful Websites:

National Equity Atlas
https://nationalequityatlas.org/

PolicyLink
https://www.policylink.org/

Stanford Social Innovation Review
https://ssir.org/  
The Bay Area Atlas
PolicyLink
https://www.policylink.org/our-work/economy/baea

Other Resources:


**Assessments**

The final course grade will be calculated using the following categories and percentages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Percentage of Final Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Annotations</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic Presentation</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
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Numerical scores will be recorded on a continual basis on Canvas and calibrated for their respective assessment and for their percentage contribution to the final course grade.

**Reading Annotations (30%)**
Reading Annotations covering a given week’s assigned readings will be due two days before class. Students are expected to cover major points of each reading assignment. Briefly discuss the author’s critical constructs and items you find compelling that either expand or cause you to rethink your own understanding. Include questions for the topic discussion. See Guidelines for Reading Annotations below.

**Assessment**
Assessments will be made on a 5-point scale: (1) submitted with evidence the readings were not completed; (2-3) complete and somewhat insightful; and (4-5) complete and insightful to very insightful. Evaluations will be based on discussion points that are relevant to the readings’ theme(s) and additional readings beyond those required, including those assigned to the topic leaders. Your top 4 (four) Reading Annotations will be used for final grading.

**When Due**
Reading Annotations are due **Saturday by midnight (11:59 PM)** on Canvas and will be available for use by the topic leader(s) the next morning. Late annotation assignments will receive ½ credit. Those received after the beginning of class will receive 0 (zero) credit.

**Weekly Attendance and Active Participation (10%)**
Attendance is mandatory for all classes and students are expected to have the readings completed before class and to actively engage. Be a part of the group and participate! If the Instructor is calling you to answer or comment, you should realize that you need to improve your participation. See the policy on mobile devices below.

**Assessment**
Evaluations will be made on a 3-point scale: (1) in attendance; (2) in attendance and contributing; (3) in attendance and leading. Your top 5 (five) Weekly Attendance and Active Participation assessments will be used for final grading.

**Topic Presentations (40%: 10% Research, 30% Presentation and Facilitated Discussion)**
Students will be assigned to lead at least one class session on a week’s topic as a civic engagement educational discussion. As a topic leader your responsibility will be to lead the presentation and discussion of that week’s reading assignment, undertake additional research to deepen your understanding of the topic, and respond to questions
raised by your classmates’ Reading Annotations. Depending on the number of students enrolled in the course, you will be presenting and facilitating a discussion as either a two- or three-person group. Members should divide the topic material equally with each person responsible for presenting their respective portion and also facilitating (leading) the discussion when it involves your topic material. See Guidelines for Topic Presentations below.

Assessment
Assessments will be made on a 100-point scale: Up to 25 points for Research and up to 75 points for Presentation and Discussion (50 for Presentation and 25 for Facilitated Discussion). If you participate in more than one topic presentation, your higher assessment will be used for final grading.

When Due
Topic Presentation Submissions are due on the day of your presentation Monday by 5:00 PM on Canvas. Late submissions will receive 3/4 credit. No submission by the following Friday at 11:59 PM will receive 0 (zero) credit.

Final Paper (20%)
The Final Paper will be based on your Topic Presentation. Working with material already developed, prepare a written paper that covers three items: (1) a conversion of your presentation and discussion material to text form; (2) additional research and analysis which addresses items uncovered during your topic presentation, that of others, and items which need a more comprehensive overview; and (3) your proposal for conducting a civic engagement session (or sessions) that focuses specifically on your topic based on what you’ve learned from this course. Students will find that readings and presentations throughout the course will cover methods and tools for civic engagement; some will be specific to a presentation topic and others will require interpretation, but also look to the course’s readings as they can be adapted and applied as well. Item (3) is the opportunity for you to expand your thinking to include new ideas about engagement. Include visual material as appropriate. Cite resources.

