

Seminar in Social Sciences: Public Service & Civic Engagement
HON 3143 H02 (Hybrid)
Monday 4:35 PM – 5:50 PM and Virtual
Location: TBD

Instructor: Dr. Brian Pugh

Office: One Research Boulevard, Suite 104, Starkville, MS 39759

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday, 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM or by appointment

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

“Civic engagement 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 means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes.” Thomas Ehrlich, *Civic Responsibility and Higher Education*

“...public servants are [...] reconnecting with citizens. Administrators are realizing that they have much to gain by *listening* to the public rather than *telling*, and by *servicing* rather than *steering*. At the invitation of public servants...ordinary citizens are once again becoming engaged in the governance process. Citizens and public officials are working together to define and to address common problems in a cooperative and mutually beneficial way.” Janet and Robert Denhardt, Price School of Public Policy at the University of Southern California

This course will use service-learning to enhance student’s academic growth while also addressing real community needs. The course will focus on how students can best provide meaningful service to the public while simultaneously gaining new skills, knowledge, and understanding as an integrated aspect of social sciences. The purpose of the course is to “learn by doing.” We will spend part of the course performing community service projects and spend the remaining time investigating the theory and practice of participatory democracy. Many citizens today remain—for the most part—reasonably informed spectators in public affairs, but not players. This class will change that.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

- Putnam, Robert D. (2020). *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (20th Anniversary Edition). New York, NY: Random House. (ISBN 978-0399589812).
- Cress, Christine M, Peter J. Collier, Vicki L. Reitenauer. (2013). *Learning Through Serving: A Student Guide for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement Across Academic Disciplines and Cultural Communities* (2nd ed). Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC. (ISBN 978-1579229900).

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1) Class Participation

Students are expected to participate in all class discussions. A guest speaker will address the class most Mondays, and all students are expected to be attentive and ask questions. Students are also required to complete the weekly Canvas Assignments by answering questions on the assigned readings.

2) Presentation

Students are required to research a government agency (e.g., National Endowment for the Humanities), quasi-governmental agency (e.g., Mississippi Home Corporation), or nonprofit organization (e.g., American Red Cross) that is responsible for providing a public service to the general public. In addition to researching the organization, students are required to interview a representative of that organization. Students must present their findings to the class using Microsoft PowerPoint or a comparable program for visual aid.

3) Service-Learning Project

“Service-learning combines service objectives with learning objectives with the intent that the activity change both the recipient and the provider of the service. This is accomplished by combining service tasks with structured opportunities that link the task to self-reflection, self-discovery, and the acquisition and comprehension of values, skills, and knowledge content.” (National Clearinghouse for Service Learning). The service-learning project this year will be a class project (instead of individual assignments), and we will all be working with the J.L. King Center. Each student will be required to submit weekly service-learning journal entries about their personal experience. Students are required to volunteer at the Center at least 1 hour a week on Wednesdays. More details to come.

ATTENDANCE

You are expected to attend all classes ON TIME and to participate in class discussions. If you miss a class for any reason, you are responsible for any missed assignments, reading, notes, and other make-up work if approved by the professor. Students who cannot attend the class for any reason are expected to contact the instructor before class.

COURSE GRADING

Alphabetical grades will be assigned based on the following accumulated points: 100-90 (A); 89-80 (B); 79-70 (C); 69-60 (D); and below 60 points (F).

Student grades will be assessed based on the following criteria:

| | |
|---|-----|
| Class Participation & Attendance | 30% |
| Class Presentation | 30% |
| Community Engagement/Service-Learning Project | 40% |

ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

The tentative outline of the course is provided below. This schedule is subject to modifications, and any changes in the order outlined will be announced in class.

WEEK 1:

LEARNING THROUGH SERVICE

January 11, 2021

-Syllabus, course organization, and procedures. Introduction and orientation to class.

-Guest Speaker: Maurice Smith, Assistant Director for Social Justice and Student Leadership – Tulane University’s Center for Public Service

-Tulane University, Entering Communities: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HMdKsuM4zJO>

Virtual

-WebEx Discussion on Service-Learning and the J.L. King Center

-Reading: Cress – Chapter 1, *What are Service-Learning and Civic Engagement?* in “Learning through Serving,” pages 9 – 18

-Reading: Reitenauer, Spring, Kecskes, Kerrigan, Cress, and Collier – Chapter 2, *Building and Maintaining Community Partnerships* in “Learning through Serving,” pages 19 – 30

WEEK 2:

WHEN VOLUNTEERING GO WRONG

January 18, 2021

HOLIDAY – NO CLASS

-Reading: Reitenauer – Chapter 3, *Becoming Community: Moving from I to We* in “Learning through Serving,” pages 37 – 47

Virtual

-Reading: Voegele and Lieberman – Chapter 9, *Failure with the Best of Intentions: When Things go Wrong* in “Learning through Serving,” pages 137 – 149

-Video: Voluntourism: When You Take More Than You Leave Behind | Madara Zgute | TEDxISM <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qNch2WwBnh8>

-Canvas Assignment 1: Service-Learning Journal Entry Introduction (What do you expect to get out of taking this course?)

