

Com 270: Public Deliberation

MW 10:30am-12:20pm

Spring 2017

Professor: Pamela Conners

Course Description

The public exchange of arguments and perspectives is critical for democratic advancement. In this course, students will explore theories of deliberation and will practice making and evaluating cogent arguments through two class dialogues. Students will further bring theory into practice by designing and facilitating a community discussion. This civic engagement project is undertaken in partnership with the local school district.

Assignments

Debates occur in both formal and informal settings and arguments may be made in different forms (e.g. written, oral, visual). This course thus creates opportunities for you to learn how to develop and evaluate arguments in a variety of forms. The assignments are summarized below in brief.

Participation

You are expected to come prepared to class every day. Always complete the reading prior to class and bring it and your questions/notes with you.

Participation in class includes both speaking and listening. You are encouraged to challenge one another's ideas and to argue vigorously. In developing your own arguments, you should be putting into practice the skills you will hone over the course of the semester—claims should be supported with evidence. You are also expected to be respectful of others and maintain a level of professionalism appropriate to the classroom. Your final participation grade will be based on your contributions to class discussion and in small group workshops; you will be accountable for your preparation for class as well as your attention to assignment and course expectations. You are also required to attend all in-class debates and deliberations. If you miss or interrupt a debate, your own debate grade will be penalized. Additionally, you will be required to participate in and facilitate deliberations.

Dialogues (2)

In a vibrant public sphere, we encounter situations in which others expect us to express cogent arguments about matters of general public and political interest. The civil dialogue invites you to engage in an extemporaneous dialogue with your classmates by stepping into a position on an issue. We will use different formats for the dialogues in order to assess the strengths and weaknesses of each model.

Dialogue Analysis Papers

Following the dialogues, you will assess the models used as well as the quality of discussion they facilitated.

Framing Public Deliberation (Interviews, Interview Coding, Deliberation Design)

To prepare for the event, students will conduct research and assess the information we have in order to design an appropriate deliberative format for the issue and context. As a part of the research, every student will conduct interviews with community members. Every student will then review and code all of the responses in order to determine key themes, concerns, and language that should frame the issue for the conversations. Students will also draw upon the reading and theory to draft their own design for the deliberation. The final design will be determined by the class as a whole.

Public Deliberation

In planning, hosting, and facilitating a public deliberation, you will take on a number of responsibilities. The tasks are multiple and will require you to take initiative, engage theories of argumentation, collaborate with your peers, and communicate with the public. You will be evaluated on your contribution, initiative, and professionalism. Preparation for the deliberation includes, but is not limited to the following:

Framing Documents

In order to prepare participants for the public dialogue, we will need to develop information that frames and explains the question(s) being discussed and the process for discussing it.

Facilitator Guide

Everyone will learn the essential responsibilities and functions of a dialogue facilitator. We will also create a guide that can be used by others describing how to facilitate a dialogue effectively.

Event Planning

We will need to identify dates and locations, invite participants, publicize the events, and arrange for child care, translation, and transportation as needed.

Data Capturing

We will develop a process for collecting the perspectives and arguments voiced by participants at the deliberation.

Data Synthesis/Report

We will organize, synthesize, and thematize the notes captured from the events. This will be part of a final report shared with the community partner.

Deliberation Analysis Paper

At the conclusion of the deliberation and report development, you will individually assess the process, the deliberation, and your participation in a final paper.

Points	Assignment
15	Participation
15	Dialogue 1

10	Dialogue Analysis Paper 1
20	Dialogue 2
10	Dialogue Analysis Paper 2
10	Interview Coding Report
20	Deliberation Design Report
75	Public Deliberation
25	Deliberation Analysis Paper
200	Total

