



Ben-Gurion University of the Negev
Department of Politics and Government

Course Title:

Topics in Political Participation: From Party Membership to Twitter Revolutions, How Do Citizens Engage Politically and How Does it Matter?

Course goals: The course will examine the role of political participation in democratic polities from a cross-national and historical perspective. Students will engage critically with classic texts on the topic, and select one topic they will study in-depth as the focus of periodic exercises and a final paper.

Attendance regulation: Mandatory.

Lecturer: Dr. Jennifer Oser

Contact details: Building 72, Room 669

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Office hours: By appointment - Thursdays, 12:00 to 13:00

Course number: 138.1.0335

BGU credits: 4 credit points (נקודות זכות)

Academic year: 2014-2015

Semester: Spring semester (סמסטר ב')

Hours of instruction & location:

Mondays 14:00-16:00 – Building 28, Room 104

Thursdays 10:00-12:00 – Building 28, Room 106

Language of instruction: English; recognized English course

Note: students will not be expected to have perfect English; oral and written assignment evaluations will focus on evaluating content. A modest budget will be available to students who have completed all requirements for language editing of final paper.

Position: Elective course for 3rd year undergraduate students of Politics and Government

Responsible department: Politics and Government; students from other depts. may also register

Assessment: (final grade components)

Assignment description

Percentage of Final Grade

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| (1) Oral presentations – 2 for each student during semester | 25% |
| (2) Peer review of oral (20%) and written (5%) exercises | 25% |
| (3) Full draft paper submission | 10% |
| (4) Final paper (including topic selection and final paper evaluation) | 40% |

Learning outcomes of the course: (2 content-specific and 2 skills-specific outcomes)

1. Broad content knowledge: Students will demonstrate broad content knowledge on three main aspects of political participation, cross-nationally and over time:
 - a. WHAT? What is political participation? What are different definitions in the literature and how do *we* define it?
 - b. WHO? Who participates in what kind of activities? *Individual-level* (e.g. age, gender, income) and *country-level* (e.g. voting in US versus other countries).
 - c. WHY? Why do people participate politically? *Individual-level* (e.g. personal motivation, ideology) and *country-level* (e.g. voting registration rules in US versus other countries).
2. Specific content knowledge: Students will demonstrate specific content knowledge of a single topic in political participation that each student will choose as the focus of the final paper and assignments throughout the semester.
3. Oral and written interpretation skills: Students will demonstrate oral and written interpretation skills of academic writing on political participation that includes the following elements:
 - a. Accurate summary of content.
 - b. Presentation of the reading's unique contribution to knowledge on the topic.
 - c. Presentation of the reading's weaknesses and suggestions for improved research.
4. Peer review skills: Students will demonstrate peer review skills of providing feedback to peers on oral and written exercises.

Assignments (further information on assignments will be posted on the course website)

Ongoing student expectations in this course include:

- Careful review of assigned reading in preparation for class (about 20 pages per class).
- Active participation in class.
- Use of personal computers or other electronic devices is not permitted during class (except for powerpoint presentation purposes).

Assignment description (sequential)

1. Topic selection: paragraph description of topic selected as the student's content focus for assignments throughout the course. Selection relates to 3 elements: type of political act; geographic context; and time span.
2. In-class presentations about the reading (two during the semester): Each student will do two oral presentations of a reading in the syllabus during the semester. Two different students will prepare presentations of the same reading assignment, and each student will focus on a different perspective:
 - a. One student's presentation will focus more on the positive contributions of the reading, i.e. what the reading did well and how it contributes to knowledge on the topic;
 - b. The other student's presentation will focus more on critiquing the reading re: the weaknesses of the research, and how future research could improve upon it.
3. In-class peer review of presentations: Every student who is not presenting will (a) complete a written evaluation form of one of the student presentations that relates to both content and style, and will (b) participate in a small group discussion with the presenter

immediately following the presentation in which the peer review comments will be reviewed and additional content will be discussed. The written evaluations will be taken into account by the instructor for grading the oral presentations. Each form completed at appropriate standards will count for 1 point toward the 20 points of the oral peer-review grade component.

4. Full draft submission of final paper: Further information about this assignment will be posted on the course website.
5. Written peer review of one fellow student's paper: Each student will provide feedback and comments for improvement of a fellow student's full draft paper. This peer review will be done in track changes and submitted as an assignment.
6. Final paper: Further information about this assignment will be posted on the course website.

