

## DEAN OF STUDENTS OFFICE

**ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP**

Instructor: Chrys Margaritidis, Dean of Students, [margaritidisc@ceu.edu](mailto:margaritidisc@ceu.edu)

Central European University, Spring Semester 2021-2

Course Status: Elective MA course, 2 credits.

**Course Description**

One way to think about civic engagement is that it means working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It also means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes.<sup>1</sup> This course provides a forum for discussing a selection of topics on civic engagement through mainly contemporary literature. Topics discussed are the relationship between civic engagement and civil society, UN's stance on civic engagement, transnational advocacy, youth engagement, ethical issues in civic engagement and contemporary challenges. This will be an interactive course requiring students to labor with the readings by answering questions posed. Students are also asked to relate readings to their experience from their own communities in the form of thinking of ways they can help their community. An important part of the course requires students to work together and create a project proposal for the needs of an organization and the local community.

**Learning outcomes**

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

- Understand core notions of citizenship and their connection to civic engagement.
- Develop the capacity to think critically about the context, impacts, challenges and opportunities of civic engagement activities, including those in which students lead or participate.
- Understand the contexts civic engagement takes place in - at different levels (local, national, global) and between/across state and non-state organizations/ groups, as well as in countries with different levels of political, socioeconomic development and diversities of population.
- Develop an understanding of the ethical implications of civic engagement, particularly for students engaged in civic engagement activities.
- Be able to prepare a project proposal for a local civic engagement project.

**Requirements**

Regular attendance, carefully completing the assigned readings before class, and active participation in discussions will be expected. The instructor will regularly pose questions online and ask students for their feedback and views. In addition, there will be the following assignments:

1. *In class presentation*: each (team of) students will give a 15–20-minute presentation on a selected topic. The presentation should include a brief exposition of the logic of an important argument from, or related to, the readings, and raise questions and potential criticisms for discussion.

2. *Paper*: Students will be asked to answer the following after the first day of class: Reflecting on Taylor, Dalton and Westheimer/Joseph Kahne, “prepare a short paper (1000 words) on a contemporary or historical figure (or group) whom you consider to be a successful role model of civic engagement and answer the following:

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<sup>1</sup> Civic Responsibility and Higher Education, edited by Thomas Ehrlich, published by Oryx Press, 2000, p.vi

- Why did you choose this figure or group?
- How do you think the figure you chose connects with the three types of citizen Weistheimer/Kahne propose?
- Does the person exemplify the way you see social change be driven?
- What do you consider to be the keys to their success?
- Where did they fail?
- What was the context for their success and failure? What are lessons learned?
- Did the change have a long lasting impact?
- What about the biography of the individual (or group) influenced their leadership?

3. *Project Proposal*: Students will form team and work on preparing a project proposal that would address their community needs with the potential to bring positive change. More information will be given in class.

4. *Project Presentation*: Student Teams will present their project proposal ideas to the rest of the class

### **Assessment**

20% participation, 20% paper, 20% in-class presentation, 30% project proposal, 10% project presentation

### **Grading criteria for the presentation**

A blank “Presentation Score Sheet” listing the evaluation criteria according to which presentations will be assessed can be downloaded from the course web site. It is most important that in-class presentations do not merely reproduce the readings: to earn at least a B+ grade, they must offer significant clarifications, raise important questions, and/or add the presenter’s own well-grounded opinions and arguments. Presentations will otherwise be assessed primarily according to their clarity, focus, soundness of arguments, and helpfulness in understanding the topic. Excessively long or rushed presentations (exempting time taken for questions or other interruptions) will be marked down 1/3 of a grade. Participation in the rest of the seminar will count equally with the presentation, and will be graded according to attendance, preparation, attention to others, and quality of contributions in class throughout the term.

