



Reclaiming Democracy

Fall 2016

Wednesdays, 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Elon School of Law

Room 207

Stephen Bloch-Schulman, Philosophy
COR 453A, Elon University
sschulman@elon.edu
Office: Spence Pavilion, 110
Phone: 336-278-5697

Spoma Jovanovic, Communication Studies
CST 440, UNCG
s_jovano@uncg.edu
Office: Ferguson 108
Phone: 336-601-3282

Hollyce "Sherry" Giles
Community & Justice Studies
JPS 335, Guilford College
gileshc@guilford.edu
Office: King 28E
Phone: 336-316-2285

Dan Malotky, Religion, Ethics, & Philosophy
REP 3300, Greensboro College
dmalotky@greensboro.edu
Office: Proctor Hall West 310
Phone: 336-272-7102, ext. 5380

Fred Humphrey, Liberal Studies
LIBS 320, North Carolina A & T State University
jfhumphr@ncat.edu
Office: A-311 General Classroom Bldg.
Phone: 336-285-2103

Vincent Russell, Communication Studies, UNCG
c.vincent.russell@gmail.com
Office: Curry 202

We thank the faculty and students who were part of past teaching teams and continue to influence how we think about Reclaiming Democracy: *Ellen Bateman, Andy Busam, Gwendolyn Bookman, Audrey Campbell, Maggie Castor, Eric Ginsburg, Logie Meachum, Karla McLucas, Larry Morse, Isabell Moore, and Wendy Poteat, Ellie Richard, Matt Troy, and Ed Whitfield.*

Course Description

Reclaiming Democracy draws on multiple academic disciplines to examine and model democracy. The course brings together students from Elon University, Greensboro College, Guilford College, North Carolina A & T State University, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and the greater Greensboro community.

To understand democracy, we explore the different traditions of participation that drive public policy, governance, and citizen engagement. As we turn our gaze toward democracy in Greensboro more specifically, we consider the city's rich history in civil rights and economic justice, as well as the even more powerful desire for civility that has impacted our ability to have deep, community-wide discussion of the area's struggles.

Participants in the class learn together within a large classroom and also in smaller study groups. To set the tone for communal engagement, traditional academic learning is augmented with other learning experiences, including music, stories, film, and other creativity activities.

Course Questions

- What is democracy?
- In what ways is Greensboro democratic/undemocratic?
- What is the role of education in a democratic society?
- What is the role of democracy in education?
- What do these considerations require of us?

Course Goals

- Develop an understanding of democracy that is responsible to all members of the community.
- Critically examine the theories and concepts that inform contemporary and historical understandings of democracy.
- Explore the role of stories and public narratives in democracy.
- Identify barriers to democracy at personal, systemic, institutional, and cultural levels.
- Co-create a model of teaching and learning that embraces democracy.
- Create a vibrant and productive dialogue about community issues.
- Study the discourses, decision-making and community action relevant to key community issues.
- Develop and deepen an understanding of what democracy requires of us.
- Explore the ways a person's social identity impacts his or her relationship to the issues and concepts we are studying in class.

Readings

Chafe, W. H. (1980) *Civilities and civil rights: Greensboro, North Carolina, and the black struggle for freedom*. New York: Oxford.

Articles as assigned. You are expected to print out all articles and bring a hard copy to class.

Course Grading

Faculty members use a common grading rubric. Students wishing to question a grade may provide a written argument to a team of not less than two faculty members with evidence of why a grade should be modified. The instructor of record (affiliated with the student's home institution) will be the final arbiter.

Grading Scale

A = 90-100; B = 80-89; C = 70-79; D = 60-69; F = below 60.

Assignments and point values are explained in more detail in the following "Course Assignments Guide."

Late Assignments. Late assignments, if accepted, will receive point reductions.

Course Policies and Expectations

1. The readings and the discussions are designed to challenge you. To be prepared, you need to read the required text and/or articles in advance of each week's discussion.
2. Attendance is necessary to ensure rich discussion in small groups and in the larger class. We value the learning that occurs from interaction, and recognize that democracy itself depends upon collective engagement. Any time you are absent, you will need to keep current with the readings.
3. Ask questions and be curious. Faculty members are available during office hours and by appointment to address specific questions and concerns.
4. Watch for emails and updates.
5. BE ON TIME. We will take breaks during the evening, but we expect to start and finish on time. Also, PLAN TO STAY until the end of each session out of courtesy to your colleagues.
6. We will accommodate fall break schedules.
7. We ask that everyone leave laptops closed and cell phones off during class as these devices have a way of separating people from one another.
8. We encourage the kind of active reading that includes circling interesting passages, highlighting main points, expressing outrage and agreement in the text itself, etc. This practice leads to successful learning.

