<u>**Communication 323 – Public Deliberation –**</u>

Gordon Stables   stables@usc.edu   (213) 740-2759

Off ice: AHF 261/ Studio A   Office hours: 2-330 T/Th, by appointment and via gchat
(stables@gmail.com) when status is green.

Course Description: This course is an opportunity to examine the ways in which our culture and governance are influenced by elements of deliberative democracy. Deliberative democracy functions when individuals consider, review and engage in matters of public concern. This deliberation takes place across a wide array of institutions and social practices, but is always concerned with referring questions of legitimacy and authority. This course reviews historical and contemporary institutions of this democratic discourse and looks ahead to emerging communication norms.

Student Objectives:

1. At the conclusion of the course, students will be familiar with a theoretical framework to assess the quality of deliberation across a range of communicative settings.
2. Students will be able to identify and compare prominent deliberative institutions.
3. Students will gain practical experience with evaluating and improving deliberation in their communities.

Assignments:

1. <u>Exams</u> – (20% each, 40% total) The course will include two in-class written examinations that emphasize the ability to identify and explain significant theoretical and applied dimensions of deliberative democracy. Each exam builds on the material from earlier sections of the course, but no single exam is explicitly cumulative.

2. <u>Controversies in Mediated Deliberation</u> – (10%) Each student will identify a recent controversy that was prominently featured in mediated news coverage. They will define the essential public issues involved in the controversy and assess how at least two distinct media organizations covered the moment using Gastil's "Key Features of Mediated Deliberation" (p. 52). At least one media organization should be a 'traditional' news organization such as a broadcast news station, a newspaper or magazine. At least one media organization should be a non-traditional source, such as a blog or community journalist. After assessing the coverage, students should suggest how the coverage could have been improved to better satisfy these key features. (7-10 page paper meeting the guidelines listed at the end of this section).

3. <u>Online Deliberation and Authority: "The Wikipedia Project"</u> – (15%) Each student will be required to review Wikipedia's community editing policy and Wikipedia content as examples of deliberative norms. Each student will then register and provide specific improvements to Wikipedia page. Students should select pages that have already been identified by the Wikipedia community as requiring additional information, citations or other adjustments. Students will keep a record of their rationale for the changes and the feedback from the Wikipedia community regarding these changes. At the conclusion of assignment, students will submit a paper exploring how their experience can be understood from the perspective of enriching deliberation of that subject matter. (7-10 page paper meeting the guidelines listed at the end of this section).

4. <u>Community Deliberation Project</u> – (30%, divided into each phase of the assignment) During the first days of the course, the class will examine prominent public policy concerns facing the Los Angeles community. The course will collectively decide on a single issue that will be used as the template for a semester long project. Once the topic is selected, students will be divided up into research teams with three sets of responsibilities. First, each group will identify the specific institutions responsible for examining and determining policy in this arena. Students will analyze how well the organizations adhere to aspects of deliberative democracy in both in-person meetings and online deliberation. Second, students will identify, gather, and building information and techniques to enhance public deliberation of this issue. Finally, each student will prepare an assessment of the current state, and future prospects of deliberation, for this issue.

5. <u>Participation</u> – (5%) This class relies on daily attendance and active participation by students. Students are expected to complete and be able to discuss the readings assigned for each class period.

Common Standards for All Course Papers - All papers should all utilize common font and margin settings (such as Times New Roman 12 point fonts and 1 inch margins). Each paper should follow a consistent style manual (APA or MLA are the preferred options) and should reflect a writing style consistent with junior-level college work. The expectations for senior level writing include:

Structure - Quality papers should demonstrate a clear writing plan and basic structure. A clear thesis should be evident early on the first page to preview the fundamental elements of the essay. This section should also preview the organizational structure of the project. Each section should reflect an organizing principle which utilizes previews, summaries, and transitions. You shouldn't be trying to build suspense in these essays. If you don't provide a sense of your final direction in the first two to three paragraphs, you are too weakening the focus of the essay. Good essays also should include a quality conclusion that draws together the basic details. Simply finishing your last point doesn't accomplish this task.

Focus on specific arguments - Your essays are all designed to analyze specific political contexts so it is important that you closely detail the relevant articles and texts, including properly citing them, and provide specific analysis. You are free to use your own perspectives to accent these essays, but ultimately they need to provide analysis of the specific artifacts in question as their primary task.

Writing Style - In any essay, the medium of your language is the technique that you will use to make your arguments. Even in our visual culture, the ability to make a professional argument in writing is an essential skill, especially in an argumentation course. When your language begins resembles the spoken word it loses its authority and it distracts from your contentions. These essays are intentionally short to provide you with time to edit and revise your work. Junior level college writing should be free of

- (Thinking out loud comments in parenthesis)
- Misspelled words or words that are poorly spell-checked and come back as different words. There is a huge credibility problem for your writing when these errors appear.
- Conversational or sarcastic tones. This is a formal essay and it should be treated as such. President Bush is the appropriate way to first refer to him, regardless of your views.

Use of a style manual - Papers should feature consistent use of a style manual. In some cases students still need to familiarize themselves with a manual. Common errors include a lack of alphabetical listing of citations, incomplete citation information (i.e., you need authors in all cases) and the inclusion of the appropriate URL).

