

## **POLI:3701 *Special Topics in Politics***

History and Politics of Voter Registration and Civic Engagement

### **Series: “Engage & Empower: A Journey through Civic Participation”**

*Engage & Empower: A Journey through Civic Participation* is a fifteen-week series of accomplished guest lecturers who will share their knowledge and experience with the students of POLI:3701 *Special Topics in Politics*. This series aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the main core competencies of the Office of Leadership, Service, and Civic Engagement. From volunteering to navigating difficult dialogues, Voting Ambassadors will discover the intricacies of community involvement, with the goal of bolstering their volunteer skills which will be implemented during Hawk The Vote tabling and programming.

### **Core Competencies:**

1. Students can define civic engagement, leadership, and service through the lens of political involvement.
2. Students will reflect on civic engagement.
3. Students will comprehend the idea of civil discourse.
4. Students will comprehend how leadership applies to local and state contexts.
5. Students will understand how nonprofits foster civic engagement across the national and global community.
6. Students can connect experiences as a Voting Ambassador to civic engagement, leadership, and service.

### **Grading Scale:**

<b>Assignments:</b>	<b>Grade per task</b>	<b>Total Points</b>	<b>Total Percentage</b>
<b>Reflections</b>	1 point per reflection	10 points	<b>10%</b>
<b>Voter Interview Assignment</b>	10 Points	10 points	<b>10%</b>

<b>Class Discussion</b>	.83 points per class assuming two unexcused absences	10 points	<b>10%</b>
<b>Event Attendance</b>	10 points per programming event (2 in total)  10 points for education event  5 points for Group Photo event  10 points for the Election Night Watch Party	45 points	<b>45%</b>
<b>Quizzes</b>	5 points	5 points	<b>5%</b>
<b>Final Assignment</b>	20 Points	20 Points	<b>20%</b>

### **Reflections:**

After each guest speaker, students will complete 250-word reflection, which can be found on ICON. Prompts will be on the syllabus and on the assignment page. This can be submitted as a text box submission or as an attached file with your writing. Each one is worth one point, with ten reflections in total.

### **Voter Interview Assignment:**

This is the first major assignment assigned on September 4th, 2024. It is due on September 17th, 2024, at 11:59pm, allowing for two weeks to contact a family/friend and write the paper. It is **2-3 pages double spaced, Times New Roman size 11 font**. The

prompt will be on the assignment and on the syllabus. It is worth ten points, which equates to ten percent of your grade. Late submissions will lose 20% for each day past the deadline.

### **Class Discussion:**

Points will come from participation in class discussion such as asking questions during class, being present, and being a good listener. Each student is allowed TWO unexcused absences, but after accumulating three or more, students will lose 3 points for each additional unexcused absence from their final grade.

### **Event Attendance:**

Multiple outside-of-class events will occur on behalf of Hawk The Vote. You are required to attend all of these events in order to pass the class! One will have to work on **two programming events, which will take about two hours each. Each programming event will be five points. Ten points come from your required education event. These education events will focus on Hawk The Vote collaboration with other campus partners across the University of Iowa.** Sign up for all events will be in the class and informed to students.

During the semester, there will be a time that Hawk the Vote will take a group photo with all Voting Ambassadors and Executives. This will count as five points for the class. Information will be given in the class once schedules are finalized.

On the evening of November 5th, Hawk The Vote is hosting an election watch party, where attendance will count as ten points. Attendance is 10% of one's grade unless excused. 40% of this class's grade comes from Event Attendance.

### **Quizzes:**

Throughout the class, there will be two short quizzes on ICON. They are planned for weeks 4 and 8. Content will be primarily about the readings discussed in the class before. Each one is worth five points. These will open after class and be due before the next class.

### **Final Assignment:**

A 3–4-page double-spaced paper reflecting about one's time in the class. Notable speakers, readings, presentations, and discussions should be discussed. Prompt will be found on the ICON page and the syllabus. Due on **December 13th, 2024** as the final

project for the class.

## **Week 1–4 “What is “Civic Engagement”?”**

### Week 1: “Introduction to Hawk The Vote and American Electoral Process”

8/28/2024

- Hawk The Vote Introductions of Executives
- Icebreakers
- Voting Ambassador Onboarding Process led by JB Bartlett
- Syllabus rundown
- 250-word reflection
  - Why did you decide to sign up for the Hawk The Vote class? What are certain methods and tactics that make you successful in class? How can the HTV team help you be successful in this class? What is one thing you hope you learn from this class? Which speaker are you the most excited/interested to hear from?
  - Due 9/3/24 on ICON at 11:59 PM

