

CTZN 110: Inquiry into Citizenship Am I My Brother's Keeper?

Professor Y
Contact Information

Course Description: This course uses an inquiry-based approach to introduce students to aspects of citizenship, with an emphasis on the development of critical thought, civil discourse, and applied ethical reasoning. Sections of the course pose discipline-specific topics and questions to facilitate students' exploration of citizenship. Students will build and refine their skills for academic success and will identify strengths and weaknesses in their oral communication. Speaking infused. 3 credits.

Section Description: In this CTZN 110 section, students will be asked to articulate, defend, and expand their own beliefs about fate, personal responsibility, and responsibility toward others. By contrasting the belief systems of the Greek philosopher Epictetus with those of 18th- and 20th-century Americans and 20th-century Senegalese women, students will gain exposure to a variety of ways of interacting with others. Ultimately, students will learn to consider questions about the responsibilities of a citizen.

Core Curriculum Course Outcome: Students will investigate the foundations of citizenship, which include ethical reasoning, critical thought, and civil discourse.

Course Objectives: Students will

1. describe and evaluate the responsibilities of citizenship, including one's personal responsibility and responsibility toward others.
2. analyze and critically respond to a variety of texts using written and oral arguments.
3. analyze and use speaking conventions appropriate to different audiences. Students will identify strengths and weaknesses in their own speaking in order to improve.

Required Texts:

1. [*The Handbook of Epictetus*](#). From Wikipedia: "Epictetus taught that [philosophy](#) is a way of life and not just a theoretical discipline. To Epictetus, all external events are determined by [fate](#), and are thus beyond our control; we should accept whatever happens calmly and dispassionately. However, individuals are responsible for their own actions, which they can examine and control through rigorous self-discipline."
2. Stanley Milgram, [*Obedience to Authority*](#). From Amazon: "In the 1960s Yale University psychologist Stanley Milgram famously carried out a series of experiments that forever changed our perceptions of morality and free will. The subjects—or "teachers"—were instructed to administer electroshocks to a human "learner," with the shocks becoming progressively more powerful and painful. Controversial but now strongly vindicated by the scientific community, these experiments attempted to determine to what extent people will obey orders from authority figures regardless of consequences. 'Milgram's experiments on obedience have made us more aware of the dangers of uncritically accepting authority,' wrote Peter Singer in the *New York Times Book Review*."
3. [*Mariama Bâ, So Long a Letter*](#), a semi-autobiographical [epistolary novel](#) set during the years after Senegal's independence from France. Its theme is the condition of women in Western African society and depicts differing solutions to questions of marriage and divorce, national independence, religious structures, and parenthood.

4. *The New York Times* (or a national blog), to help with timely examples of civil (and uncivil) discourse and the cultivation of curiosity, and *The Declaration of Independence*.

Evaluation/Assessment:

Active discussion leadership & participation	15%
Reading quizzes & Reflections	15%
3 Essays on Readings	45%
Oral Presentation	5%
Final Exam	20%

Speaking-infused assignments:

1. This class will be run as a discussion seminar. Class participation is expected every day.
2. Students will also have to facilitate one classroom discussion during the semester.
3. Students will give one oral presentation relating current events to the themes of personal responsibility discussed in the course texts.

Assignments: In addition to the speaking-infused assignments and short reading quizzes or reflection papers, students will complete three papers of 3-4 pages each, one after each major reading. The final exam might be a case study on a thorny question, requiring students first to synthesize how Epictetus, Milgram, and Bâ would offer a solution, and then generate a thoughtful personal solution.

Class Schedule:

Weeks 1-2 *The Declaration of Independence* & The Foundations of Citizenship
Introduction to the responsibilities of citizenship, ethical reasoning, civil discourse
Discussion of current events relating to issues of personal responsibility and community
Study skills: How to participate in a seminar-style course; How to evaluate media sources

Weeks 3-6 *The Handbook of Epictetus*.
Study skills: How to manage all this reading; How to read and annotate a text
First Paper Due on Epictetus

Weeks 7-10 Stanley Milgram, *Obedience to Authority*.
Study skills: How to revise and write papers
Second Paper Due on Milgram

Weeks 11-14 [Mariama Bâ](#), *So Long a Letter*.
Study Skills: How to prepare for oral presentations and exams
Third Paper Due on Bâ

Week 15 Oral Presentations focused on current events and course texts

Week 16 **Final Exam**

INQUIRY INTO CITIZENSHIP: ARE ELECTIONS FAIR?

Professor X

Meeting Time

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Section description: This section will investigate various types of voting systems and their fairness. Topics may include yes-no voting, plurality voting, apportionment, gerrymandering, and the power of elected officials.

Core Curriculum Course Outcomes:

1. Students will investigate the foundations of citizenship, which include ethical reasoning, critical thought, and civil discourse.
2. Students will analyze and use speaking conventions appropriate to different audiences. Students will identify strengths and weaknesses in their own speaking in order to improve.

Course Objectives: Students will

1. use various apportionment methods, compare their results, and explain whether those results are ethical or unethical.
2. use various voting methods, compare their results, and explain whether those results are ethical or unethical.
3. explain how various voting methods and apportionment methods influence the political power structure.

Required Text/Resources:

1. Common First Year resources, possibly available to all sections:
 - a. Reading 1- Perspective on citizenship
 - b. Reading 2- Perspective on ethics
 - c. Speaking resource developed for this course
2. Specific resources required by professor
 - a. Mathematics and Politics. Alan D. Taylor and Allison M. Pacelli. Springer, 2009.

Evaluation/Assessment:

Active class participation	10%
Group Presentations	25%
Homework and Tests	65%

Speaking-infused:

1. This class will require group work each day. Each student is expected to actively participate in all group and class discussions. Each group member should be prepared to represent their group decisions in class discussions.
2. Two group oral presentations will be required in this course.

Class Schedule:

Weeks 1-2 Citizenship
Ethical reasoning introduction
Study skills: working in groups, oral communication

Weeks 3-5 Yes-No Voting
Weighted Voting vs. Non-weighted Voting
Trade Robustness vs. Swap Robustness
Ex) U.S. Federal System, U.N. Security Council
Study skills: mathematics homework, mathematics test taking skills

First Test

Week 6-8 Social Choice Procedures
Desirable Properties of Voting Procedures
Advantages and Disadvantages of Procedures
Ex) Third party candidates in state and presidential elections
Study skills: oral presentations

Group Presidential Election Presentations

Groups present their analysis of who would have won a previous election if another voting system was used and determine its fairness

Week 9-11 Apportionment Methods
Apportionment Problem and Properties
Apportionment Methods and their Advantages and Disadvantages
Ex) Africa and Middle East

Second Test

Week 12-14 Apportionment of State Voting Districts
Fair Division
Gerrymandering
Study skills: using maps, graphs and charts

Week 15 **Group Apportionment Presentations**
Groups present their proposed apportionment of Virginia and explain its fairness

Week 16 **Final Exam**