**POL 1903 Political Discussion and Deliberation in the 2016 Election**

**Blegen 115**

**Monday and Wednesdays 1:00-2:15**

Professor Dan Myers

Department of Political Science

Office: 1474 Social Sciences Bldg.

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 11:00 AM - Noon

Email: [cdmyers@umn.edu](mailto:cdmyers@umn.edu)

What if the most important part of democracy isn’t voting, but talking before the vote is taken? That’s the claim of deliberative theories of democracy, which argue that political decisions are only legitimate if they are preceded by a fair deliberation among those affected. But what kind of talk is good for democracy? And are average citizens capable of productive conversation, especially in this age of political polarization? We’ll explore these questions through a range of academic research from political science, psychology and communications.

But we won’t just seek answers from academic sources – we’ll take a hands-on approach by hosting the 2016 Minnesota Election Forum, a deliberative public forum where average citizens will discuss the presidential election. Planning and hosting the forum will be the centerpiece of the course; alongside reading and discussing academic papers, we will plan how to host a productive conversation between among ordinary citizens. We’ll put everything we’ve learned into action the weekend before the election, when we’ll help a diverse group of voters have a different kind of conversation about the Presidential Election.

**Liberal Education Theme Statement**

This course satisfies the Council on Liberal Education’s Civic Life and Ethics theme. At its core, democracy’ claim to be a legitimate form of government rests on a series of ethical claims about how members of a society should make collective decisions. In the first several classes students will be challenged to think deeply about what these ethical claims mean for how a people might be said to govern themselves, and what this implies for the standards that a society must meet to be considered “democratic.” As we learn about deliberative theories of democracy, students will explore a specific set of claims about how these standards can be met, and in particular what ethical speech – and ethical listening – look like in a democratic society. Alongside these claims, we will consider critiques of deliberative theories of democracy that will help students clarify their own views on democracy and also serve as an example of the social processes that produce particular views of legitimate government. Finally, in planning and hosting the Minnesota Election Forum students will be asked to put these lessons into action by designing an event where people can converse across lines of division in a way that brings democracy to life.

**Course Structure:**

The course will be centered on running the 2016 Minnesota Election Forum (henceforth, The Forum), and conducting research projects that draw on data collected from this forum. To that end, the course will be divided into 4 sections.

1. The first three weeks of class we will read key readings on the theory of deliberative democracy and deliberative “mini-publics” like the one we will be hosting.
2. During the next three weeks we will think about what it means to conduct research about deliberation. We will read some examples of political science research that investigates what happens in deliberative mini-publics and what their effects are. Building on these, we will develop our own research questions and form into groups to figure out how to answer these. In addition, we will have two class sessions devoted to training as deliberative facilitators. These classes will be led by the staff of the Jefferson Center, a non-profit in St. Paul that conducts deliberative public engagement.
3. The next three weeks of class will be devoted to preparing for and hosting the forum. Each student will facilitate two test groups in which U of M students deliberate using a similar structure and informational materials to those we will use in the Forum. During class periods, we will reflect on these facilitation experiences. This section will culminate in hosting the Forum.
4. After the forum, we will return to academic readings that help contextualize the Forum in the broader political science literature on political behavior. While reading these, groups will work together to on their research papers. This section will end with a series of in-class presentations in which each group gives a talk on its research.

Please note that taking part in the Forum is mandatory. If you are not available to participate on Saturday, October 29th please do not enroll in this course.

**Course Readings**

We will read most of the following book, which is available through the University of Minnesota book store:

* Mutz, Diana C. 2006. *Hearing the Other Side: Deliberative vs. Participatory Democracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press

In addition, we will read journal articles, chapters of other books, and materials from the Jefferson Center on deliberative facilitation. You will be expected to find those that are easily available through the library on your own. Readings that are more difficult to locate will be posted to the course Moodle site.  
  
