

Citizenship in the 21st Century - Winter Quarter 2023

Draft Course Calendar

Note: This course calendar is still subject to change, and some of the links are to full documents that will be excerpted for students.

Part 1: Introducing citizenship and its challenges

Week 1, Session 1: Introduction: What is citizenship? Why should we study it?

- In-class reading: [Edgar Robinson, “Problems of Citizenship.”](#)
- In-class reading: Stanford [Fundamental Standard](#) and excerpt of [Founding Grant](#).
- In-class reading: [Stephen Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, How Democracies Die. Introduction.](#)

This session introduces the goals and structure of the class and gives the students a chance to get to know each other and their instructor. The Levitsky and Ziblatt reading helps them understand the challenges facing democratic citizenship today, and the short Stanford readings, which can be done in class, give them a perspective on why studying citizenship is part of their freshman year.

Week 1, Session 2: Can citizenship work in a divided society? How can we communicate across differences?

- [Podcast Interview with Alice Siu on American in One Room.](#)
- [Jean Bethke Elshtain “Democracy at Century’s End”](#)
- Students choose 3 of the 9 articles in this [series of op-eds on polarization in Stanford Magazine by Stanford faculty.](#)

This session focuses on a key set of issues facing democratic citizenship: hyperpolarization and the resulting breakdown of communication across political differences. Activities on deliberation and active listening inspired by the [E Pluribus project at Stanford Law School](#) help students understand some of the challenges of communication. Students will also brainstorm questions for experts at the upcoming plenary session.

End of Week 1 (Thurs Jan 12): Plenary session: expert roundtable on “Is democratic citizenship in crisis?”

5-6 experts from a variety of disciplines will discuss the question of whether democratic citizenship is in crisis and, if so, what can be done. We'll gather questions from students in advance to generate a list of top concerns for the speakers to address.

Week 2, Session 1: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day / No Class

- OPTIONAL: Speech by Dr. King at Stanford, "The Other America" [[link](#)]

Week 2, Session 2: How should we study citizenship?

- [Danielle Allen, *Our Declaration*, excerpt.](#)
- United States Declaration of Independence, text included in the Allen excerpt.

Students and instructors will discuss reactions to the plenary session, focusing on key ideas to take away as well as questions that remain open or in dispute. Danielle Allen's work gets us into the nuts and bolts of how citizenship works, starting with the ways documents ("memos" for Allen) structure citizenship. We'll use Allen's ideas to read the Declaration of Independence specifically as a memo of citizenship that, like others we'll read over the quarter, lays out goals, values, group boundaries, and rights and obligations—and seeks to change how citizenship is done.

Week 3, Session 1: Monument or rough draft? (Re)reading a document of citizenship

- [Frederick Douglass, "What to the slave is the Fourth of July?"](#)
- Blackpast.org. [Account of William Lloyd Garrison's "Covenant with Death" speech.](#)
- [Tracy K. Smith. "Declaration."](#)
- Steven Calabresi. ["On Originalism in Constitutional Interpretation."](#)

How should we think about documents and practices of citizenship that we inherit from the past, especially when these older forms of citizenship seem, to our eyes, unjust in various ways? Students may be used to a "monument view" of citizenship, which asks us to simply learn and venerate the unchangeable achievements of the past. Garrison, in his famous speech excoriating the U.S. Constitution as a document of slavery, is using a version of this view, since he sees citizenship as unchangeable. In contrast, Douglass argues that we can revise the forms of citizenship that come down to us from the past (the "rough draft" view), strengthening what's good in them and discarding what's unequal or unjust. Smith, in her erasure poem, does this reworking literally, while Calabresi offers an argument for retaining the original meaning of our documents of citizenship.

Part 2: The challenge of collective action: Citizenship is hard but not impossible

Week 3, Session 2: Citizenship as cooperation: Hobbes's challenge and the dangers of freeriding

- Video module on cooperation problems [[link](#)] (to be updated)
- Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651), selections - to be read / annotated collaboratively.
- [Jane Mansbridge. "What is political science for?"](#)

The goal of this session is to show why citizenship is hard, that even people of good will may find themselves stuck in collective action problems or tempted to freeride. For Thomas Hobbes, this is a reason for abandoning the enterprise of democratic citizenship entirely and creating an unaccountable sovereign, while Mansbridge, in a lucid and accessible introduction to collective action problems, identifies the goal of political science as finding ways of making collective action work without giving up on democratic self-governance.

