

**Darien Learning Community**

**Topics in Political Science: Citizenship & Civic Engagement**

**790:250, Fall 2014**

**Instructor/Contact Information:**

Elizabeth C. Matto, Ph.D.

Assistant Research Professor

Director, Youth Political Participation Program

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**Meeting Time/Location:**

*Topics in Political Science: Citizenship & Civic Engagement*

Thursdays, 10:55AM-12:15PM

Eagleton Institute of Politics, Library

*Nature of Politics*

Tuesdays & Thursdays, 5:35-6:55PM

**Office Hours:**

* Dr. Matto:
	+ Wednesdays, 10AM-12PM and by appointment
	+ Location: Eagleton Institute of Politics
* Caitlin Scuderi
	+ Fridays, 10AM-12PM and by appointment
	+ Location: Hickman Hall room 303

**RU VotingTM** is anonpartisan 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 this course and the *Darien Learning Community (DLC)* is to link the theory of American political thought with the practicalities of politics by focusing attention and effort on youth political participation via **RU VotingTM.** 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.

**Grading/Course Expectations:**

Through **RU VotingTM,** *DLC* students will support the project’s mission to encourage students to register to vote, get informed about the political process, and turn out on Election Day. This course is worth 1.5 credits, and it is expected that students will devote approximately 60 hours to the course over the course of the semester. Any time spent on efforts related to this course counts towards those 60 hours. A list of important dates related to **RU VotingTM’s** efforts is provided below. It is understood that students have other classes, work commitments, etc. that may preclude attendance at some of them. Clear and consistent communication between students and Dr. Matto and Caitlin Scuderi is encouraged.

* Grade Breakdown
	+ **Reflection Papers (40%)** Twice during the semester, students will reflect upon their DLC experience by writing an essay on a topic assigned by Dr. Matto. The essay topic will be provided via sakai approximately one week prior to its due date. The essay will be 3-5 pages in length. For papers turned in after the assigned due date/time, five points will be deducted for each day the paper is late. Due dates are noted in calendar below. Please see grading rubric for reflection papers, provided separately.
	+ **RU VotingTM Project (40%)** At the beginning of the semester, students will choose a project from a pre-determined list of projects to complete and present by the end of the semester. Depending on class size and student preference, students can work alone and in small groups. Due dates for individual projects will be noted in the list of projects, provided separately. All projects will be presented at our end-of-the-semester celebration on **December 4.** Please see grading rubric for projects, provided separately.
	+ **Participation (20%)** Students are expected to participate throughout the course period in several different and important ways.
		- All DLC students are required to participate in an RU VotingTM voter registration training (scheduled for the second class meeting). In addition, students are expected to support RUVotingTM voter registration and get-out-the-vote drives as their schedules allow.
		- Students are expected to come to class having read and prepared to engage in discussion.
		- Students will be informed mid-semester (as well as other times throughout the semester) how well they are performing regarding participation in order to make any necessary improvements by the end of the semester.
		- Students are required to participate in our end of the year presentation of projects, to be held on **Thursday, December 4** during our normal class time.
* Students are expected to adhere to Rutgers University’s policy regarding academic integrity. To view the policy, go to <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>
* To report an absence, go to: <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/>
* All readings either are available online or will be provided on the Topics sakai website.
* *DLC* students will play an integral role in the success of **RU VotingTM’s** outreach efforts and are expected to represent themselves in a professional and respectful manner and uphold the mission of **RU VotingTM** and the Eagleton Institute of Politics.

**Important Dates to Put in Your Calendar**

* September 5th – Student Involvement Fair
* September 15th – Constitution Day Debate
* September 17th – Constitution Day, Campus-Wide Voter Registration Drives
* September 23rd – National Voter Registration Day, Campus-Wide Voter Registration Drives
* September 29th – Constitution Day Speaker Jamal Greene, Professor of Law, Columbia Law School
* October 1st – *Popcorn and Politics*
* October 8th – *Pizza and Politics*

General Election

* October 14th – Registration Deadline for General Election
* October 28th – Mail In Ballot Application Deadline for General Election
* November 4th – General Election Day

**Course Schedule (\*\*Please note that the course schedule is subject to change\*\*)**

**Week of September 2**

* **September 5 – Involvement Fair**
* September 4: Topics in Political Science: Citizenship & Civic Engagement
	+ Introductions & course overview