Assessment
Assessments will be made on a 100-point scale. The context on which you base your topic (assumptions), its conceptual basis or thesis (ideas or hypothesis), the material that supports your topic’s basis, and the breadth of research, including citations, will form the basis for the evaluation. From your topic presentation, address its implications for public policy affecting: (1) Individual citizens, (2) A community or neighborhood, and (3) Local government. Creativity, insightfulness, and appropriateness in addition to the paper’s organization, clarity, and refinement will be the criteria for the assessment. The paper will be checked using Turn-it-in. Think of this as a publishable paper, similar to many of the readings you undertake during this course.

When Due
Final Papers are due Wednesday evening December 11 by 11:59 PM on Canvas. Evaluations for late papers will be reduced by 10% for each late day.

Grading
Students will be assigned the following final letter grades at the end of term, based on the cumulative calculations of the four Assessment sections. Undergraduates will receive a letter grade without +/- marks.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Percentage Interval</th>
<th>Grade Point</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+ to A-</td>
<td>Work that is exceptional to very good.</td>
<td>100% - 87%</td>
<td>4.33 - 3.67</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+ to B-</td>
<td>Work that is good to fair and meets course expectations.</td>
<td>86% - 77%</td>
<td>3.66 - 2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+ to C-</td>
<td>Work that is poor to minimally passing but fails to meet some course expectations.</td>
<td>76% - 67%</td>
<td>2.66 - 1.67</td>
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<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Work that shows a lack of effort and fails to meet several expectations.</td>
<td>66% and below</td>
<td>0</td>
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Course Policies

Academic Integrity and Collaboration
Students are required to conduct their learning in an honest and committed fashion by avoiding plagiarism, cheating, or taking credit for work not their own. It is the responsibility of each student to produce her/his own original academic work in any manner of presentation. In all academic work to be graded, the citation of all sources is required. Plagiarism is defined as the use of work or concepts contributed by other individuals without proper attribution or citation. Unique ideas or materials taken from another source for either written or oral use must be fully acknowledged in academic work to be graded. Citation and acknowledgement must be incorporated into the work submitted. Offences will result in a “0” for the assignment and will be reported through the proper channels for possible disciplinary action.

Students are encouraged to utilize the assistance provided by Academic Development, the Global Communications Center, (GCC) and the Academic Resource Center (QMU-Q). Final Paper: Students are encouraged to utilize the assistance of the GCC prior to the December 11 submittal. The GCC will work with you by providing useful feedback and communication suggestions. Depending on the GCC’s appointment availability, your paper may be reviewed as many times as desired. After each review, the GCC will issue a session report for your use.

Late Work and Make-Up Work
Unless noted otherwise, assignments received after 12:00AM before class are accepted for ½ credit. The only exceptions are for serious or contagious illnesses, care of family members in these circumstances, funeral services, religious holidays, or personal activities approved by the instructor with at least two weeks advanced warning. When students are ill, they are expected to provide a health professional’s note and negotiate with the Instructor the time and place for make-up of assignments. For students who are seriously ill, the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs (412-268-2075) should be contacted so that the student’s academic Track Chair and/or Instructor may be contacted.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
If you have a disability and require accommodations, please contact Catherine Getchell, Director of Disability Resources, 412-268-6121, getchell@cmu.edu. If you have an accommodations letter from the Disability Resources office, I encourage you to discuss your accommodations and needs with me as early in the semester as possible so that I can work with you to ensure that accommodations are provided as appropriate.

Statement on Student Wellness
As a student, you may experience a range of challenges that can interfere with learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, substance use, feeling down, difficulty concentrating, and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may diminish your academic performance and/or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. CMU services are available, and treatment does work. You can learn more about confidential mental health services available on campus at: http://www.cmu.edu/counseling/. Support is always available 24/7 from Counseling and Psychological Services (412-268-2922).

Mobile Devices
Cellphone, tablet, computer, and other electronic device usage is limited during class to our readings, note taking, and project-based research activities. Phone calls, online chats, checking email, and other distracting activities are strictly forbidden and may result in a 0 (zero) credit for that class session’s participation grade.

