**University of Iowa**

**Fall 2024**

**POLI:3720**

“History and Politics of Voter Registration and Civic Engagement”

Meeting Time: Wednesday, 1:30pm-2:20pm

Meeting Location: 112 Macbride Hall

Department of Political Science

Instructor: Professor Nicholas Martini

Office Hours: TBD

Office Location: 336 Schaeffer Hall

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Undergraduate TAs

Josh Studer, [htv-executive@uiowa.edu](mailto:htv-executive@uiowa.edu)

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**Course Description:**

**POLI:3720**

**History and Politics of Voter Registration and Civic Engagement**

*‘Engage for Change: Building Active Communities’* is a fifteen-week series of guest lecturers who will share their knowledge and experiences with POLI:3701 *Special Topics in Politics* students. This lecture series aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the main core competencies of the Office of Leadership, Service, and Civic Engagement, with an emphasis on volunteering and learning to navigate challenging conversations. As Voting Ambassadors, students will dive deeper into community involvement to improve volunteer skills implemented through Hawk The Vote tabling and programming events.

**Learning Objectives:**

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.

**Readings:**

All readings will be posted on ICON. Most weeks do not have any readings, but they are all online and free. **There are NO required textbooks for this course.**

**Course ICON site:**

To access the course site, log into [Iowa Courses Online (ICON)](https://icon.uiowa.edu) using your Hawk ID and password.

**Grading Scale:**

This course will use the following grades: A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-, F

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Assignments:** | **Points Per Task** | **Total Points** | **Total Percentage** |
| **Reflections/Pre-Class Questions** | 1 per reflection | 10 points | 10% |
| **Other Assignment(s)** | 5 points per assignment (2 assignments) | 10 points | 10% |
| **Class Discussion** | 1 point per class assuming 2 unexcused absences | 15 points | 15% |
| **Event Attendance** | 2.5 points per hour of programming events (10 total)  10 points per hour of education events (10 total)  10 points for ‘other’ | 40 points | 40% |
| **Quizzes** | 5 points | 5 points | 5% |
| **Final Assignment** | 20 points | 20 points | 20% |

**Reflections/Pre-Class Questions:**

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. Before some speakers, instead, students will submit 2 questions to ICON. The prompts will be on the syllabus and on the assignment page. Each one is worth one point, with ten reflections/questions in total. Students must submit the assignment within the deadline. Late submissions are NOT accepted for reflections or pre-class questions.

**Other Assignments:**

Students will complete 2 projects in class, worth 5 points each. The first project is assigned on 10/22 in class and due on 10/28 at 11:59 pm. The second project is assigned on 10/29 in class and due on 11/4 at 11:59 pm. There will be in-class work time for both projects, but if not completed in class, they must be finished on your own time. The prompt for each is included in the assignment submission page and the syllabus. Each project is worth 5 points, which equates to 5% of your grade. Late submissions for these assignments will lose 20% of the final grade 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. 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. These events are very important for the class. One is working on **4 hours of programming events. Every 1 hour of programming events will be 2.5 points. Ten points come from 1 hour of an 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 class and posted to the ICON site.

During the semester, there will be a time that Hawk the Vote will take a group photo with all Voting Ambassadors and Executives.

**Quizzes:**

Throughout the class, there will be one short quiz on ICON. Content will be primarily about the readings discussed in the class before. It is worth five points. It will open after class discussion and be due before the next class. Late submissions will not be accepted.

**Final Assignment:**

A 3–4-page double-spaced paper reflecting on one’s time in the class. Notable  
speakers, readings, presentations, and discussions should be discussed. Prompt will be found on the ICON page and in the syllabus. Due on 12/14 at 11:59pm as the final project for the class. Late submissions for this assignment will lose 20% of the final grade for each day past the deadline.

**Attendance Policy:**

Each student is allowed TWO (2) unexcused absences from class. After accumulating three or more absences, students will lose 3 points for each additional unexcused absence from their final grade.