Week 4, Session 1: Sources of solidarity: why do people accept the demands of citizenship even when it's not in their self-interest?

- [Plato's Crito](#). - Excerpt this and have students read / annotate it collaboratively.
- [Judith Shklar's chapter on Crito in *On Political Obligation*, pgs. 42-49.](#)
- [Tim O'Brien "On the Rainy River" \(from *The Things They Carried*\)](#)

Having laid out why citizenship is hard, the goal of this session is to show that it is not impossible. Some hardline theorists of collective action dismiss any action not in accord with narrow self-interest (even voting) as a muddle-headed mistake, but this misses all the other reasons people act together, reasons that we'll call "sources of solidarity." But what about when the community seems to demand too much? The readings for this class look at two instances of citizens put in a tremendously difficult dilemma between what seems best for themselves and what their political community demands of them. Ultimately, both end up accepting the burdens of citizenship, albeit for very different reasons.

Week 4, Session 2: Institutionalizing citizenship: constitutions, norms, and rules

- James Madison. [Federalist No. 10](#) - To be read / annotated collaboratively.
- Sonia Mittal and Barry Weingast, "Self-Enforcing Constitutions" (2010) [Excerpt](#).
- Excerpt of [Ch 3 of Robert Dahl's *How Democratic is the American Constitution?*](#)

Another way we try to make collective action work is through institutional design, including constitutions and other forms of law. This session's texts offer different answers to the question of whether institutional design can truly solve the challenge of collective action; all of them find that even a well-designed constitutional system needs widespread and deeply entrenched norms of democratic citizenship as well.

Part 3: Today's public square

Week 5, Session 1: Free speech in divided societies

- [J. S. Mill, *On Liberty*, excerpts on free speech.](#) - To be read and annotated collaboratively.
- [Charles Lawrence, "Regulating Hate Speech on Campus."](#) Read pp. 434-442, 457-466.

Democratic citizenship clearly requires free speech, but how should we think about this issue in light of the challenges to citizenship we've discussed so far? This session makes the question more concrete with an activity around controversial speech on campus: Students talk through what to do in a scenario like finding an inflammatory flier in a dorm.

Week 5, Session 2: Technology and citizenship [Open day]

Open day - Instructors have the option of teaching a different lesson on the topic of technology and citizenship.

- Langdon Winner, *The Whale and the Reactor* (1986): "[Technologies as forms of life](#)" (pp. 10-12), and "[Do artifacts have politics?](#)" (pp. 19-29)
- Ashley Gilbertson and Kevin Granville, "[In Amish Country, the future is calling.](#)" *NY Times* (2017) [[PDF](#)]
- [Amy Gutmann and Jonathan Moreno. "Keeping CRISPR Safe."](#)

Winner argues that technologies are not simply "tools" that we pick up for pre-chosen purposes and then put down but are instead "forms of life" that reshape our goals and individual and collective self-understandings. The two other readings look at concrete cases of debates on the role of different technologies in democratic life.

Week 6, Session 1: The digital public square

- Renee DiResta, "Democracy: Fixing It is Up to Us" [[video](#)]

- Jonathan Haidt. “Why the last 10 years of American life have been uniquely stupid.” [\[link\]](#)

Social media is surely one of the technologies that acts as a “way of life” in Winner’s sense. This session’s readings look at the ways that social media has contributed to some of the crises of democratic citizenship we’ve discussed, including hyperpolarization and viral misinformation. The session includes an activity designed to ask students to think about how this technology could strengthen rather than undermine citizenship: Imagine California has just purchased a major social media platform. You’ve been invited to join a commission whose goal is to develop principles for content moderation that might be good for democratic citizenship and acceptable to most people, even those who have divergent political views. What should these principles be?