Syllabus Modifications
The Instructor reserves the right to modify or change any provision or item in this syllabus, including the class schedule, as deemed appropriate and necessary during the semester. Updated versions will be announced in class and will also be uploaded to Canvas with a new version number.
Guidelines for Reading Annotations

If you are not a topic leader, you will be submitting a Reading Annotation. Your responsibility is to complete the assigned readings and submit the assignment every week. Topic leaders are responsible for reading the assigned readings plus those assigned to topic leaders, but not required to submit a Reading Annotation for that session. Each week’s Reading Annotation should be 2-3 pages (minimum-maximum), double-spaced, based on the assigned readings: total of 2-3 pages, not per reading.

You are expected to cover the major points of each assigned reading. The annotation should be in your own words and include:

- Brief discussion of the work of each author including critical frameworks you find compelling in relation to either expanding or rethinking your own knowledge as a citizen and professional.
- Questions for discussion by the topic leaders.

Annotations are reactions to the content, comments, thoughts, and insights—not summaries. Personal experiences are encouraged to support annotations.

- Annotations should be in paragraph form.
- Annotations should always have titles that include the discussion Topic, Date, and your Name.
- All pages are to be numbered and text spelled correctly. Proofread your document and use both Spell Check and Grammar checking software.
- At the beginning of the annotation provide a definition of the topic(s) as you understand them to be. Keep in mind that these topics can have several meanings depending on citizens’ backgrounds, cultures, or local context. If there is anything you may not understand from the reading assignments, list and briefly describe them at the end of the document; these will be useful for the topic leaders to incorporate into their presentations.
- Reading Annotations need to include 2 (two) questions about the topic for class discussion. Maximum of 2.
- Remember to cite your sources when you are paraphrasing or recording verbatim text.
- Maximum of 3 pages.

Annotations will be made available to the topic leader(s) on Sunday morning. Topic leaders will depend on your annotative work and questions to be turned in on time.

Guidelines for Topic Presentations

The role of the topic leader(s) is to educate others through Topic Presentations: a education presentation to be followed by a facilitated discussion. It is your responsibility to fully understand the topic and to describe it to the class, including all aspects of the readings and your independent research. You will need to keep the group focused and actively engaged. In effect, you will first be educating your audience and then leading them in a civic engagement deliberation.

- Assume that your audience comes from all backgrounds and opinions. Your task is to educate, not debate, with a goal that each member will achieve the breadth of knowledge needed to make educated decisions based on the topic.
- Each separate reading carries equal weight so don’t spend an inordinate amount of time on one reading at the expense of the others. It is not required that you submit a Reading Annotation if you are a presenter.
- Explore all aspects of the readings using examples and stories to reinforce their themes.
Consider using visual materials that will reinforce your presentation. Video clips are fine but limit their time (a video clip should be under 5 minutes). Visual material can often assist in making connections between topic items and chronicling themes.

Your topic presentation should cover and deliberate from three perspectives:

- Individual citizens,
- A community or neighborhood, and
- Local government.

Expect the presentation to last at least an hour. As these are complex subjects, the topic will require that you look deeper into how the topic is defined and understood from a variety of perspectives. The assigned readings are a window into the topic and are not intended as the sole source for your presentation. You will find there are several interpretations (and often disagreement) depending on one’s personal experience and even between professionals. Role-play should consider multiple interpretations: as a member of a community or neighborhood or just an interested citizen, as a community activist, a city official, a planner, or maybe a developer unfamiliar with the neighborhood and looking for insights about how to approach a proposed development project. Why is this a current topic and what precipitated it as an issue? What themes are inherent in the subject? Are there useful facts and statistics that provide evidence backup for better understanding or explaining the topic? Is the topic a contentious issue and, if so, why? Is there a current consensus or alternative viewpoints that have developed along a consistent theme, and/or have contrarian opinions or approaches resulted without consensus? Respond to questions in the Reading Annotations from the class as they will help with your presentation but save opinion or open-ended questions for the later discussion.