**Class Schedule:**

**Week 1-5 “Defining Civic Engagement”**

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

8/27/2025

* Introduction of Hawk The Vote Executives
* Icebreakers
* Voting Ambassador Onboarding led by Josh Studer
* Syllabus overview
* 250-word reflection
* Why did you sign up for the Hawk The Vote class? How can the HTV team support you this semester? What are methods or techniques that will help you to be successful in this class? What is one thing you hope to gain from this class? What speaker are you most excited for and why?
* Due 9/2 on ICON at 11:59 PM

Week 2: “Auditor Rob Sand: Running for Office as the ‘Taxpayers’ Watchdog’”

9/3/2025

* Iowa State Auditor, Rob Sand
* The Iowa State Auditor is the ‘Taxpayers’ Watchdog’, and has responsibility for audits of counties, cities, school districts, and other government subdivisions. He will speak on his experience as the auditor and about what it is like to run for state office.
* 250-word-reflection
* What does the State Auditor do? How are they chosen for their position (elected vs. appointed)? What is the length of their term? What was the most interesting thing you learned? Did the auditor challenge any of your preconceived notions?
* Due 9/9/2025 on ICON at 11:59 PM

Week 3: “Inside Election Processes at the State Level: Secretary of State Paul Pate”

9/10/2025

* Iowa Secretary of State, Paul Pate
* The Secretary of State is the state commissioner of elections and supervises all county auditors in the administration of elections. He can speak about his experiences administering elections and working in the Iowa state government.
* 250-word-reflection
* What does the Secretary of State do? How is the Secretary of State chosen (elected vs. appointed)? How does he help elections run smoothly? What was the most surprising thing you learned? What are some other duties of his office and how have they changed over time?
* Due 9/16 on ICON at 11:59 PM

Week 4: “How College Towns and City Government Interact: A Discussion with Mayor Teague”

9/17/2025

* Bruce Teague, Iowa City Mayor
* Meeting at the Iowa City City Hall
* Students will get a feel for politics at the local level by engaging with Mayor Teague, a City Councilor and the Mayor.
* Teague can explain the city-manager-council style of government Iowa City has, while connecting it to leadership in local communities.
* 250-word-reflection
* What makes the city-manager style of government different than the mayoral style? Have you heard of the city-manager style before? What is the role of the mayor in each of these systems? What expectations did you have about City Hall? Did any of these expectations change? Have you been to City Hall before? If not, what was most surprising? What was the most interesting thing you learned?
* Due 9/23 on ICON at 11:59 PM

Week 5: “Inside the Political Engine with JoCo Auditor Julie Persons”

9/24/2025

* JoCo Auditor, Julie Persons
* Students will learn about engaging with political processes through a presentation and Q&A with the JoCo auditor, Julie Persons.
* Persons will center her discussion around experiences working with JoCo.
* 250-word-reflection
* What is the role of the JoCo auditor? How do they interact with the community? What does the auditor’s office do outside of elections? What was the most interesting thing you learned? Was there anything that surprised you?
* Due 9/30 on ICON at 11:59 PM

Week 6: “In A Representative’s Shoes: A Conversation With Adam Zabner

10/1/2025

* Iowa House Representative, Adam Zabner
* Students will have the opportunity to chat with Iowa State Representative Elinor Zabner, whose constituents live in Iowa City.
* 250-word-reflection
* What did you learn from Rep. Zabner about the State Congress? Has this conversation changed your opinion on participating in local elections? What was the most interesting thing Rep. Zabner shared? Were any of your preconceived notions challenged?
* Due 10/7 on ICON at 11:59 PM
* Reading
* <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2023/07/12/voting-patterns-in-the-2022-elections/>
* Read before the start of class next week

Week 7: “Discussing the Power of the Youth Vote”

10/8/2025

* Education Presentation Demo (Power of the Youth Vote)
* Led by Joslyn and Ava
* Students will learn how to present at an education event, and they will also get information about the power of the youth vote and its history.
* Discussion
* Students will discuss the reading assigned last week about voting patterns.
* <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2023/07/12/voting-patterns-in-the-2022-elections/>
* Quiz
* There will be a 5-question quiz on ICON about the reading materials discussed in class.
* Due 10/14 on ICON at 11:59 PM

Week 8: “In A Senator’s Shoes: A Conversation with Janice Weiner”

10/15/2025

* Iowa State Senator, Janice Weiner
* Students will have the chance to chat with Iowa State Senator Janice Weiner, whose constituents live in Iowa City.
* 250-word-reflection
* What did you learn from Sen. Weiner about the State Congress? How has this conversation changed your opinion on local elections and their impacts? What was one new thing you learned from Sen. Weiner? Were any of your preconceived notions challenged?
* Due 10/21 on ICON at 11:59 PM

Week 9: “Empowering Voters: Designing A Civic Engagement Campaign”

10/22/2025

* Voter Education Project
* Students will create an infographic, social media post, poster, or other similar material with information on how to vote, the history of voting, civic engagement, or other topics. They are encouraged to include relevant information from previous speakers.
* Caption the Post
* Come up with a creative caption for the post/infographic and submit both to ICON!
* Due 10/28 on ICON at 11:59 PM

Week 10: “Learning to Create Education Presentations”