Part 4: The boundaries of citizenship

Week 6, Session 2: Race and the contested boundaries of citizenship

- [Short excerpt from Josiah Ober. *Demopolis*.](#)

Three U.S. Supreme Court cases on boundaries of citizenship:

- [Dred Scott v. Sandford.](#)
- *Plessy v. Ferguson*. Excerpts from [majority ruling](#) and [dissent](#).
- [United States v. Wong Kim Ark.](#)

Citizenship is a status defined by inclusion and exclusion, and the question of who gets to be a citizen is always contested. Along with some background reading on the topic of the boundaries of citizenship by Josiah Ober, this session focuses on three U.S. Supreme Court cases in which the racial boundaries of citizenship have been debated. The session also looks at how these legal debates connect to other ways that the boundaries of citizenship are contested: through force and violence and through changing popular understandings of who is a citizen.

Week 7, Session 1: Presidents’ Day: no class

Week 7, Session 2: Crossing boundaries: Immigration, naturalization, and taking on new forms of citizenship [Half-Open Day]

Open day - Instructors have the option of teaching a different lesson on the topic of immigration.

- [U.S. Naturalization test guide](#)
- [Edward Rothstein. *The New York Times*. "Refining the Tests That Confer Citizenship."](#)

- [Reihan Salam. *Melting Pot or Civil War*. Chapter 3: “Race to the bottom.”](#)

We read the U.S. Naturalization test guide not to study for the test but to think about what it is that these questions are actually getting at. What does it say about citizenship (and the process of becoming a citizen) that the United States has chosen these questions and not others? Should the process of becoming a citizen involve an expectation of cultural assimilation, as Salam argues, or is democratic citizenship compatible with cultural heterogeneity?

Week 8, Session 1: Citizenship, diversity, and culture [Half-Open day]

Open day - Instructors have the option of teaching a different lesson on the topic of cultural diversity and citizenship.

- Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship* (1995), [selection](#).
- Susan Okin, “[Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?](#)” (1999) Excerpt.
- [Wisconsin v. Yoder](#).

This session begins from the empirical fact that all societies today are culturally diverse; the question is how our policies on citizenship ought to handle the (perhaps inevitable) controversies that arise. Kymlicka and Okin offer different arguments on the question of whether special group rights are compatible with liberal individual rights and democratic citizenship, and the case of Wisconsin v. Yoder is a concrete example of this ongoing question.

Part 5: Economic and political challenges to citizenship

Week 8, Session 2: Social class and citizenship [Open day]

*This is the one **fully open day**, meaning that instructors may teach this default lesson or something else entirely. Other options that could fit well here include sessions on alternatives to liberal democratic citizenship, public space and citizenship, or an additional day on economic inequality.*

- [Anne Case and Angus Deaton’s 2019 Tanner Lecture](#) on “deaths of despair.”
- Sterling HolyWhiteMountain, “[The Blackfeet Brain Drain](#)” (2018)
- Jennifer Morton, *Moving Up Without Losing Your Way* (2019). Selections from [Introduction](#) and [Chapter 4](#).

In addition to formally equal democratic citizenship, most people have other identities as well, the cultural identities that were the focus of the last session as well as the class backgrounds highlighted here. Case and Deaton show data on some of the class-specific dangers to

citizenship, while HolyWhiteMountain and Morton, in strikingly personal terms, examine the challenges of moving between different identities in different places or phases of life.

Week 9: Session 1: Economic inequality and citizenship

- Debra Satz and Stuart White. "[Breaking the Civic Promise of Democracy: Why Economic Inequality Matters.](#)"
- N. Gregory Mankiw. "[Defending the One Percent.](#)"

Is economic inequality a problem for democratic citizenship? This is a question many of the students will come in already caring about, and the two readings here set up a strong debate about whether equal democratic citizenship is possible in a society with increasingly wide economic inequality.