Course Schedule

Date	Day	Topic
2/6/17	Monday	Introduction
2/8/17	Wednesday	(Why) Should We Argue?
2/13/17	Monday	Guest: Sara Drury, Wabash College
2/15/17	Wednesday	What is an argument?
2/20/17	Monday	Class Dialogues
2/22/17	Wednesday	Class Dialogues
2/27/17	Monday	No Class: Professor at Kettering Foundation
3/1/17	Wednesday	Naming and Framing Issues
3/6/17	Monday	Deliberation
3/8/17	Wednesday	Planning Day
3/13/17	Monday	Designing Deliberation
3/15/17	Wednesday	Making Arguments
3/20/17	Monday	Analyzing Arguments
3/22/17	Wednesday	Why Deliberative Democracy?
3/27/17	Monday	No Class: Spring Break
3/29/17	Wednesday	No Class: Spring Break
4/3/17	Monday	Planning Day
4/5/17	Wednesday	Community Deliberation Models (Guest Speaker: Kyle Bozentko, Jefferson Center, Minneapolis)
4/10/17	Monday	Class Dialogues
4/12/17	Wednesday	Class Dialogues
4/17/17	Monday	No Class: Easter Recess
4/19/17	Wednesday	Facilitating Dialogue and Deliberation (Guest Speaker: David Kim, formerly of Youthprise, Minneapolis)
4/24/17	Monday	Facilitation Training
4/26/17	Wednesday	Testing Deliberative Framework
5/1/17	Monday	Planning Day
5/2/17	TUESDAY	COMMUNITY DELIBERATION 6-8pm
5/3/17	Wednesday	No Class: May Day Conference
5/7/17	SUNDAY	COMMUNITY DELIBERATION 4-6pm

5/8/17	Monday	Organizing Data for Community Report
5/10/17	Wednesday	Writing Report
5/15/17	Monday	Finalizing Report
5/17/17	Wednesday	Final Reflection and Course Evaluation

Reading

- Asen, Robert. "A Discourse Theory of Citizenship." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 90 (2004): 189-211.
- Carcasson, Martín. "Beginning with the End in Mind: A Call for Purpose-Driven Deliberative Practice," Occasional Paper No. 2 (2009), Center for Advances in Public Engagement, Public Agenda.
- Carcasson, Martín and Leah Sprain. "Beyond Problem Solving: Reconceptualizing the Work of Public Deliberation as Deliberative Inquiry." *Communication Theory* 26 (2016): 41-63.
- Dewey, John. "Creative Democracy—the Task Before Us." In *The Later Works, 1925–1953*. Volume 14: 1939–1941, ed. Jo Ann Boydston. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1991.
- Farkas, Steve and Ann Duffett. "Maze of Mistrust: How District Politics and Cross Talk Are Stalling Efforts to Improve Public Education." Kettering Foundation and FDR Group, 2014.
- Kaner, Sam. *Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Business & Management Series, 2014.
- Kolbert, Elizabeth. "Why Facts Don't Change Our Minds." *The New Yorker*. February 17, 2017.
- Makau, Josina M. and Debian L. Marty. *Dialogue and Deliberation*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2013.
- "Naming and Framing Difficult Issues." Kettering Foundation, 2011.
- Pratt, Julie. "What is the 21st Century Mission for Our Public Schools?" National Issues Forum, 2007.
- Rourke, Brad. "Developing Materials for Deliberative Forums." Kettering Foundation, 2014.

Course Policies

Late Work

No late work will be accepted. If you miss a deadline, you will receive 0 points for that assignment.

Email

Email is an opportunity to further demonstrate and practice your writing skills and rhetorical sensitivity to audience. Here are a couple guidelines:

- Limit your email correspondence to questions that may be answered in one or two sentences.
- Use appropriate salutations, grammar, and punctuation.
- If you wish to set up an appointment outside of the professor's office hours, then you should email 3 different options for alternative times in which you could meet.
- Do not ask the professor to repeat instructions or course content that has been explained in the syllabus, on an assignment sheet, or in class.

Anticipate that it may take me at least 24 hours to receive a reply to your email.

Reading

All reading should be completed prior to the class for which it is assigned. Take notes on the reading and bring the reading with you to class.

Papers

All assignments must be turned in by the beginning of the class period on the day they are due.

Academic Honesty

You are expected to conduct yourself ethically. In signing up for this course, you have agreed to abide by the Gustavus Honor Code. With the submission of every assignment, you affirm:

“On my honor, I pledge that I have not given, received, nor tolerated others' use of unauthorized aid in completing this work.”

Plagiarism is a grave offense with serious consequences. Students found guilty of academic misconduct will receive **no credit** for that assignment and a letter concerning the affair will be forwarded to the Dean of Students. If you have concerns or questions about how to avoid plagiarizing, please consult with me. Full descriptions of the Academic Honesty Policy and the Honor Code can be found in the catalogue on the web at:

https://gustavus.edu/general_catalog/current/acainfo.

Disability Services

Every attempt will be made to accommodate qualified students with disabilities. If you are a student with a documented disability, please see me as early in the semester as possible to discuss necessary accommodations and/or contact the Disability Services Office at x7027.