10/29/2025

* Project Day
* Create your own education presentation! This can be done individually, or in small groups of 2-4. It should be 8-12 slides, and include information about what HTV is, how to register to vote, and where to find information like your polling place or absentee ballot request. It can include facts about the history of voting, how to be civically engaged, or other topics. Be creative! An example will be posted on ICON.
* Submit your education presentation
* Each person should submit their own copy of the presentation, and it should include all names.
* Due 11/4 on ICON at 11:59 PM

Week 11: “Engaging with Collegiate Level Voting and Leadership: SEC and Finance

Director”

11/5/2025

* Student Elections Commission and USG Finance Director
* Students will learn about political processes at the microlevel; the Finance Director of Undergraduate Student Government (USG) as well as members of the Student Elections Commission (SEC) will discuss how USG functions, election processes, and the connection to civic engagement.
* This will be a Q&A session, less of a traditional lecture.
* 250-word-reflection
* Have you ever heard of Undergraduate Student Government (USG) before? What do you know about USG? What did you learn from the speakers about USG? What initiatives does USG work on? How do USG elections work? How can Hawk the Vote work with USG to increase voter turnout in upcoming elections?
* Due 11/11 on ICON at 11:59 PM

Week 12: “Across the Aisle: Learning How to Disagree with Empathy”

11/12/2025

* Across the Aisle, Iowa Law School
* Across the Aisle is a student-run organization at the Iowa Law School designed to promote respectful conversation on matters of divisive political and social importance. They will teach students how to have hard conversations on difficult topics.
* 250-word-reflection
* What is Across the Aisle? How do their discussions promote respectful civil discourse? What are common themes they discuss? What was something interesting that you learned? Would you go to an Across the Aisle event given the opportunity?
* Due 11/18 on ICON at 11:59 PM

Week 13: “Building Bridges Through Global Civic Engagement”

11/19/2025

* Global Ties Executive Director, Amy Chastain, and Global Tie Interns
* Global Ties Iowa coordinates people-to-people exchanges between international leaders and residents of eastern Iowa’s Creative Corridor
* Amy and the interns can present the mission of Global Ties Iowa and stress the importance of transnational engagement. They can also talk about volunteering with or interning for the organization, as almost all of the workers are students.
* 250-word-reflection
* What is transnational engagement? How does Global Ties connect Iowa City across the state, nation, and beyond? How are students involved in Global Ties? Which connection sounded the most interesting or exciting to you? Do you know any volunteers or exchange members? Would you ever volunteer for an organization like Global Ties? What surprised you the most about Global Ties?
* Due 12/2 on ICON at 11:59 PM

Week 14: “Making Your Vote Count: Poll Workers in Action”

12/3/2025

* Panel of poll workers from Johnson County
* A group of poll workers from Johnson County will visit the class. They will speak about their experiences working at the polls, the importance of poll workers, how they got involved, and ways to volunteer in elections.
* 250-word-reflection
* What are the qualifications to become a poll worker in Iowa? What are the biggest problems poll workers face? How do poll workers overcome challenges on Election Day? What is one thing you learned about being a poll worker? Would you ever become a poll worker?
* Due 12/9/2025 on ICON at 11:59 PM

Week 15: “Reflecting on Our Journey of Civic Engagement”

12/10/2025

* The last week of class will serve as time for students to reflect on and discuss experiences with guest speakers.
* Final assignment
* 3-4 page reflection about the class
* Who was your favorite guest speaker and why? What was the most interesting thing you learned from them? Were there any surprises about the class or speakers? Do you have a greater understanding of civic engagement after this course? Do you have a greater motivation to vote after this course? What was the most interesting thing you learned from this course? How will you stay civically engaged in your community after this class is over? Did you find it easy to convince students to register to vote? What worked or didn’t work for you? How would you improve upon this class in the future?
* Due 12/14 on ICON at 11:59 PM

This course is through the Department of Political Science

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**Academic Honesty and Misconduct**

All students in CLAS courses are expected to abide by the [college’s standards of academic honesty](https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/academic-fraud-honor-code). Undergraduate academic misconduct must be reported by instructors to CLAS according to [these procedures](https://policy.clas.uiowa.edu/clas-policies-and-procedures/undergraduate-education/academic-misconduct-undergraduate). Graduate academic misconduct must be reported to the Graduate College according to Section F of the [Graduate College Manual.](https://grad.uiowa.edu/academics/manual/academic-program/section-iv-academic-standing-probation-and-dismissal)

**AI (Artificial Intelligence) Policy**

You are NOT allowed to use AI in your coursework for this class. Students suspected of using AI will be given a 0 on that assignment at the instructor’s discretion.

