Community Politics  
POS 424Z Class #10463  
Fall 2018  
T-TH 2:45-4:05 pm PAC 355  
Prof. José E. Cruz

Course Description

This course focuses on power relations at the local level. We will consider how race, class, ethnicity, and gender intersect around issues of political participation, descriptive, and substantive representation. Throughout the semester we will reflect on the relationship between community, individuality, and political empowerment.

Learning Objectives

In this course students will:

1. understand the concept of power at different levels of society and government;

2. understand how race, class, ethnicity, and gender intersect in political issues at the community level;

3. research a topic using a variety of sources;

4. produce several clear and coherent texts following rules of usage, style, and mechanics in the context of academic writing in political science; and

5. demonstrate the ability to revise and improve such texts.

Required Readings


Selected readings on Blackboard.

Course Environment

This course will be taught interactively through lectures and discussion of readings in plenary and small groups. During lectures you need to take good notes since lecture material will not be posted on Blackboard.

At various points during the semester we will have question and answer writing sessions prior to the mid-term and final exams. During these sessions the class will be divided into small groups and students will compare notes on the topics examined and write possible
questions for the exams. During each session we will answer the questions written and the instructor will design the exams based on a selection of student questions and his own. To be successful, this process requires excellent attendance to class and good note-taking during lectures and discussions. Guidelines for these review sessions will be provided in writing before the sessions.

I notice everything and take everything into account. If you are routinely absent, late, disruptive, disrespectful, texting, improperly browsing the internet, etc., your grade will be affected negatively.

**Course Requirements**

1. **Class participation (20% of course grade).** During discussion and deliberation the instructor will play three roles: facilitator, devil's advocate, and provider of information. As a facilitator the instructor will guide exchanges between students making sure that rules of civility and critical thinking are followed. As a devil's advocate the instructor will push students to substantiate their positions through reasoned argumentation. As a provider of information the instructor will supplement the facts presented by students and/or clarify points of contention when necessary.

To prepare for class discussions of assigned readings you should read the material with a view toward answering the following questions: What is the main point of the chapter/reading? What did you learn? What did you find particularly interesting or provocative? Is (are) there any value judgment(s) that you disagree with and/or assumption(s) that is (are) unfounded? Explain. Do you have any questions that you would like to share with the class? Focus on conceptual rather than empirical questions. A conceptual question is: Is individualism incompatible with communitarianism? An empirical question is: In what year was the city of Albany founded? The second question is legitimate but you can find the answer easily on your own. **Let's use class time to analyze, probe, and debate.**

2. **Mid-term exam (20% of course grade).** The mid-term will be objective, a combination of multiple-choice, true and false, and fill-in-the blank questions. The exam will be based on the material covered during the first half of the term.

3. **One twenty-page paper, broken down into four, separate five-page papers, typed, double spaced, in Times New Roman 12 font with one inch margins, describing and analyzing a social, economic, or political issue at the community level in your city or town of origin (10% of course grade each).** Each five-page paper will be one section of the overall work. Each will answer specific questions as follows:

   **Paper 1:** What is the historical background of your city or town of origin?

   **Paper 2:** What is the demographic and socio-economic profile of your city or town of origin and what is its community leadership structure?
Paper 3: Select a contentious historical or contemporary issue in your city or town of origin and fully describe its origin, nature, importance, implications for the overall well-being of city or town residents.

Paper 4: Describe and analyze the conflict surrounding your selected issue, the players involved and their positions, strategies, actions, and the outcome.

To write your papers you should use the University Libraries, the World Wide Web, and other information sources.

Your writing will be a process of finding, evaluating, and citing information sources presented in diverse formats from multiple sources. While the four pieces you will write should stand on their own separately, when put together they should read as an integrated single textual document.

**Feedback with an opportunity to revise and resubmit will be provided for the first paper. However, a late submission without a compelling reason for lateness will result in forfeiture of the opportunity to revise and resubmit. In these cases, feedback will be provided which students can use to improve subsequent papers.**

To write your paper, you should use academic and periodical sources available at the University Libraries, the World Wide Web, and other information sources.¹

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<th>Paper Schedule</th>
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<td>Paper 1</td>
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<td>Paper 1 Returned for revision</td>
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<td>Resubmit Paper 1</td>
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<td>Paper 2</td>
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<td>Paper 3</td>
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<td>Paper 4</td>
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4. Final exam (20% of course grade). The final will also be objective be a combination of multiple-choice, true and false, and fill-in-the blank questions. The exam will be based on the material covered during the second half of the term.