-Canvas Discussion 1: Why is it important to understand the culture of the place you are volunteering at?

WEEK 3:

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

January 25, 2021

-Reading: Putnam – Chapter 1, *Thinking about Social Change in America* in “Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community,” pages 15 – 28

-Guest Speaker: Dr. Corey Wiggins, Executive Director of the Mississippi NAACP

Virtual

-Canvas Assignment 2: Service-Learning Journal Entry

-Canvas Discussion 2: Is *social capital* just a theoretical concept, or do you believe the idea that people are better off with strong social ties?

WEEK 4:

POLITICAL PARTIES

February 1, 2021

-Reading: Putnam – Chapter 2, *Political Participation* in “Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community,” pages 31 – 47

-Guest Speaker – Shad White, Mississippi State Auditor (Mississippi Republican Party)

Virtual

-Canvas Assignment 3: Service-Learning Journal Entry

-Canvas Discussion 3: Excluding voting, what are three effective ways to engage in political affairs? Explain your answer.

WEEK 5:

POLITICAL PARTIES cont.

February 8, 2021

-Reading: Putnam – Chapter 3, *Civic Participation* in “Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community,” pages 48 – 64

-Guest Speaker – Rep. Robert Johnson, Mississippi House of Representative and House Democratic Leader (Mississippi Democratic Party)

Virtual

-Canvas Assignment 4: Service-Learning Journal Entry

-Canvas Discussion 4: In 1975-76, 64% of all Americans attended at least one club meeting in the previous year. By 1999 that figure had fallen to 38%. What caused this decrease in club meetings, and is the reduction necessarily a problem?

WEEK 6:

CHURCH AND STATE

February 15, 2021

-Reading: Putnam – Chapter 4, *Religious Participation* in “Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community,” pages 65 – 79

-Guest Speaker – Marcus Thompson, Deputy Commissioner of the Institution of Higher Learning (IHL) and Pastor at Mountain Ridge United Methodist Church

Virtual

-Canvas Assignment 5: Service-Learning Journal Entry

-Canvas Discussion 5: What role should religion play in politics?

WEEK 7:

NETWORKING AND ORGANIZATIONAL CONNECTIONS

February 22, 2021

-Reading: Putnam – Chapter 5, *Connections in the Workplace* in “Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community,” pages 80 – 92

PRESENTATIONS DUE

Virtual

-Canvas Assignment 6: Service-Learning Journal Entry

-Canvas Discussion 6: Putnam explains that the workplace remains a significant recruiting ground for volunteers, and an overwhelming majority (92%) of corporate executives say they encourage their employees to become involved in community service. Are individuals without the means to volunteer, or intern for free, at a disadvantage compared to those that can?

WEEK 8:

CONGRESSIONAL CORRESPONDENCE

March 1, 2021

-Reading: Putnam – Chapter 6, *Informal Social Connections* in “Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community,” pages 93 – 115

-Guest Speaker – U.S. Congressman Michael Guest (MS 3rd District)

Virtual

-Canvas Assignment 7: Service-Learning Journal Entry

-Canvas Discussion 7: According to Putnam, writing letters to U.S. Congressmen and U.S. Senators are down by 25% (relative change 1973-94 to 1993-94. Research a topic of concern and write a formal letter to Rep. Guest requesting either an explanation or solution to the problem.
<https://guest.house.gov/contact>

WEEK 9:

CONGRESSIONAL CORRESPONDENCE cont.

March 8, 2021

-Civic Practice Test: my.uscis.gov

-Denhardt and Denhardt – *The New Public Service: Serving Rather than Steering* (article provided)

-Guest Speaker – Michelle Barlow Richardson, Chief of Staff to U.S. Senator Roger Wicker

Virtual

-Canvas Assignment 8: Service-Learning Journal Entry

-Canvas Discussion 8: Research a topic of concern and write a formal letter to Sen. Roger Wicker requesting either an explanation or solution to the problem.
<https://www.wicker.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/contact>

WEEK 10:

CONGRESSIONAL CORRESPONDENCE cont.

March 15, 2021

- The Final Report of the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service, *Inspired to Serve*, (March 2020). <https://inspire2serve.gov/sites/default/files/final-report/Final%20Report.pdf>

- Letter from the Commissioners
- Executive Summary, 1 – 8
- Introduction, 9 – 12
- Elevate All Forms of Service, 13 – 26

-Guest Speaker – Doug Davis, Chief of Staff to U.S. Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith

Virtual

-Canvas Assignment 9: Service-Learning Journal Entry

-Canvas Discussion 9: Research a topic of concern and write a formal letter to Sen. Cindy Hyde-Smith requesting either an explanation or solution to the problem.

<https://www.hydesmith.senate.gov/contact-senator>

WEEK 11:

U.S. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION (EEOC)

March 22, 2021

-Reading: Putnam – Chapter 6, *Informal Social Connections* in “Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community,” pages 93 – 115

-Guest Speaker: Brett Harvey, Director of Title IX & Programs MSU Office of Compliance and Risk Management

Virtual

-Canvas Assignment 10: Service-Learning Journal Entry

-Canvas Discussion 10: Putnam explained that participation in youth sports is on the decline. One important exception is the growth in organized school-based sports for women in federally funded athletic programs (Title IX). 1) Should the government be doing anything more to promote community involvement? If so, what? 2) Do you think that none discriminatory laws contributed to the decline in formal organizations?