Topic Presentation submission: Develop objectives for the discussion, talking points in an order that creates a comprehensive overview of the subject, and supportive material to back up the talking points. Explain current thinking and methods for addressing issues raised by the topic. End with a review of your topic’s major points. Remember to incorporate the classes’ annotations as these will often add thoughts and ideas you may not have covered in your own work. The submission is not a paper, but a lesson plan and talking points you would develop for leading a deliberative engagement session.

- Schedule in one 10-minute break once you’ve finished the presentation portion.

Use the second hour for an open and active facilitated discussion by you. This is where your classmates’ questions will be useful to guide the deliberation. Remember that they are questions and thoughts meant to inquire—not debate. You should also have your own questions which will be useful to ask should there be lulls in the conversation. You, no doubt, will have your own opinion and response to questions, but your task is to elicit responses from the class and engage in a deliberation—not reach a consensus. Remember that you are a facilitator, not a participant.

- Record the discussion. This will be useful for completing your Final Paper.

Topic assignments and presentation dates will be agreed upon the first day of class. You are expected to make your presentation on the day it is assigned even if you didn’t submit your Topic Presentation. An absence requiring reassigning the order of topic presentations due to a missed presentation is not acceptable.

Rules of Engagement for Topic Presentations and Deliberations

Successful civic engagement requires that all participants observe a few ground rules to assure that deliberation will be civil and respectful. It is important to keep in mind that not everyone shares the same beliefs, values, or
cultural norms as yours and discussions can become tense or even disintegrate when comments become personal. These guidelines will be discussed during our first meeting and modified as the class agrees.

- Listen respectfully, without interrupting. Respect other points of view. Everyone is equal and has an equal voice.
- Listen actively and with an ear to understanding other’s views. Assume good will. Suspend judgment.
- Speak to one another, not just to the topic leader.
- Allow everyone the chance to speak. No one or two persons should dominate a discussion. Let others have an opportunity.
- Seek first to understand. Ask questions that seek clarification when you don’t understand the meaning of someone’s comments.
- Criticize ideas, not individuals. It’s okay to disagree, but don’t personalize.
- Commit to learning, not debating. Comment in order to share information, not to persuade. Do your best to understand the pros and cons of every opinion, not just those you prefer. Be as objective and fair-minded as you can be.
- Avoid blame, speculation, and inflammatory language.
- Avoid assumptions about any member of the class or generalizations about social groups. Do not ask individuals to speak for their (perceived) social group.
- What is said during the discussion, other than broad themes, stays within the classroom. Personal experiences may be shared, and confidentiality is expected. Protect identities and other’s stories.

For topic leaders, your role is to facilitate the deliberation by keeping it focused and flowing. Create a framework or guide for the discussion and have clear objectives for items you want to cover within the timeframe. Encourage your audience consider the how citizens, a neighborhood, or local government would respond. Be open to responses, observations, and interpretations. Keep in mind that facilitation does not mean to advocate for your personal beliefs or opinions.

As an active facilitator you can reword questions as needed to maintain focus, encourage elaboration by others on comments, and use probing questions to share more specific information. At times you will want to provide further explanation to a point by referencing the reading material. It is a good idea to review the main points from time to time.

- Start off with clear, open-ended but bounded questions that encourage discussion.
  - Avoid questions that pose two issues simultaneously or questions that search for a specific answer.
  - Ask questions that prompt multiple answers rather than short factual responses or simple “yes” or “no” replies.
- Prepare specific questions for use if your audience is silent or hesitant about speaking, such as “Can I help with a clarification?” or “What makes this hard to discuss?” Keep in mind that silence is often necessary for reflection.
- Be prepared to re-direct the discussion if the line of discussion drifts beyond your intended focus. Drawing attention to the readings or returning to your discussion objectives are good ways to redirect.
- When points are raised that are extraneous to the topic or issue, note their importance and use them as opportunities to redirect.
- At the end of the discussion plan on recapping the key points or issues that were covered.
- End by 8:30 PM.