**Grading**

The course is graded A-E. The course grade will be tabulated according to the weights indicated above for each requirement. Letter grades will be converted into scores according to the scale noted below.

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¹ This section draws from University guidelines online at http://www.albany.edu/generaleducation/
Letter Grade Scale

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Exam scores will be converted to grades according to the following scale:

Score Grade Scale

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Policies

There are no opportunities for extra credit in this class.

Concerning standards of academic integrity, freedom of expression, and attendance and timely completion of course requirements please refer to:
http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html

Concerning medical excuses please refer to:
http://www.albany.edu/health_center/medicalexcuse.shtml

Please also note that, as indicated in the University’s Undergraduate Bulletin: “Each instructor retains the right to modify the syllabus and give notice in class of any modifications in a timely fashion. Students are responsible to apprise themselves of such notices.”

I retain the power to judge and/or decide on any situations, terms, conditions, and stipulations not specified herein, nor prohibited by reasonable academic and administrative standards.

Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with documented physical, sensory, systemic, cognitive, learning and psychiatric disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring accommodation in this class, please notify the Director of the Disability Resource Center (Campus Center 130, 518-442-5490, DRC@albany.edu). That office will provide the course instructor with verification of your disability, and will recommend appropriate accommodations.

Office Hours

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30-11:00 am HU-B16. If you are unable to meet during scheduled office hours, we can meet at a mutually convenient time by appointment. Contact information: jcruz@albany.edu E-mails sent after business hours may not be
answered until the following day. E-mails sent after 5pm on Fridays will be answered the following week between 9am and 5pm.

**Course Schedule**

**August**
28 - Introduction
30 - Lecture on power

**September**
4 - Lecture on leadership
6 - Lecture on community power and pluralism
11 - Question and answer writing session - 5 questions for each lecture topic, two multiple-choice, two true/false, and one fill-in-the-blank.
13 - Jonas, "Corporate Takeover and the Politics of Community."
18 - Krinsky and Reese, "Forging and Sustaining Labor-Community Coalitions."
20 - Herbert, "The Trapdoor of Community."
25 - Tuan, "Community, Society and the Individual."
27 - Donahue, "All types of participation Shape a Community."

**October**
2 - Donahue, "Silent majority and civil rights."
4 - Donahue, "Exploring Participation for Insight into Community."
9 - Question and answer writing session - 5 questions for each article/chapter, two multiple-choice, two true/false, and one fill-in-the-blank.
11 - Question and answer writing session - 5 questions for each article/chapter, two multiple-choice, two true/false, and one fill-in-the-blank.
16 - Mid-term exam
18 - DeFillipis, Ch. 1
23 - DeFillipis, Ch. 2
25 - DeFillipis, Ch. 3
30 - DeFillipis, Ch. 4

**November**
1 - DeFillipis, Ch. 5
6 - DeFillipis, Ch. 6
8 - Question and answer writing session - 5 questions for each article/chapter, two multiple-choice, two true/false, and one fill-in-the-blank.
15 - Horan, "Community Development, Racial Empowerment, and Politics."
20 - Watch *Battle for Brooklyn-Fighting to Save a New York Community* on Blackboard, write a 250-word reaction paper and submit by e-mail in a word file on or before November 27.
27 - Comments on *Battle for Brooklyn*: Bhostedt, "Gender, Household and Community Politics-Women in English Riots, 1790-1810."
29 - Caron, "Birth Control and the Black Community in the 1960s-Genocide or Power Politics?"

**December**
4 - Freeman, "From the Lesbian Nation to the Cincinnati Lesbian Community-Moving to a Politics of Location."
6 - Question and writing session - 5 questions for each article, two multiple-choice, two true/false, and one fill-in-the-blank. Last day of classes.
18 – Final exam, 1:00-3:00pm.