WEEK 12:

EDUCATION POLICY

March 29, 2021

-Reading: Putnam – Chapter 17, *Education and Children’s Welfare* in “Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community,” pages 307 – 318

-Guest Speaker: Dr. Linda Southward, Children’s Foundation of Mississippi

Virtual

-Canvas Assignment 11: Service-Learning Journal Entry

-Canvas Discussion 11: Should the government fund ACT Prep in all Mississippi high schools?

WEEK 13:

EDUCATION POLICY cont.

April 5, 2021

HOLIDAY – NO CLASS

Virtual

-Canvas Assignment 12: Service-Learning Journal Entry

-Canvas Discussion 12: What were the Pros and Cons of offering ACT prep at the JL King Center?

WEEK 14:

LOBBYING YOUR GOVERNMENT

April 12, 2021

-Guest Speaker: Camp Murphy, Partner at Corporate Relations Management and Past President of Bully Bloc (non-partisan political action committee)

Virtual

-Canvas Assignment 13: Final Service-Learning Journal Entry

-Canvas Discussion 13: Should the class introduce a bill to the Mississippi Legislature to mandate formal ACT prep in all Mississippi Schools?

WEEK 15:

INTRODUCING LEGISLATION

April 19, 2021

-Guest Speaker: Ronny Frith, Legislative Attorney with the Mississippi House of Representatives

-Timetable for Processing Legislation 2021: <http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/htms/timetable.xml>

Virtual

No Virtual Class Meeting

WEEK 16:

LAST WEEK OF CLASS

April 26, 2021

SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECT DUE

MSU STUDENT HONOR CODE

Mississippi State University (MSU) has an approved Honor Code that applies to all students. The code is as follows: "As a Mississippi State University student, I will conduct myself with honor and integrity at all times. I will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor will I accept the actions of those who do." Upon accepting admission to MSU, a student immediately assumes a commitment to uphold the Honor Code, accepts responsibility for learning, and follows the Honor Code's philosophy and rules. Students will be required to state their commitment on examinations, research papers,

and other academic work. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any MSU community members from the Honor Code's requirements or processes. For additional information, please visit the Honor Code Policy at <https://www.honorcode.msstate.edu/policy>.

TITLE IX

Mississippi State University (MSU) is committed to complying with Title IX, a federal law that prohibits discrimination, including violence and harassment, based on sex. This means that MSU's educational programs and activities must be free from sex discrimination, sexual harassment, and other forms of sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know has experienced sex discrimination, sexual violence, and/or harassment by any member of the University community, you are encouraged to report the conduct to MSU's Director of Title IX/EEO Programs at 325-8124 or by e-mail to titleix@msstate.edu. Additional resources are available at <https://www.students.msstate.edu/sexual-misconduct-sexual-assault/>.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Students who need academic accommodations based on a disability should visit the Office of Student Support Services, 01 Montgomery Hall, call 662-325-3335, or visit <http://www.sss.msstate.edu>.

UNIVERSITY SAFETY STATEMENT

Mississippi State University (MSU) values the safety of all campus community members. Students are encouraged to register for Maroon Alert texts and to download the Everbridge App. Visit the Personal Information section in Banner on your MyState portal to register. To report suspicious activity or request a courtesy escort via Safe Walk, call University Police at 662-325-2121, or in case of emergency, call 911. For more information regarding safety and to view available training including helpful videos, visit ready.msstate.edu.

FACIAL COVERINGS

To safeguard the health of all members of the Mississippi State University (MSU) campus during this global pandemic, the University has reconfigured classroom spaces and adjusted room capacities to ensure adequate physical distance between all individuals in each room. In addition, the University has published requirements for the use of face coverings for everyone on campus, including specific requirements for their use in all classrooms, labs, and shared office spaces regardless of physical distancing. In order to mutually protect the students' freedom to learn and the instructor's ability to teach in a safe classroom environment, everyone in this classroom is required to wear a face covering in the classroom in accordance with MSU policy. For the MSU policy, please visit <https://www.msstate.edu/covid19/return-plan/health-safety#evaluation-face>. If a student cannot wear a face covering due to a medical condition, they should request an accommodation via the Office of Disability Support Services. If a student simply doesn't want to wear a face covering, they will not be permitted to remain in the classroom or lab.

CONTINUITY OF INSTRUCTION

In the event that face-to-face classes are suspended due to the pandemic or its effects, the instructor will continue instruction in a manner that best supports the course content and student engagement. In this event, all instructors will notify all students of the change via their University e-mail address (the official vehicle for communication with students). At that time, they will provide details about how instruction and communication will continue, how academic integrity will be ensured, and what students may expect during the time that face-to-face classes are suspended. If a student becomes unable to continue class participation, the student should contact their instructor and advisor for guidance.