Week 9, Session 2: Responding to injustice: Civil disobedience, exit, and revolution

- [Letter from Alabama Clergymen](#) (1963)
- Martin Luther King, "[Letter from Birmingham Jail](#)" (1963)
- Malcolm X, "[Message to the Grassroots](#)" (1963)

When can injustice be fought through the practices of citizenship, and when is a political system so unjust that exit is the only option? In his famous Letter from Birmingham Jail, Martin Luther King, Jr. positions civil disobedience as part of democratic citizenship, not a rejection of it. Malcolm X argues that this is an essential flaw in civil disobedience as a political strategy, that it accepts a fundamentally unjust system.

End of Week 9: Students see TAPS performance of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*.

The Stanford Theater and Performance Studies program will perform Julius Caesar at the end of week 9: all students and instructors will see the play.

Week 10, Session 1: The threat of authoritarianism [Half-Open day]

Open day - Instructors have the option of teaching a different lesson on the threat of authoritarianism.

- William Shakespeare. *Julius Caesar*. Short excerpts - to be read / annotated collaboratively.
- David Teegarden, *Death to Tyrants! Ancient Greek Democracy and the Struggle Against Tyranny* (2014) [[selection](#)]

- [Timur Kuran. 1991. "Now Out of Never." Excerpts.](#)

How should citizens counter a threat of authoritarianism? Is authoritarianism best understood as a threat from outside democracy or a breakdown within? This session's discussion will build on Julius Caesar, which takes on all these questions. Other readings in the default lesson plan look at some of the ways that citizens of a democracy can try to cooperate to counteract the threat of authoritarianism and return to the language of game theory introduced earlier in the course.

Week 10, Session 2: The possibility of global citizenship

- Martha Nussbaum, "[Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism.](#)" (2002)
- Amy Gutmann, "[Democratic Citizenship.](#)" (2002)

When the COLLEGE curriculum is fully in place, this course will come ahead of a Spring Quarter class on global issues. While not all students will take that spring course yet, it's still useful to end the quarter on a discussion about the possibility of global citizenship. Nussbaum approvingly cites Diogenes the Cynic's claim to be a "citizen of the world" and argues that education for citizenship should nudge students in this direction. Gutmann argues instead that education should focus on democratic citizenship, which for the foreseeable future means national citizenship. The fact that this debate takes place in the context of education for citizenship gives students an opportunity for reflection on the course and its goals as the quarter wraps up.

Assignment structure

- 1. Eight discussion question responses (250 words each, 4 in Weeks 1-5, 4 in weeks 6-10, graded for satisfactory completion) (20% of final grade)**

For each session, we will have 4-6 questions about the readings / topics. Students have these well in advance and can use them to focus their reading. On 4 days in the first half of the quarter and 4 days in the second half of the quarter, students choose one question and respond in ~250 words, either in Canvas discussions or in a Google doc so that they can see (and respond to) each other's contributions. These are due before class starts. In class, instructors have the option of having students meet in groups based on which question they chose to discuss these more, and then, when the lesson plan gets to that question, the students who did this writing assignment can take the lead in the discussion.

[As an example, here's a version from Poli Sci 234.](#)

2. Annotations on readings, graded for satisfactory completion (10% of final grade)

For several of the denser, older readings in the course (Hobbes, Mill, Crito, Federalist No. 10, passages of *Julius Caesar*), students are assigned to read collaboratively on a Google doc (or other shared document) and include at least 3 annotations with ideas, questions, connections to other texts or conversations. We can especially encourage students to comment on difficult passages and/or help answer each other's questions, which can help normalize finding the texts hard and help instructors see where they need to focus in class. [Here's an example of how students read and annotated Hobbes in PS 234.](#)

3. Midterm paper: Intervention in a conversation: (750-1000 words, letter graded with optional rewrite, 25% of final grade)

Students choose one issue we've discussed over the quarter on which reasonable people could disagree and explain at least two different perspectives from our readings, showing how they relate to each other and their main points of contrast. The students make an argument that builds on the disagreement between these perspectives, a key skill for the course.

4. Final project: Design a new lesson for the class (1500-word essay + lesson plan, letter graded) (30% of final grade, partial draft required in advance)

Revised version of the "Design a new lesson" final project from the [2022 version of the course.](#)

5. Participation: 15% of final grade (includes attendance, punctuality)