### **Grading criteria for the midterm and final paper**

To earn a B+, the written assignment must clearly and concisely address the agreed question, must be written in good academic English. Insofar as these are relevant, the paper must demonstrate a solid understanding of the arguments from readings in the course as well as in-class presentations and discussions. Important principles and concepts should be clearly explained. The views of others should, where necessary, be charitably, clearly and succinctly reconstructed, and properly cited. The paper must show that you have analyzed and independently organized the material yourself in response to the question, rather than simply following the organization of in-class presentations or parts of the literature. To earn an A-, the assignment must demonstrate all the above plus evidence of genuine progress as a result of your own independent thinking, such as your own substantive evaluation and critique of the validity and soundness of the arguments of others, or your own original positive argument. If there are any problems with the exposition or arguments in the paper, these will be minor. Any obvious objections to your argument will have been anticipated and answered. Papers that earn an A will demonstrate all the above virtues, to the extent that they are nearly flawless in writing style, organization, exposition and soundness of arguments. While remaining entirely relevant to the

question, such a paper will be ambitious in scope and will demonstrate an exceptional degree of understanding and insight into the topic.

### **Course Schedule and Readings**

The schedule is not set in stone but is subject to change for pedagogical reasons as the course progresses! The course website always includes the latest information.

Day 1, Session 1	Course Outline/Basics of Project Proposal: Overview
Day 1, Session 2,	Education and Civic Engagement (Freire)
Day 1, Session 3,	Storytelling (Calvino)
Day 1, Session 4,	Storytelling and Civic Engagement
Day 1, Session 5,	Civic Engagement and Citizenship (Dalton)
Day 1, Session 6,	Civic Engagement and Civil Society (Adler) and (Westheimer/Kahne)
Day 1, Session 7	Civic Engagement and Citizenship (Putnam-Taylor)
Day 1, Session 8,	Civic Engagement and Citizenship conclusions
Day 2, Session 1,	Basics of Project Proposal: Assessment Plan
Day 2, Session 2,	Basics of Project Proposal: Statement of Needs
Day 2, Session 3,	Basics of Project Proposal: Executive Summary/Project Description
Day 2, Session 4,	Basics of Project Proposal: Project Management Skills
Day 2, Session 5,	WEF 2013 Report, CIVICUS 2021 Report
Day 2, Session 6,	Organization Presentation
Day 2, Session 7,	Organization Presentation
Day 2, Session 8,	Group Work
Day 3, Session 1,	Youth Engagement
Day 3, Session 2,	Youth Engagement
Day 3, Session 3,	Internet, Social Media and Activism
Day 3, Session 4,	Activism and Slacktivism
Day 3, Session 5,	Contemporary Challenges
Day 3, Session 6,	Contemporary Challenges
Day 3, Session 7,	Student Presentations
Day 3, Session 8,	Student Presentations

## **Readings**

Richard P. Adler and Judy Goggin, 'What Do We Mean By "Civic Engagement"'?

Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*, Chapters 1-3

Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*

Putnam and Sanders, *Still Bowling Alone: the Post 9/11 split*

Richard Taylor, *Concepts of Citizenship in the Context of Political Education*

Russell Dalton, *Citizenship Norms and the Expansion of Political Participation*

Joel Westheimer and Joseph Kahne, "Educating the "Good" Citizen: Political Choices and Pedagogical Goals,"

Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Transnational Advocacy in International and Regional Politics*

S. Sugita, *Arab Youth: Civic Engagement and Economic Participation*

*Global Youth Index and Report, Chapter 3, Youth and Public Participation*

Cabrera and Montoya, "'Activism or Slacktivism? The Potential and Pitfalls of Social Media in Contemporary Student Activism'

Vissers and Stolle, "The Internet and new modes of political participation: online versus offline participation"

Julia Kreienkamp, "Responding to the Global Crackdown on Civil Society"

IDR Report: *Addressing Civil Society's Challenges: Support Organizations as Emerging Institutions*

## **Useful tools for Project Proposal**

Bard College Civic Engagement Handbook: <https://cce.bard.edu/resources/civic-engagement/>

CEU: Basics of Project Proposal: <https://prezi.com/view/Ym1dtu956Dbb3Nis1wcp/>

University of Kansas Toolkit, Chapter 3: <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/assessing-community-needs-and-resources>