I may from time to time change the readings required in the syllabus if I determine that a better reading is available. I will give at least one week's notice of any change via email, and will post an updated version of the syllabus on Moodle.

**Class Format:**

The class will be held in seminar format. While I may begin class with some brief remarks on the day’s materials, most of our class sessions will be driven by student discussion. Please come prepared to discuss.

**Course Assignments:**

**Memos:**

Most of the class assignments will take the form of memos. Before most classes, students will complete either a memo and a response.

*Brief reaction memos and responses:*

For classes where we read academic articles, students will complete brief (250-500 words) memos reacting to the readings. These memos must be posted to Moodle by 5 PM the afternoon before class.

In addition to writing the memo, each student will be assigned to read and react to another student’s memo. These reactions should be a brief paragraph on the order of 100-150 words. These must be completed and posted to Moodle before class begins.

*Facilitation Reflection Memos*

After each test group, as well as the forum itself, students should write a memo (250-500 words) reflecting on the experience of facilitating the group. Each student should read ALL of the other student’s test group memos, and write a reaction that responds to the general themes in all of them. These reactions should be a brief paragraph on the order of 100-150 words.

**Research Papers:**

In addition to conducting a deliberative forum, students in this class will complete a research project that asks a question about political deliberation and draws on data from the forum to answer this question. You will complete these research papers in groups of 3-4 students. The following sequence of assignments will build towards the final research paper:

* Research Ideas (Due Thursday, September 29). Each student must submit via email 3-4 research ideas that they find interesting, along with a brief paragraph describing each research idea. The paragraph should describe the topic of research, why the topic is of interest, possible research questions, and how the questions might be answered using data from the election forum. I will use this list of ideas to group together students with similar research interests.
* Research Interests Memo (Due Monday, October 3). By Friday, September 30 I will assign each student to a group of 3-4 with at least one research interest in common. Each student should then write a 250-500 word memo describing their interests in the topic and some ideas for specific research questions to ask. This should be posted to Moodle by Sunday, October 2 – you should read all of the memos written by your fellow group members before class begins.
* Research Question Meeting: During the week of October 3, each research group will meet with me to determine a final research question that the group’s research paper will address. Your group must submit a 1000-1250 word memo describing and justifying the research question, your approach to answering it, and detailing any data that you will need to collect in either the practice groups or the Forum.
* Paper Planning Meeting: The week of November 14th each research group will meet with the instructor to discuss their plan for completing the research paper. Prior to the meeting, each group should turn in a draft of the paper’s introduction, an outline for the paper, and a memo detailing the group’s plan for completing the paper.
* Intro, Lit Review, and Hypothesis Workshop: On November 30th each group will have their intro, lit review and hypothesis workshopped. Each group should turn in drafts of these three sections by 24 hours before the start of class. Everyone should read all of these drafts before class begins.
* Methods, Results and Conclusion Workshop: On December 12th each group will have their methods, results and conclusion sections workshopped. Each group should turn in drafts of these two sections by 24 hours before the start of class. Everyone should read all of these drafts before class begins.
* In-Class Research Presentations: Each group will give a 10-minute presentation of their research paper on December 14th. Each presentation will be followed by 5 minutes of questions.

The final paper, which should be on the order of 20-30 pages, will be due 11:59 PM on Saturday, December 22nd. This paper should will advance an original argument about deliberation drawing on the experience and data generated by the election forum.

**Grades**

Grades will be based on the following five elements:

Class/forum participation: 20%

Daily brief memos and responses: 20%

Test group and forum reflection memos: 20%

Group research project presentation: 10%

Group research project papers: 30%

This course will use the following grading scale:

A: Achievement outstanding relative to the basic course requirements

A 93 points or higher

A- 90-93

B: Achievement significantly above the basic course requirements

B+ 87-90

B 83-87

B- 80-83

C: Achievement meeting the basic course requirements

C+ 77-80

C 73-77

C- 70-73

D: Achievement worthy of credit but below the basic course requirements

D+ 67-70

D 60-67

F: Below 60 points

**Late Work and Missed Classes**

You must attend class to get credit for any memo or response that is due that day. This requirement will only be waived for documented medical or family emergencies or for approved university activities. Documentation must not be hypothetical, and must actually be provided in either case. Personal or medical issues that do not rise to the level of documented emergency are not an acceptable reason to miss class.