**Week of September 8**

* September 11: Topics in Political Science: Citizenship & Civic Engagement
	+ Voter registration drive training with Steven Mercadante
	+ What is the Millennial Generation & Who are Millennials?
	+ Assigned reading(s):
	+ Chapter 2, *Millennials, A Portrait of Generation Next,* http://pewresearch.org/millennials/
	+ “Millennials” Play a Central Role in our Nation’s Civic Health, but Who are They?: http://www.civicyouth.org/%e2%80%9cmillennials%e2%80%9d-play-a-central-role-in-our-nation%e2%80%99s-civic-health-but-who-are-they/

**Week of September 15**

* **September 15th – Constitution Day Debate**
* **September 17th - Constitution Day**
* September 18: Topics in Political Science: Citizenship & Civic Engagement
	+ A continued look at the Millennial Generation
	+ Assigned reading(s):
		- *Millennials Talk Politics*, http://www.civicyouth.org/PopUps/CSTP.pdf
		- Executive Summary and Topline Data, Spring 2014 Survey, Institute of Politics, Harvard University, http://www.iop.harvard.edu/spring-2014-survey

**Week of September 22**

* **September 23th - National Voter Registration Day**
* September 25: Topics in Political Science: Citizenship & Civic Engagement
	+ Youth Political Participation
	+ Assigned reading(s):
		- *State Election Law Reform and Youth Voter Turnout,* http://www.civicyouth.org/PopUps/FactSheets/State\_law\_and\_youth\_turnout\_Final.pdf
		- *50 State Student Voting Guide*, Brennan Center for Justicehttp://www.brennancenter.org/content/student\_voting/

**Week of September 29**

* **September 29th – Constitution Day Speaker Jamal Greene, Professor of Law, Columbia Law School**
* **October 1st – Popcorn and Politics**
* October 2: Topics in Political Science: Citizenship & Civic Engagement
	+ Youth immigration and political participation
	+ Assigned reading(s):
		- Chapter 8, *Millennials, A Portrait of Generation Next,* http://pewresearch.org/millennials/
		- "State by State Youth Voter Turnout in 2012": http://www.civicyouth.org/state-by-state-youth-voter-turnout-in-2012/?cat\_id=6

**Week of October 6**

* **October 8th – Pizza and Politics**
* October 9: Topics in Political Science: Citizenship & Civic Engagement
	+ Guest Speaker: Ingrid Reed

**Week of October 13**

* October 16: Topics in Political Science: Citizenship & Civic Engagement
	+ **Reflection Paper #1 due at class meeting time**
	+ Media and Youth Participation

**Week of October 20**

* October 23: Topics in Political Science: Citizenship & Civic Engagement
	+ Getting out the vote – best practices
	+ Assigned reading(s):
		- *Young Voter Mobilization Tactics*, Young Voter Strategies (PDF provided on sakai)
		- *The Effects of an Election Day Voter Mobilization Campaign Targeting Young Voters,* http://www.civicyouth.org/PopUps/WorkingPapers/WP21Green.pdf

**Week of October 27**

* October 30: Topics in Political Science: Citizenship & Civic Engagement
	+ Getting out the vote - voter identification legislation
	+ Assigned reading(s):
		- Voter Identification Requirements, National Conference of State Legislatures, http://www.ncsl.org/legislatures-elections/elections/voter-id.aspx
		- *The Case for Voter ID* (Wall Street Journal editorial, 5/23/11) http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704816604576333650886790480.html
		- *A Poll Tax by Another Name* (New York Times editorial, 8/26/11) http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/27/opinion/a-poll-tax-by-another-name.html
		- "Did New State Voting Laws Affect the Youth Vote in 2012?": http://www.civicyouth.org/did-new-state-voting-laws-affect-the-youth-vote-in-2012/?cat\_id=6

**Week of November 3**

* **November 4th – Election Day**
* November 6: Topics in Political Science: Citizenship & Civic Engagement
	+ **Reflection Paper #2 due at class meeting time**
	+ Debrief: status of projects and preparing for December 4th presentations

**Week of November 10**

* November 13: Topics in Political Science: Citizenship & Civic Engagement
	+ No Class

**Week of November 17**

* November 20: Topics in Political Science: Citizenship & Civic Engagement
	+ No Class

**Week of November 24**

* November 27: Topics in Political Science: Citizenship & Civic Engagement
	+ No Class

**Week of December 1**

* **December 4: Topics in Political Science: Citizenship & Civic Engagement**
	+ **Final class meeting and presentations**