

Darien Civic Engagement Project (DCEP)
Topics in Political Science: Citizenship & Civic Engagement
790:250

Instructor/Contact Information

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Sakai Site

TBD

Class Meeting

This class is scheduled to meet on **Thursdays from 10:55-12:15**. This fall, this course will be offered primarily remotely. We will meet synchronously via Zoom on Thursdays from 10:55-11:55 for discussion and to apply what students have read or reviewed prior to our meeting. Modules for each week's theme will contain relevant lectures/videos that students will review prior to each meeting (modules will be housed on our Sakai site). ****DETAILS BELOW****

"Office Hours" & Staying Connected

- DCEP students will be connected on a group text via GroupMe
- I will hold drop-in office hours on **Wednesdays from 10am-12pm** in my personal meeting room on Zoom. Students can drop-in during that time. I also am happy to meet with students via appointment.

- Our Sakai site will have a Chat Room – I will monitor that Chat Room on **Mondays from 10-11am** and am happy to answer questions that arise.

Learning Objectives

RU Voting is a nonpartisan effort administered by the Eagleton Institute of Politics. Its mission is to prepare and encourage Rutgers students to pay attention to politics, register to vote, and turn out on Election Day.

The objective of Topics in Political Science: Citizenship & Civic Engagement and the Darien Civic Engagement Project (DCEP) is to link how we think about American politics with the practicalities of politics by focusing attention and effort on youth political participation via RU Voting. As such, it offers an opportunity to gain a rich understanding of the realities of youth political action and its connection to the theoretical underpinnings of American democracy.

By participating in the Darien Civic Engagement Project, students will *gain an understanding* of the intricacies of voter registration and mobilization processes and their relationship to youth engagement; *learn to appreciate* the connection (or lack thereof) between how we think about politics and how practice politics; *employ the practical tactics* of organizing and administering voter engagement efforts (with special attention to mobilization remotely); *analyze* campaign-related content through the lens of youth engagement; *collaborate* with fellow students on practical and research-related efforts; *gain confidence* in their leadership and problem-solving abilities; and *better appreciate* their role in their community.

Course Expectations/Procedures

- The Eagleton Institute of Politics studies how American politics and government work and change, analyzes how the democracy might improve, and promotes political participation and civic engagement. The Institute explores state and national politics through research, education, and public service, linking the study of politics with its day-to-day practice.

Our teaching at Eagleton is an extension of the Institute's mission. As such, we expect all students in our courses to engage in discussion. This includes sharing knowledge, questions and political opinions, while also listening to the comments of fellow students, faculty and guest speakers with grace, patience and an open mind. Verbal discussions and differing points of view about politics are expected and encouraged.

Like all Rutgers students, those at Eagleton are expected to act in a professional, honest and ethical manner. They are required to abide by the University Code of Student Conduct and to adhere to the University's policies regarding academic integrity. To view the policy, go to <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>.

- We will meet synchronously via Zoom on Thursdays from 10:55-11:55 for discussion and to apply what students have read or reviewed prior to our meeting. Modules for each week's

theme will contain relevant lectures/videos that students will review prior to each meeting (modules will be housed on our Sakai site).

- If students are unable to attend a session, they are expected to get in touch with Professor Matto prior to the missed class – all classes will be recorded and recordings will be provided to students who were unable to attend that week's session.
- In order to facilitate discussion and allow students an opportunity to have meaningful connections with each other, it is my preference that students' cameras remain on. That being said, I understand that this isn't always possible – please be advised that all students should be prepared to be called on to answer questions or engage in discussion whether their cameras are on or not.

Grading

- *RU Voting Projects (30%)* Members of the Darien Civic Engagement Project will serve as RU Voting Ambassadors and participate in creating and disseminating virtual voter registration, education, and mobilization content. At the beginning of the semester, students will choose a project from a pre-determined list of RU Voting projects to complete - due dates for individual projects will vary based on the type of project.
- *Reflection Papers (40%)* Over the course of the semester, students will be assigned **two** reflection papers (4-5) pages in length (each paper is worth 20% of a student's final grade). The papers will be based on course readings and discussions and will not require additional research on the part of the student. Dr. Matto will announce the reflection paper topic via sakai, and students will be expected to submit the paper in their sakai dropbox folder one week later. **Three points will be deducted for each day the paper is late.**
- *Participation in the National Student Issues Convention (15%)* Students from universities, community colleges, and high schools from Illinois, Michigan, and other states have for more than a decade held student issues conventions to develop a student agenda and to have candidates and public officials respond to student concerns. With the support of the American Political Science Association, it will be enlarged to a National Student Issues Convention this year. The Convention will be live via Zoom (it also will be recorded) on **Friday, October 16th from 12-3 EST.**

Convention agenda:

1. Students will meet in small groups of 20-25 to discuss the most important items for a Student Issues Agenda.
2. A plenary of all students will vote on five items based upon small group reports.
3. Candidates and public officials will respond to the issue agenda presented by students to them.
4. After the convention, students on each campus will mobilize to register students to vote, turn out the vote, and meet with public officials to push for solutions to the problems highlighted in the agenda.

***Students are asked to put this in their calendars right away. If students have another class at this time or a non-negotiable time commitment, they need to make alternate arrangements with Professor Matto.

- *General Participation (15%)* Throughout the semester, students will be offered opportunities to reflect upon and share what they've learned from the readings, discussions, and activities. These opportunities may come in the form of quizzes, forums and discussion threads, or small group work. Students participation/completion of these assignments and assessments will constitute 15% of a student's final grade.

List of Important Dates (subject to change and grow!)

- Constitution Day: September 17th
- National Voter Registration Day: September 22nd
- "Popcorn and Politics" Presidential Debate Watch: September 29
- NJ Voter Registration Deadline: October 13th
- National Student Issues Convention: Friday, October 16th from 12-3 EST
- Election Day: November 3rd

Themes/Weekly Modules

For each week's theme, a selection of content will be provided for students to read or view or engage with through a forum/discussion board. Students are expected to come to our weekly meeting having read/reviewed the content contained in that week's module so they are prepared to engage in discussion.

Week 1: September 3 - Course Introduction

Week 2: September 10 - Looking at Political Engagement Through a "Generational Lens"

Week 3: September 17 - Who Are Millennials and Post-Millennials, & What Do They Care About?

Week 4: September 24 - What Do We Mean by "Engaged" and How "Engaged" are Young Adults in Politics?

Week 5: October 1 - The Connection Between Voter Registration Processes and Youth Political Participation

Week 6: October 8 – Talking Politics

Week 7: Class will not meet on October 15th but students will participate in the National Issues Convention on October 16th

Week 8: October 22 - Getting Out the Vote, Best Practices.

Week 9: October 29 - The Connection Between Electoral Law and Youth Political Participation

Week 10: November 5 - Election Day DEBRIEF

Week 11: November 12 - Young Adults and Activism

Week 12: November 19 - Young Adults Running for Office and Serving

NO CLASS November 26 - Thanksgiving

Week 13: December 3 – Young Adults and Volunteering

Week 14: December 10 – LAST CLASS