The final essay must be turned in via Moodle by 11:59 pm on Thursday, December 22nd. If I notice that your group did not turn in the essay, I will send you an email. You will have 24 hours after that email is sent to turn in an essay, whose grade will be reduced by 3 points. After that, no late work will be accepted.

All students must participate in the October 29th forum. Failing to do so, barring unforeseeable medical or personal emergency, will lead to a grade of F.

**Class Policies**

**Students with Disabilities**

I will make every effort to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities. Please contact Disability Services (180 McNamara Alumni Center: 612-626-1333) to discuss your individual needs as early as possible in the semester. More information on disability services is available at:

<https://diversity.umn.edu/disability/home>

**Academic Freedom and Responsibility**

All of the work presented in this course is expected to be your own. I will follow the University’s policies and procedures for academic integrity. Using information from a book, article, web page, another person, etc. without crediting the author is plagiarism. Quotations, paraphrased information, and use of others’ ideas should be properly cited in your written assignments. If you have questions about citation, please contact the Professor. More information is available at:

<http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/academic/StudentConduct.html>

**Technology in the Classroom**

While our society teaches us to divide our attention between competing demands, research shows that people are terrible at multi-tasking, particularly when one of the tasks requires a high level of concentration. Indeed, while research shows that multi-tasking degrades performance and leads multi-taskers to get *less* done, not more, multi-tasking provides emotional gratification. This makes it difficult to resist, even if you really, truly intend to only take notes on your laptop and not check Facebook or your fantasy football league. Finally, extensive research shows that taking notes by hand leads to significantly greater learning.

For all of these reasons the use of electronics will not be allowed in class. Please put away all laptops, cellphones, etc. for the duration of the class.

For more details on the perils of multi-tasking and the benefits of taking notes the old-fashioned way see:

<https://medium.com/@cshirky/why-i-just-asked-my-students-to-put-their-laptops-away-7f5f7c50f368>

<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-learning-secret-don-t-take-notes-with-a-laptop/>

<http://hilt.harvard.edu/files/hilt/files/notetaking_0.pdf>

**Contact Policy**

In an effort to hold in-class announcements to a minimum, I will be using e-mail to relay most of the nuts and bolts of the course. You must check your campus e-mail every day. You are responsible for any information that I pass along via email.

I will respond to all email within 24 hours, except on weekends. Though I will respond as quickly as possible, I cannot guarantee that I will respond to any email faster than 24 hours of it being sent.

**Office Hours**

Office Hours will be held Monday and Wednesday from 11 AM to Noon. I’m more than happy to make an appointment with you if those times do not work. Just ask or e-mail me.

**University Resources**

This class will use writing assignments. The Student Writing Center has TA’s and ESL specialists to help with your writing skills. The Writing Center is at 306 B Lind Hall, East Bank (612-625-1893) or on the web at (http://swc.umn.edu.html).

**Course Schedule**

**Section 1: What is Deliberative Democracy?**

**September 7: Intro to class**

Reading:

* Fishkin, James. 2009. *When the People Speak: Deliberative Democracy and Public Consultation*. OUP Oxford. Chapter 1

**September 12: Deliberative Democratic Theory**

Assignment: Reaction Memo and Response

Readings:

* Cohen, Joshua. 1989. “Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy.” In The Good Polity, ed. Alan Hamlin, and Phillip Petit. Boston: Blackwell pp. 17–34. **(M)**
* Guttman, Amy and Dennis Thompson. 2004. “What Deliberative Democracy Means.” Ch. 1 in *Why Deliberative Democracy?* Princeton: Princeton University Press 1-63. **(M)**

**September 14: Critics of Deliberation**

Assignment: Reaction Memo and Response

Readings:

* Sanders, Lynn. 1997. “Against Deliberation.” Political Theory 25(3): 347–376.
* Young, Iris Marion. 2001. “Activist Challenges to Deliberative Democracy.” *Political Theory* 29(5): 670–90.

