What factors determine how individuals participate in politics? Assuming political participation matters, how come some people become active while others choose not to? What role does early socialization and learning from a variety of sources—the family, schools, peers—compared to later experiences—attending college, starting to work, the events of the day—play in influencing our actions? What are the alternative theories about what gets people involved and what are advantages and disadvantages about different ways to participate within the system? What does all this say about the concept of political citizenship, what it means and what consequences it has in a democracy??

Focusing on literature on political socialization (our early learning) and participation, this course will examine and debate these important questions. In addition to describing a standard set of topics (voting, participating in groups), some special topics worthy of our consideration include how to motivate more young people to become interested in politics, the potential for deliberative democracy and differences in participation by important demographic groups.

This course is writing intensive and will meet the standards for oral discourse credit. (See http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/general_education.html For more details of the requirements.)

It is also a capstone course for political science majors. As such, it will meet this requirement in two ways. The course will ratchet up your understanding of the tried-and-true concept of political participation (covered in other classes) by integrating aspects of participation into broader considerations of citizenship. Second it will do so in a way that hopefully will additionally enhance your communication skills about political science topics.

Learning Objectives
a) Identify key theories, controversies and relevant debates
b) Compare/contrast the advantages/disadvantages of alternative forms of political participation and their consequences
c) Compare/contrast alternative ways of engaging in “citizenship”.
d) Locate yourself on a continuum: How do you see yourself as participating in politics? as a “citizen” more generally?
e) Incorporate other viewpoints into your ideas
f) Connect current events and controversies to the theories/controversies being covered in class

BOOKS

- Books are available in the campus bookstore and at Mary Jane Books. Additional readings available on Blackboard.

Course Requirements

1. **Research papers**: papers will vary in length from a first research paper on political socialization (4-6 pages), a longer research paper on interest groups and their strategies (8-10 pages; due before spring break, will be the basis of your in-class presentation) and a final project based on a combination of a short survey project and an advocacy argument integrating all course material, 6-8 pages); 10%, 20%, 20%
2. **Oral Presentations**, one to your peers (5% of grade; 1 to the class, 10% of grade), thus 15%
3. **Attendance, class participation, quizzes**, 35%
   There will be *two kinds of quizzes*: every other Friday there will be a 15 minute quiz on the readings from the last two weeks. There will also be approximately five pop quizzes throughout the semester. (Grading: quizzes, 18%; consistent participation 17%).

Notes

**Attendance**: This is a labor intensive course. The course has a great deal of in class and collaborative work. You have to come to class. Each person is allowed one unexcused absence. Any other absence must be excused by the instructor before the absence or excused afterwards based on a medical note. Any unexcused absence after the first one will result in a half grade penalty per absence. Really. Repeated late arrivals will result in a warning and then also result in a half grade penalty per absence.

**Plagiarism**: The strength of the university depends on academic and personal integrity. In this course, you must be honest and truthful. Plagiarism is the use of someone else's work, words, or ideas as if they were your own without giving the original author credit by citing him or her. If you have any questions about plagiarism, please contact me before submitting assignments for grading. Plagiarism violations will result in disciplinary action.
Topics and Readings (dates subject to change contingent on progress)

**Part I: Learning to be a Citizen**
What does it mean to be a “good” citizen? How have ideas about citizenship changed over time and what are the implications of those changes? What do political scientists think is happening to citizenship and political participation today?

1/20-1/22  Introduction: Citizenship and Participation

**Part II: The Political Socialization of Young People and the Agents That Shape It**
How important is politics to children? What do children learn/know about politics, how do they learn it and from whom? In what ways, if any, do our early learnings shape participation and attitudes in later life?

1/27  Overview
Dawson, Prewitt and Dawson (1977), *Political Socialization*, ch. 3 (The Political Self), ch. 4 (Political Learning during Childhood and Adolescence)
1/29  Agents of Socialization and What We Learn from Them: Family and Schools: Dawson et al, *Political Socialization*, ch. 7 (The Family and Political Socialization), ch. 8 (Education, the School and Political Learning)

2/1-2/5  The Teen Age Years
2/1-2/3  Niemi and Junn (2005), *Civic Education: What Makes Students Learn*, ch. 2 (What High School Students Know about Civics), ch. 3 (How Students Learn about Government), ch. 4 (Exposure to Learning)
2/5  CQ Researcher on “Student Rights”

2/8-2/12  Other Facets of Socialization
2/8  Context, CQ Researcher on “Race and Politics”
2/10  Dalton, *The Good Citizen*, ch. 2 (The Meaning and Measurement of Citizenship), ch. 3 (Forming Citizenship Norms)
2/12  Catch up day
2/17  CQ Researcher on “Cyber-socialization”
2/19  First paper and presentation to a group due.
Part III: Participation
What are some advantages and disadvantages of different ways to participate in politics? Which types of participation are most effective? When is non-participation ok? Are there ever circumstances where we should even work against the existing system?

2/22-3/5 Voting and Campaigning

2/22 Controversial History of voting in U.S: McGlen and O’Connor and et al. (2005), Women, Politics and American Society, ch. 1 (The Struggle for Political Rights, pp 21-42)

2/24-2/26 Voting debate and theories of voting: Macedo, Democracy at Risk, ch. 2 (National Electoral Processes)

3/1-3/3 Ways to get out the vote: Green and Gerber (2008), Get out the Vote: How to Increase Voter Turnout, experiments on mobilization

3/1 Introduction: ch. 1 (Introduction: Why Voter Mobilization Matters); ch. 2 (Evidence versus Received Wisdom); ch. 3 (Door-to-door Canvassing)

3/3 Subsequent chapter (choose one from ch. 4-9) of your choice.

3/5 Dalton, The Good Citizen, ch. 8 (In Tocqueville’s Footsteps)

3/8-3/12 Participating in Local Politics

3/8-3/10 Macedo, Democracy at Risk, ch. 3 (The American Metropolis)

3/12 CQ Researcher on “Confronting Warming”

3/15-3/29 Interest Groups

3/15-3/17 Group Formation, Strategies, Problems, Individual Transformations? Chapters from Cigler and Loomis (2007), Interest Group Politics, ch. 2 (the enduring power of the NRA); ch. 3 (politics of tribal recognition); ch. 4 (interest groups and advocacy for the disadvantaged); ch. 5 (big-money donors to environmental groups), ch. 11 (is corporate lobbying rational or just a waste of money?); ch. 16 (emerging issues, new organizations: interests groups nad the making of nanotechnology policy)

3/19 Macedo, Democracy at Risk, ch. 4 (Associational Life and the Nonprofit and Philanthropic Sector)

3/22-3/24 Participation on the college campus


3/26  Paper on groups due; (you will have the opportunity to revise)

**Part IV: Citizenship and Participation**
Redefinitions, New Directions, from Deliberative Democracy to Civil Disobedience, Protest and even Revolution

4/7  CQ Researcher on “Immigration debate” [from ninth edition]

4/9-4/14  In class presentations and reading on deliberative democracy

4/16-4/19  Discussion on deliberative democracy: ordinary citizens understand politics


Fishkin, *Democracy and Deliberation* (entire book)

Revised papers due, 4/19 or earlier

4/21-4/23  Johnson and Reynolds (2005), Political Science Research Methods, ch. 10 (Elite Interviewing and Survey Research)

4/26-4/30  The other extreme: Protest Politics


4/30  Reading on revolutions (t.b.a.)

5/3  Conclusion; Macedo, *Democracy at Risk*, ch. 5 (Conclusion: Assessing Our Political Science of Citizenship)

5/10  Final Project Due