Assignment due dates:

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| 1. Topic selection | Wednesday March 25, 17:00 (one day prior to last class before Spring/Passover vacation) |
| 2. In-class presentations (x2) | Dates chosen by students, in coordination with course instructor. |
| 3. In-class peer review of presentations | Every class that includes student presentations |
| 4. Full draft submission of final paper | Tuesday, May 26, 17:00 (one month prior to end of the semester) |
| 5. Written peer review of one fellow student's paper | Tuesday June 2, 17:00 (one week following submission of paper) |
| 6. Final paper and oral presentations | Paper submission: Tuesday June 16, 17:00. Oral presentations in final 3 classes of course. |

Note: the reading list is subject to change. The course website lists the most updated information on class topics, and all readings will be available on the website.

| Topics | Class | Date | Class Content and Required Reading |
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| | cancelled | March 9 | NOTE: the first scheduled class time on March 9 th is cancelled due to the Purim Festival. The first class meeting will be held on March 12. |
| Intro | 1 | March 12 | Introduction – experiences of political participation |
| | 2 | March 16 | How do <i>we</i> define political participation? |
| | 3 | March 19 | Discussion as political participation 1: peer review -Baranowski & Weir (2011) “Peer Review in the Political Science Classroom” |
| | 4 | March 23 | Discussion as political participation 2: oral presentation -Parker (2001) “Absolute Powerpoint: Can a Software Package edit our Thoughts?” |
| What? | 5 | March 26 | How and why have participation patterns changed over time? -Dalton (2008) “Citizenship Norms and the Expansion of Political Participation” |
| | 6 | April 13 | How can we conceptualize political participation? -Van Deth (2014) “A Conceptual Map of Political Participation” |
| | 7 | April 16 | What are the problems with this conceptualization? -Hooghe, Hosch-Dayican, and Van Deth (2014) “Symposium: Conceptualizing Participation” |
| | 8 | April 20 | Creative participation; limits to what we consider political? Schlozman (2011) “Creative Participation” |
| | 9 | April 27 | Decline in political party membership -Van Biezen, Mair and Poguntke (2012) “Going, Going, Gone? The Decline of Party Membership in Contemporary Europe” |
| | 10 | April 30 | Political consumerism -Newman and Bartels (2011) “Politics at the Checkout Line” |
| | 11 | May 4 | Online political participation -Valenzuela, Arriagada and Scherman (2014) “Facebook, Twitter and Youth Engagement” |
| | 12 | May 7 | Political participation in Israel -Hermann (1996) “Do They Have a Chance? Protest and the Political Structure of Opportunities in Israel” |
| Who? | 13 | May 11 | Introduction to participatory inequality -Verba (2003) “Would the Dream of Political Equality Turn out to be a Nightmare?” |
| | 14 | May 14 | Gender (in)equalities in participation -Van Aelst and Walgrave (2001) “Who is that (Wo)man in the Street”? |
| | 15 | May 18 | Israeli Political Science Association Conference in |

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| | | | Ashkelon [Extra course credit for those who attend and write a peer review of one research panel] |
| | 16 | May 21 | Age -Dalton (2007) “The Good Citizen: How a Younger Generation is Reshaping American Politics” |
| | 17 | May 25 | Worldwide -Kittilson (2007) “Research Resources in Comparative Political Behavior” |
| | 18 | May 28 | Israel -Hermann et al (2014) “Israeli Democracy Index” |
| | 19 | June 1 | Why does political participation matter? -Schlozman (2002) “Citizen Participation in America: What Do We Know? Why Do We Care?” |
| Why? | 20 | June 4 | Lifestyle politics Bennett (2008) “The Uncivic Culture: Communication, Identity, and the Rise of Lifestyle Politics” |
| | 21 | June 8 | Protest impact Gillion (2014) “Protest and Congressional Behavior: Assessing Racial and Ethnic Minority Protests in the District” |
| | 22 | June 11 | Civil society impact Htun & Weldon (2012) “The Civic Origins of Progressive Policy Change: Combatting Violence Against Women in Global Perspective” |
| | 23 | June 15 | Scholarly shortcomings in studying why “voice” matters -Bartels (2009) “Voice, and Then What?” |
| Conclusion | 24 | June 18 | Paper presentations and discussion |
| | 25 | June 22 | Paper presentations and discussion |
| | 26 | June 25 | Paper presentations and discussion Revisit our opening definition of political participation |