### Week 2: “Behind the Ballot: Unveiling the Unsung Heroes of Polls” 9/4/2024

- Panel of Poll workers from Johnson County
  - Students will meet with a group of poll workers who have volunteered at the polls in the past. Guest speakers will discuss the importance of poll workers, how to volunteer on Election Day, and why they got involved.
- 250-word reflection
  - What are the largest problems poll workers face? What are the qualifications to become a poll worker? Have you ever worked as a poll worker before? What is one thing you learned about being a poll worker whether from the class speakers or previous experience?
  - Due 9/11/2024 at 11:59 PM
- Voting Interview Assignment
  - A 2–3-page double-spaced paper interviewing a family member or friend about their voting history and the why they voted in certain ways
  - For full points on this assignment, they must complete \_\_\_\_\_ out of \_\_\_\_\_ interests. Interview a family member (or friend but must inform Noah LeFevre about such) about their voting history. Questions such as: “why did you feel like voting in US elections”, “what was the motivation to vote”, “which elections have you voted in”, and other questions as they arise during the questioning. This assignment also requires some reflection and

reaction to what the individual has said. What thoughts do you have about voted after this interview and what did you learn from the interviewee?

- Due 9/17/24 on ICON at 11:59 PM

### Week 3: "Blast from the Past: Hawk The Vote Alumni"

9/11/2024

- Hawk The Vote Alumni
  - Hawk the Vote Alumni will come to class to discuss their experiences in Hawk The Vote over their time in the organization.
- 250-word Reflection
  - Did their experiences sound more different or similar? What are a couple of the career paths that the guests have taken? Which guest had the most compelling story?
  - Due at 11:59 PM of 9/16/24 on ICON
- Reading:
  - <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2023/07/12/voting-patterns-in-the-2022-elections/>
  - Students will read "Voting patterns in the 2022 elections" from the Pew Research Center. In the next class, students will discuss their findings in the discussion next week.

### Week 4: "Gen Z's Game Plan: The Impact of Registration and Voting"

9/18/2024

- Discussion and Questions from last week's reading
  - Summarize the reading and ask questions about such reading.
- "Power of the Youth Vote" Lecture led by Josh Studer and Noah LeFevre
  - Students will learn a brief history of voting from the youth including at the University of Iowa and across the United States.
- Quiz:
  - Six questions spanning from Week 1-4 and reading
  - On ICON due 11:59 PM on 9/17/24

## **Week 5—8 "Taking Charge: Leadership"**

### Week 5: "Engaging Collegiate Level Voting and Leadership: A Discussion with USG "

9/25/2024

- Addison Eckard | Undergraduate Student Gov. President
- Brenda Ramirez | Undergraduate Student Gov. Vice President

- o Students will learn about the political process at the microlevel; guest speakers Addison and Brenda will discuss the mission of The University of Iowa's Undergraduate Student Government (USG) and its connection to civic engagement. This week would serve more as a Q&A session, with less of a traditional lecture style.
- o Contact:
  - [addison-eckard@uiowa.edu](mailto:addison-eckard@uiowa.edu)
  - [brenda-ramirez@uiowa.edu](mailto:brenda-ramirez@uiowa.edu)
- 250-word Reflection:
  - o Have you heard about Undergraduate Student Government before? If so, what do you know about the Undergraduate Student Government? What did you learn from Addison and Brenda about USG? What sort of initiatives does USG pursue? If you were to have one initiative for USG to work towards, what would be the issue? How can Hawk The Vote work with USG to increase voter turnout in the upcoming elections?
  - o Due 10/1/2024 on ICON at 11:59PM

### Week 6: "In A Senator's Shoes: A Conversation with Janice Weiner"

10/2/2024

- Janice Weiner, Iowa State Senator District 45
  - Students will have the chance to chat with (likely over Zoom) the representative for Iowa State Senator Janice Weiner whose constituents live in Iowa City.
- 250-word reflection:
  - o Due 10/8/2024 at 11:59PM on ICON
  - o What did you learn from Sen. Weiner about the Iowa State Congress? How has this conversation made you think about local elections and what voting in them means as a citizen? What was one new thing you learned about from Sen. Weiner? Did any of your preconceived notions get challenged by Sen. Weiner?

### Week 7: "Running for Elected Office: A Conversation with Christina Bohannon"

10/9/2024

- Christina Bohannon
  - o Students will hear from University of Iowa College of Law Professor and current District 1 Candidate for Iowa, Christina Bohannon. She will discuss her efforts as an Iowa State Representative and her election efforts running for US House of Representatives District 1 for Iowa, noting the changes between election years and what resonates with voters. Hawk The Vote is a nonpartisan organization but is pleased to host Christina for

her firsthand experience as a former elected official, employment as a University of Iowa Faculty member, and current candidate for federal office.