9. Students are expected to abide by their home school's academic integrity policy. See each school bulletin or web site for details.

Students with Disabilities. If you have any special needs that require accommodation, please alert your instructor of record the first week of class. A plan will be developed to meet your learning needs. If you have a disability, you will need to provide the proper documentation as required by your school.

Bibliography

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- Ravitch, D. (2011, September 29) School 'reform': A failing grade. *The New York Review of Books*, retrieved from <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2011/sep/29/school-reform-failing-grade/>
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Reclaiming Democracy: Fall 2016 Course Calendar

This schedule is subject to revision. Changes, if any, will be announced in class and posted online.

8/17: Introduction to the Class (*A&T and Greensboro College*)

For Next Week: Read: Bloch-Schulman, et al.; write reading response

8/24: Introduction to the Class, continued (*UNCG, Guilford College, and Community Members start; Elon meets 8/29*)

For Next Week: Read Anyon, Freire, Delpit on equity, race, pedagogy (available on Google site); write autoethnography

8/31: Reclaiming Democracy: Introductions; Meet at Elon School of Law;

DUE: Autoethnography

For Next Week: Read Flammery & Mounk (available on Google site); write reading response; read Final Project descriptions

9/7: Meanings of Democracy (part 1); Community Partner Introductions

DUE: Reading Response

For Next Week: Nabatchi & Leighninger (available on Google site); write reading response

9/14: Meanings of Democracy (part 2) and Participation

DUE: Reading Response

For Next Week: Read Ravitch, Payne, and Cortes (available on Google site); write reading response

9/21: Democracy & Education

DUE: Reading Response

For Next Week: Read Gilens & Page or Stout (available on Google site) write reading response

9/28: Democracy & Oligarchy

DUE: Reading Response

Guest Presentation: Library sources/collecting research

For Next Week: Final project research report, based on outside readings you researched

10/5: Building Democracy, One Step at a Time

DUE: Individual Research paper

For Next week: Read Chafe to p. 70; write reading response

10/12: Greensboro, First and Last in Integrating (*Note: Guilford College is on Fall Break*)

DUE: Reading Response

For Next Week: Read Chafe to p. 130; write reading response

10/19: Greensboro as a Mosaic

DUE: Reading Response

For Next Week: Read Chafe to p. 202; write reading response

10/26: Civilities and Civil Rights

DUE: Reading Response

For Next week: Read articles on election issues, TBA; write reading response

11/2: Voting as a Democratic Right

DUE: Reading Response

For Next Week: Read Jovanovic and Tuana (available on Google site); write reading response

11/9: GSO Massacre/Intentional Ignorance in Education

DUE: Reading Response

For Next Week: Read Giroux (available on Google site); write reading response

11/16: Higher Education as a Public Good

DUE: Reading Response

For Next Week: Independent/group work on final projects and poster presentation

11/23: No Class (Thanksgiving Break)

11/30: Final conference preparation; poster is printed and ready

12/7: FINAL CONFERENCE (Posters first ½; Public discussion the second ½)



**Reclaiming Democracy
Fall 2016 Course Assignments Guide**

Your Education Autoethnography

Due 8/31/16

10 points

To ground our discussion of American education and democracy in our own educational experiences, please write a five-page, double-spaced, typewritten autoethnography of your own education. Students will share portions of their autoethnographies with each other in class.

Background: Autoethnography is an approach to research and writing that describes and analyzes life experiences to understand cultural conditions (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2010). Autoethnography is both a process and a product that considers research to be politically situated and socially constructed to examine cultural identities. Often, autoethnographies focus on a moment, “epiphany” or specific memory that stands out to illustrate generalizable concepts. The finished piece of writing frequently relies on sensory detail (sights, smells, sounds, feelings evoked, etc.), and storytelling techniques, along with more objective description and analysis. This kind of writing highlights the researcher as a *participant* and *observer* in the environment and activity under study at the same time *s/he analyzes* all that *s/he* is seeing.

The assigned readings are designed to help you prepare for writing your autoethnography. Anyon describes teaching and learning at five elementary schools in different socioeconomic settings, with detailed, or ‘thick’, description of the physical environments, and exchanges between teachers and students. To support her argument for the significance of race and power in education, Delpit includes richly detailed ‘scenes’ of interactions between teachers and students, as well as a description of her own experiences in different educational settings.