**Course’s College (Administrative Home)**

*For undergraduate courses*

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) is the home of this course, and CLAS governs the add and drop deadlines, academic misconduct policies, and other undergraduate policies and procedures. Other UI colleges may have different policies.

*For graduate courses*

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) is the home of this course, and CLAS governs the policies and procedures for its courses. Graduate students, however, must adhere to the academic deadlines set by the Graduate College.

**Student Complaints**

**Students with a complaint about a grade or a related matter should first discuss the situation with the instructor and/or the course supervisor (if applicable), and finally with the DEO (Chair) of the department, school or program offering the course. Sometimes students will be referred to the department or program’s Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS) or Director of Graduate Studies (DGS).**

**Undergraduate students should contact** [**CLAS Undergraduate Programs**](https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/student-rights-responsibilities#rights) **for support when the matter is not resolved at the previous level. Graduate students should contact the** [**CLAS Graduate Affairs Manager**](mailto:erika-christiansen@uiowa.edu) **when additional support is needed.**

**Drop Deadline for this Course**

You may drop an individual course before the drop deadline; after this deadline you will need collegiate approval. You can look up the drop deadline for this course [here](https://registrar.uiowa.edu/course-deadlines). When you drop a course, a “W” will appear on your transcript. The mark of “W” is a neutral mark that does not affect your GPA. To discuss how dropping (or staying in) a course might affect your academic goals, please contact your Academic Advisor. Directions for adding or dropping a course and other registration changes can be found on the [Registrar’s website](https://registrar.uiowa.edu/change-registration-myui). Undergraduate students can find policies on dropping CLAS courses [here](https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/students-academic-policies/registration-policies#dropping). Graduate students should adhere to the [academic deadlines](https://grad.uiowa.edu/academics/deadlines) and policies set by the Graduate College.

**Communication: UI Email**

Students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their UI email address (uiowa.edu) and must use this address for any communication with instructors or staff in the UI community. For the privacy and the protection of student records, UI faculty and staff can only correspond with UI email addresses.

**Mental Health Resources and Student Support**

Students are encouraged to be mindful of their mental health and seek help as a preventive measure or if feeling overwhelmed and/or struggling to meet course expectations. Students are encouraged to talk to their instructor for assistance with course-related concerns. For additional mental health support, please see the guidance and resources at [mentalhealth.uiowa.edu](http://mentalhealth.uiowa.edu/), including the 24-7 [UI Support and Crisis Line](https://mentalhealth.uiowa.edu/ui-support-and-crisis-line).

Additionally, the Office of the Dean of Students can help students navigate personal crisis situations. They can provide one-on-one support, help with identifying options, and access to [basic needs resources (such as food, rent, childcare, etc.)](http://basicneeds.uiowa.edu/). Student Care and Assistance: 132 IMU, [dos-assistance@uiowa.edu](mailto:dos-assistance@uiowa.edu), or 319-335-1162 and more info: [dos.uiowa.edu/assistance](https://dos.uiowa.edu/assistance)[University Policies](https://provost.uiowa.edu/student-course-policies)

[**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**](https://provost.uiowa.edu/teaching-resources/course-syllabi-information#accommodations-for-students-with-disabilities)

The University is committed to providing an educational experience that is accessible to all students. If a student has a diagnosed disability or other disabling condition that may impact the student’s ability to complete the course requirements as stated in the syllabus, the student may seek accommodations through [Student Disability Services](https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/students/) (SDS). SDS is responsible for making [Letters of Accommodation](https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/students/letter-accommodations-loa) (LOA) available to the student. The student must provide an LOA to the instructor as early in the semester as possible, but requests not made at least two weeks prior to the scheduled activity for which an accommodation is sought may not be accommodated. The LOA will specify what reasonable course accommodations the student is eligible for and those the instructor should provide.

[Free Speech and Expression](https://provost.uiowa.edu/teaching-resources/course-syllabi-information#free-speech-and-expression)

[Absences for Religious Holy Days](https://opsmanual.uiowa.edu/students/absences-class#8.2)

[Classroom Expectations](https://provost.uiowa.edu/teaching-resources/course-syllabi-information#classroom-expectations)

[Non-discrimination](https://provost.uiowa.edu/teaching-resources/course-syllabi-information#non-discrimination-statement)

[Sexual Harassment/Misconduct and Supportive Measures](https://provost.uiowa.edu/teaching-resources/course-syllabi-information#sexual-harassment--sexual-misconduct-and-supportive-measures)

[Sharing of Class Recordings (if appropriate)](https://provost.uiowa.edu/teaching-resources/course-syllabi-information#sharing-of-class-recordings-if-appropriate)