- 250-word reflection:
  - Did Christina discuss the difference between state and federal elections? What were some of those differences if she did? Why do you think that Christina would run again after the 2022 Midterm Elections? What are some of the hardships about running for elected office in 2024?
  - Due on ICON at 11:59PM on 10/15/2024

## Week 8: "Inside the Political Engine: Insights from JoCo Auditor's Office" 10/16/2024

- Mackenzie Northup, Commissioner of Elections in Johnson County, and Bogdana, Elections Deputy
  - Students will learn about engaging with political processes through an open Q&A and presentation with Mackenzie Northup and Bogdana.
  - Northup would center his discussion around his experiences working with JoCo.

## **Week 9–12 "Service & Community"**

### Week 9: "Collegiate Towns and City Government: A Discussion of Community: Mayor Bruce Teague" 10/23/2024

- Bruce Teague, Mayor of Iowa City
  - Meeting at the City of Iowa City City Hall
  - Students will be able to interact with politics at the local level through engagement with Bruce Teague, an Iowa City Councilor and the Mayor.
  - Teague will explain the city-manager-council style of government Iowa City has while connecting this to leadership.
  - Contact
    - [bteague@iowa-city.org](mailto:bteague@iowa-city.org)
- 250-word Reflection:
  - What expectations did you have about City Hall? Did these expectations change? What was one new thing you learned? What makes the City-Manager style of government different than the mayoral style? What about the role of the mayor in both systems? Have you been to the Iowa City City Hall before? If not, were there any perceptions that changed?
  - Due on ICON at 11:59 PM of 10/29/24

## Week 10: "News Analysis"

10/30/2024

- Kyla Hedding, Assistant Professor, School of Journalism and Mass Communications
  - Dr. Hedding will discuss Political Public Relations, and its relation to civic engagement. This will revolve around social media and dissemination of information in the modern age.
- Promote filling out and registering to vote for the election before Election Day
- 250-word Reflection:
  - What are your election day plans? Did you make voting plans with friends? How confident are you in your voting ability? How do you feel about the upcoming elections in terms of voter turnout and why?
  - Due on ICON at 11:59 PM of 11/5/24

## Week 11: "Election Week!"

11/6/2024

- No class this week

## Week 12: "Exploring Project Vote Smart's Impact"

11/13/2024

- Professor Alex Smith, POLI:3020: *Project Vote Smart, Election Administration*
  - Students can learn about unique ways to engage with service through POLI:3020. Alex Smith will present the goals of Vote Smart and a new course offered about Election Administration, the impact the course made, and how to get involved in Fall 2025.
- 250-word Reflection:
  - What does Project Vote Smart contribute to elections? How can Project Vote Smart assist your studies? If you are not a political science major/minor, would you take another higher-level political science class? Compare information given about Election Administration from Prof. Smith and Johnson County Auditor Weipert.
  - Due on ICON at 11:59 PM of 11/19/2024

## **Week 13–16 "Civic Engagement Beyond"**

### Week 13: "Building Bridges: Global Civic Engagement"

11/20/2024

- Amy Chastain, Executive Director
  - Global Ties Iowa coordinates people-to-people exchanges between international leaders and residents of eastern Iowa's Creative Corridor. Amy could present to the course their mission and the importance of



transnational civic engagement, and she could disseminate tips to volunteer or work for their organization.

- This organization is local and nearly all their workers are either students or alum, so I could see them voicing strong interest!

○ Contact

- [amy.chastain@globaltiesiowa.org](mailto:amy.chastain@globaltiesiowa.org)

- 250-word Reflection:

- How does Iowa City connect across the state and nation? What are examples of transnational engagement? What are some ways students are able to assist Global Ties? Which connection sounded the most interesting to you? Did you know any of the local volunteers/ exchange students? What most surprised you about Global Ties?
- Due on ICON at 11:59PM on 11/26/2024

## Week 12: "University Impacts: Discussion with President Wilson"

12/4/2024

- President Barbara Wilson

- Students will hear from University of Iowa President, Barbara Wilson, about how the University interacts with elected officials on behalf of the University. Students will also be able to ask the president questions about her experiences.

- 250-word reflection:

- In what ways does President Wilson interact with elected officials? Did any approaches surprise you from President Wilson? What are some areas where the University of Iowa works with elected officials? How have the President's experiences been with all levels of government in your opinion?
- Due on ICON at 11:59PM on 12/10/2024

## Week 15: "Echoes of Engagement: Reflecting on our Journey" 12/11/2024

- The last week of this series would serve as an opportunity for students to reflect on their experience with the guest speakers.
- Discuss the last election and voting patterns, which should be processed by then
- Final Assignment:
  - 3–4-page reflection about the class
  - "What was your favorite guest speaker and why? What was the most interesting thing you learned and how can you apply it to your future? Was there anything that surprised you about the speakers and class in general? Did you feel the same motivation to vote after the class? How would you improve the class if there are future classes in the future? Did you find it easy to convince students to vote? What methods worked or didn't work? Take reflection of your time in class and at Hawk The Vote's

event”

- Due 12/13/2024 on ICON