Your task: Draw on your memories of your firsthand experience of your education to offer a portrait of education in your particular school(s) or other educational environments. If you are able to supplement your memory with conversations with your parents, teachers, classmates, or friends, or any “artifacts” such as school newspapers, yearbooks, etc., that would be helpful, but not necessary. You may choose to focus on one particular *school* that you have attended, whether it was elementary, middle, high school, college, etc., **or** you may offer a portrait of your overall education that includes snapshots from each of the schools (including home schools) you attended (see Delpit reading, p. xv, for an example of one-line snapshots from her experiences in different school settings; your snapshots would be longer), **or** you may choose to focus on an *event* or a *theme* or *two* that run through many of your educational experiences.

In your autoethnography, you will be 1) giving details from your experience, and 2) making meaning of these details. Here are some questions to which you may consider responding:

- Where have you attended school—including the town/city/country? What have the neighborhood(s) and the physical space(s) of the educational environment(s) looked like?
- What did you notice about race, class, gender, the differently-abled, sexual orientation, religion, and other social identities in the life of the school? Did any of the issues about race and power raised by Delpit seem significant at your school? What did interactions reveal?
- Where would you locate your school(s) in the categories described in the reading by Anyon? Explain why you would locate your school(s) there?
- How would you relate your education to Freire’s contrast of “banking” education with “problem-solving” education?
- Based on your experience, what has been the purpose of your schooling?
- What was your experience of the transition from high school to college? Have you noticed distinctions between your educational experience in high school and college?
- What have you liked about your education? What have you not liked so much? What other issues have been evident in your schooling? What else seems significant about your education?
- How well or poorly do you feel your schools prepared you and other students to participate fully in democracy?

Be sure to explain two to three concepts from the readings (Anyon, Freire, and/or Delpit) that connect to your story. Where you do, cite the authors, including page numbers if you use direct quotations, following the guidelines with which you are most familiar, e.g., American Psychological Association (APA), Modern Language Association (MLA), etc.

Suggestion for your writing process: Begin by jotting down notes about significant events and memories of your own education. Then, read the pieces by Anyon, Delpit, and Freire; the readings may help to trigger other important and meaningful details from your education to include in your paper. Be sure to include a lot of “thick,” that is, detailed, description to support your perspective on your education.

Ellis, C., Adams, T. E. & Bochner, A. P. (2010). Autoethnography: An overview [40 paragraphs]. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 12 (1), Art. 10, <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs1101108>.

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Weekly Reading Responses	Due Weekly	30 points (10 @ 3 points each)
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For each reading response, bring TWO copies of your typed paper to class that respond to the reading prompts provided at the end of the previous class meeting (yet another reason to be in attendance weekly!).

Your response should be designed in three parts that detail:

1. One interesting point that summarizes the reading(s) for you. If you have multiple readings for the week, be sure to summarize each briefly.
2. Reflection on one point of agreement and one point of disagreement.
3. A lingering question that the reading(s) prompt(s) for you.

The key is this: Each section must be no longer than 84 words. On nights with multiple readings, be sure to summarize each reading for part 1, which gives you an additional 84 words for each summary. So, there is the possibility for 252 words total per reading response each week. Your reading responses should aim for strong quality and regular frequency (these are the criteria we will use in our grading of them as well). It’s no surprise that typically the students who do best in the class are the ones who read, write, and turn in their reading responses on time, each week.

Participation**(In Class and With Your Final Group Project Team)****10 points**

Since a democracy is dependent upon citizen involvement, we expect you to participate in every weekly class. We also recognize some absences are unavoidable due to illness, family emergency, etc. In those cases, contact your course instructor in advance.

Individual Research Paper**Due 10/5/16****10 points**

As you start to work toward your final group project, you will need to collect some background research. We expect this paper to delve deeply into two solid pieces of research (reports, academic journal articles, etc.) that you find, one reading that your community partner will provide for all students in your group, and two course readings. For your outside sources, scanning local newspapers may help you identify issues, but you need to go to the source(s) of information that informs the news item. You may include relevant newspaper articles in addition to the three outside research articles or chapters.

For your outside sources, you may want to learn who is affected, and in what ways they are affected, by the policy, issue, or the problem you are examining. Or, you may choose to look at the historical conditions and patterns that define your issue or problem. Or, you may want to analyze the decision-making process surrounding your policy issue or problem to learn how the decisions are made, what quality of input is provided (and by whom), etc. The key is to coordinate research efforts so that everyone in your group is researching different, but compatible information you can integrate into your final project.