**September 19: Deliberative Mini-Publics**

Assignment: Reaction Memo and Response

Readings:

* Smith, Graham. 2009. *Democratic Innovations: Designing Institutions for Citizen Participation*. New York: Cambridge University Press. CHAPTER 3 **(M)**
* Munno, Greg and Tina Nabatchi. 2014. "Public Deliberation and Co-Production in the Political and Electoral Arena: A Citizens’ Jury Approach." Journal of Public Deliberation: Vol. 10: Iss. 2, Article 1
* Health Democracy webpage on Citizens’ Initiative Review: <http://healthydemocracy.org/citizens-initiative-review/>
* Knobloch, Katherine R., John Gastil, Justin Reedy, and Katherine Cramer Walsh. 2013. “Did They Deliberate? Applying an Evaluative Model of Democratic Deliberation to the Oregon Citizens' Initiative Review.” Journal of Applied Communication Research 41(2): 105-125

**Section 2: Research on Deliberation and Facilitator Training**

**September 21: Research on Deliberative Mini-Publics Part 1**

Assignment: Reaction Memo and Response

Readings:

* Karpowitz, Christopher K., Tali Mendelberg and Lee Shaker. 2012. “Gender Inequality in Deliberative Participation.” *American Political Science Review* 106(3): 533-547.
* Ryfe, David M. 2006. “Narrative and Deliberation in Small Group Forums.” Journal of Applied Communication Research 34(1): 72-93.

**September 26: Facilitator Training Part 1**

Assignment:

* Reaction memo and response

Readings:

* Facilitator training materials. **(M)**

**September 28: Research on Deliberative Mini-publics Part 2**

Assignment:

* Reaction Memo and Response
* Research ideas due THURSDAY

Readings:

* Esterling, Kevin, Michael Neblo, & David Lazer. (2011) “Means, Motive, and Opportunity in Becoming Informed about Politics: A Deliberative Field Experiment Involving Members of Congress and their Constituents.” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 75(3): 483-503.
* Gastil, John, E. Pierre Deess, and Phil Weiser. “Civic Awakening in the Jury Room: A Test of the Connection between Jury Deliberation and Political Participation.” *Journal of Politics* 64(2): 585-595.

**October 3: Research Ideas Workshop**

Assignments:

* Research Interests Memo
* SCHEDULE MEETING BETWEEN RESEARCH GROUP AND PROFESSOR

Readings:

* Your group’s research interests memos

**October 5: Facilitator Training Part 2**

Assignment:

* Any survey items needed due by end of day Thursday, October 6.

Readings:

* Facilitator training materials. **(M)**

**Section 3: Test Groups and the 2016 Minnesota Election Forum**

**October 10: Theorizing Deliberative Facilitation**

* Mansbridge, Jane, Janette Hartz-Karp, Matthew Amengual, and John Gastil. 2006.

“Norms of Deliberation:  An Inductive Study.” *Journal of Public Deliberation* 2(1).