In sum, this **three to five page paper** should include *three articles* (outside research), two of your choice and one identified by your community partner, as well as *two class-assigned readings* into a cogent, interesting, informative paper that provides excellent background for your final group project. Be sure to provide a detailed summary of each reading, and a thoughtful analysis of how it informs your group's project. Also, include proper citations for all 5 references.

Final Group Project**30 points (total)**

As a member of a small group, you will complete a final project in conjunction with one of the community partners working with the class. The project will provide your group with the opportunity to engage with the course questions in impactful ways and to satisfy the course goals. The community partners will present a range of project options to the class on September 7th, you will rank your preferred partners/projects, and the course instructors will assign you to a particular project based (as closely as possible) on your stated preferences. After your project, you will also work with your group to present the work you have done during a conference open to the public on December 7th.

Your project and presentations do not need to explicitly address all of the course questions or the course goals. Working on a well-focused, well-defined project that engages a few of the questions and goals in depth can be a more powerful contribution to the course and the community than work that spreads itself too thin.

An excellent project will involve thought, action and presentation about the following:

1. What did the group do? What did you try to accomplish, did you accomplish what you set out to accomplish, did the goals change? And how did you try to accomplish it?
2. Your group should transparently address issues about decision-making for the community partners and the group itself. Who makes/who ought to make decisions about different issues? How are the decisions made (by committee, in public, with community input, etc.)? How might we change the decision making process to include those who lack a voice?

3. Why does this project matter? That is, your group should strive to articulate the ways in which the project will be relevant to the city of Greensboro, to its citizens, residents and visitors (as a whole) or to some portion thereof. By furthering our understanding of Greensboro, your project will have a longevity that goes beyond the boundaries of the course, and by being accessible, will help transform a neighborhood, a group, or some portion of the community.

The Plan & Research

Due 9/21/16

6 points

To be successful, your project needs to have a clear plan, even as it may well change (in which case, you will want a revised plan). This is the time to articulate that clear plan of action. You will need to turn in one plan per group, but one to which everyone contributes. In this paper, please describe in detail what your planned project will address, what role your group members will take in its implementation, the community partner(s) with whom you will be working, and the hoped for outcomes. We are aware that projects may change slightly over time, so the plan should be considered solid enough to pursue and flexible enough to adapt as needed throughout the semester. Keep in mind that at the end of the semester, the work you do on the final project will need to be translated into an academic poster that you will use to discuss your work with others.

The Project log and reflections to be completed by 11/30/16

10 points

We recognize that working in a democracy entails a process and a product. This portion of your final group project focuses on the process of your work. You will be working with a small group to contribute dialogue, decision-making and community action toward a project. You will need to keep a running log of your time and activities spent on completing the project, including small group meetings and planning, as well as individual and community action. We will expect to see a log with regular entries and brief reflections about how things are going. Fellow group members will routinely evaluate your progress, as well as their own.

The Poster (due 11/30/16) & Presentation (12/7/16)

14 points

This portion of your final group project focuses on the product of your work. To illustrate what you have accomplished, and to prompt discussion, you will design and create an academic poster. Like a “final paper,” the poster will include an introduction or rationale for your project, the theory or democratic principles that guided your work (citing readings and research), the method by which you engaged in community action, the data you collected (if research based) or description of the project (if advocacy based) and some tentative conclusions or questions that the work led you to develop. The poster should reflect a local connection as well as implications for cities or communities elsewhere (generalizability is what we’re looking for here). As with all visual work, your poster needs to be appealing to draw others to it with, for example, photographs, graphs/charts, boxes or arrows. The “design” work makes a strong rhetorical statement of value, fact, and purpose so you will need to collectively decide what to communicate and in what ways.

Obviously, you will not be able to directly represent all of your work on the poster itself. Some of this surplus will be reflected in your project log, but your group might also provide supporting materials (transcripts or recordings of interviews, a slide show, or a more thorough description of processes and/or conclusions) at the poster presentation, made available for interested parties to examine.

The entire teaching team will evaluate the poster and your public presentation of it at the final conference on December 7th.

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Final Reflections

Due 12/7/16 by e mail to home campus professor

10 points

At the beginning of the semester, you wrote your autoethnography, describing and reflecting on significant aspects of your educational experiences. Here at the end of our course, we’d like for you to consider the ways in which our readings, guest speakers, films, small and large group discussions, community projects, and other

activities have influenced your understanding of education, including your own. The details for this assignment will vary by campus. Your home campus professor will provide a detailed explanation of the assignment.