* Moore, Alfred. 2012. “Following from the Front: Theorizing Deliberative Facilitation.” *Critical Policy Studies* 6(2): 146–62. **(M)**

**October 12: NO CLASS TEST GROUP**

**October 17: Test Group 1 Debriefing**

Assignment:

* Reflection memo on first test group

Readings:

* Read first test group memos

**October 19: NO CLASS TEST GROUPS**

**October 24: Test Group 2 Debriefing**

Assignment:

* Reflection memo on second test group

Readings:

* Read second test group memos

**October 26: HELD FOR FINAL FORUM PREP**

**OCTOBER 28: (SATURDAY): FORUM DAY**

**October 31: NO CLASS! TAKE A BREAK!**

**November 2: Debriefing post-forum**

Assignment:

* Reflection memo on forum

Readings:

* Read forum reflection memos

**Section 4: Deliberation and Politics**

**November 7: TOPIC AND READINGS TBD**

Assignment:

* Reaction Memo and Response

Readings:

* Wojcieszak, M. (2011), Deliberation and Attitude Polarization. Journal of Communication, 61: 596–617. doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.2011.01568.x
* Gaipa Handout

**November 9: Coding Political Discussion**

Assignment:

* Reaction Memo and Response

Readings:

* Sommers , S. R. (2006). On racial diversity and group decision-making: Identifying multiple effects of racial composition on jury deliberations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* *90*, 597–612.
* Stromer-Galley, Jennifer (2007) "Measuring Deliberation's Content: A Coding Scheme," Journal of Public Deliberation: Vol. 3: Iss. 1, Article 12.

**November 14: Deliberation and Opinion Change**

Assignment:

* Reaction Memo and Response

Readings:

* Farrar, C., Fishkin, J. S., Green, D. P., List, C., Luskin, R. C., & Paluck , E. L. ( 2010 ). Disaggregating deliberation’s effects: An experiment with a Deliberative Poll. *British Journal of Political Science*, *40*, 333–347. doi:10.1017/S0007123409990433
* Andersen, V. N., & Hansen, K. M. ( 2007 ). How deliberation makes better citizens: The Danish Deliberative Poll on the euro. European Journal of Political Research, 46, 531–556.

**November 16: Social Networks and Politics**

Assignment: Reaction Memo and Response

Readings

* Klofstad, Casey A. 2007. “Talk Leads to Recruitment How Discussions about Politics and Current Events Increase Civic Participation.” *Political Research Quarterly* 60(2): 180–91.
* Jacobs, Lawrence R, Fay Lomax Cook and Michael X. Delli Carpini. 2009. Talking Together: Public Deliberation and Political Participation in America. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. **Chapters 2. (M)**

**November 21: NO CLASS – Paper Planning meetings with instructor**

Assignment: Draft introduction, paper outline, and plan for completing the paper

**November 28: Deliberation vs. Participation? Class 1**

Assignment: Reaction Memo and Response

Readings:

* Mutz, Diana C. 2006. *Hearing the Other Side: Deliberative vs. Participatory Democracy*. CHAPTERS 1-2

**November 30: Intro, Lit Review, and Hypothesis Workshop**

Assignment: Your groups’ draft intro, lit review and hypotheses.

Reading: Other groups’ draft intro, lit review and hypotheses.

**December 5: Deliberation vs. Participation? Class 2**

Assignment: Reaction Memo and Response

Readings:

* Mutz, Diana C. 2006. *Hearing the Other Side: Deliberative vs. Participatory Democracy*. CHAPTERS 3-4

**December 7: Deliberation vs. Participation? Class 3**

Assignment: Reaction Memo and Response

Readings:

* Mutz, Diana C. 2006. *Hearing the Other Side: Deliberative vs. Participatory Democracy*. CHAPTER 5
* Berger, Ben. 2013. “The Accidental Theorist: Diana Mutz’s Normative and Empirical Insights.” *Critical Review* 25(2): 181–98. **(M)**
* Landemore, Hélène. 2013. “On Minimal Deliberation, Partisan Activism, and Teaching People How to Disagree.” *Critical Review* 25(2): 210–25. **(M)**

**December 12: Methods, Results and Conclusion Workshop**

Assignment: Your groups’ draft methods, results and conclusion section;

Reading: Other groups’ methods, results and conclusion section.

**December 14: Final Paper Presentations**

Assignment: 8-minute presentation on your group’s research project.