Use of qualified sources – In cases where you need or want to make an authoritative claim, you should utilize a well-qualified source. Suggestions involve experts in the field, scholarly journals, and other professional sources, including our texts. The easiest google results, especially including Wikipedia, should be treated as starting points for reference and not references. When essay topics refer to specific concepts covered in the readings, it is important that these essays display a competent grasp of the material.

Evidence should be carefully analyzed before usage. Materials cited as proof of your claims should be timely, relevant, and well scrutinized. Materials should reflect your awareness of the ideological foundations of all evidence (i.e., using materials from Karl Rove supporting the Republicans is acceptable; however, the use of that material should reflect your awareness that this source is highly partisan).

Bibliography & Citations - Citations must be provided for all researched information. Any use of additional material, even as background, must be cited within the body of the paper and then again in a works cited or bibliography. The format for these citations should consistently reflect a style manual.

Evaluation Criteria

Grades: Students will earn grades based on the following assignments. Specific instructions for each assignment will be provided in class. Final course grades are assigned on the following scale

94-100 % = A	80-83 % = B-	67-69 % = D+
90-93 % = A-	77-79 % = C+	64-66 % = D
87-89 % = B+	74-76 % = C	60-63 % = D-
84-86 % = B	70-73 % = C-	59 % and below = F

Required Readings:

1. Gastil, John. (2008). *Political Communication and Deliberation*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
2. The Course Blackboard site contains a virtual library of other readings listed on the daily schedule

Daily Schedule:

Date	Topic	Reading 1	Reading 2
15-Jan	Introduction to the course		
17-Jan	Democracy and Deliberation	Gastil Ch. 1	Kevin Mattson, "Do Americans Really Want Deliberative Democracy?" Rhetoric & Public Affairs 5.2 (2002) 327-329
22-Jan	Discussion of LA Based public issues	Review of local media and recent issues	
24-Jan	Conversation, Discussion, & Controversy	Gastil Ch. 2	G.Thomas Goodnight "Controversy." Argument in Controversy: Proceedings of the Seventh SCA/AFA Conference on

			Argumentation. Parson, Donn W., ed. Annandale VA: Speech Communication Association, (1991), 1-14.
29-Jan	National Issue Forums	John Doble, Jared Bosk, and Samantha DuPont,"A Report - Public Thinking about Coping with the Cost of Health Care: Outcomes of the 2008 National Issues Forums."June 2009, Prepared for the Kettering Foundation	
31-Jan	Wikipedia	Wikipedia: Policies and Gudielines	Simson Garfinkel, "Wikipedia and the Meaning of Truth." Technology Review, November/ December (2008),
5-Feb	Mediated Deliberation and Public Opinion	Gastil Ch. 3	Chadwick "Web 2.0: New Challenges for the Study of EDemocracy in an Era of Informational Exuberance" I/S: A journal of law and policy for the information society, 5:1, (2009), 1-41.
7-Feb	Citizen Journalism	Shayne Bowman and Chris Willis "We the Medai: How audiences are shaping the future of news and information" Commissioned by The Media Center at The American Press Institute, July 2003.	
12-Feb	Deliberative Elections	Gastil Ch. 4	
14-Feb	Deliberation Case Study: Deliberation Day	Bruce A. Ackerman, James S. Fishkin. Deliberation Day, Yale University Press, (2005) (excerpts).	David Schkade, Cass R. Sunstein, and Reid Hastie. "What Happened on Deliberation Day?" U Chicago Law & Economics, Olin Working Paper No. 298 , AEI-Brookings Joint Center Working Paper No. 06-19, (June 2006).
19-Feb	How Government Deliberates	Gastil Ch. 5	
21-Feb	Deliberative Case Studies: Biomedical decision-making	Albert W. Dzur and Daniel Levi, "The "Nation's Conscience:" Assessing Bioethics Commissions as Public Forums" Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal 14.4 (2004), 333-360.	Albert W. Dzur & Daniel Levin, "The Primacy of the Public: In Support of Bioethics Commissions as Deliberative Forums" Kennedy Inst Ethics J. 2007 Jun;17(2):133-42, discussion 143-52.
26-Feb	Exam 1		

28-Feb	E-Rulemaking	Robert Carlitz and Rosemary Gunn "e-Rulemaking: a New Avenue for Public Engagement ," Journal of Public Deliberation: Vol. 1: No. 1, Article 7, (2005)	
5-Mar	The Virtual Agora Project	Peter Muhlberger "Lessons from the Virtual Agora Project: The Effects of Agency, Identity, Information, and Deliberation on Political Knowledge, by Peter Muhlberger and Lori M. Weber," Journal of Public Deliberation: Vol. 2: No. 1, Article 13, (2006).	
7-Mar	Deliberation in the Jury Room	Gastil Ch. 6	
12-Mar	Citizens and Officials in Public Meetings	Gastil Ch. 7	
14-Mar	Town Hall Meetings	Carolyn J. Lukensmeyer, Steve Brigham, "Taking Democracy to Scale: Creating a Town Hall Meeting for the Twenty-First Century." National Civic Review , vol. 91, no. 4, (Winter 2002)	
	Spring Break - No Class	3/19 & 3/21	
26-Mar	Community Deliberation Project Research & Team meetings		
28-Mar	Community Deliberation Project Research & Team meetings	Submit update reports from each group	
4/2-Mar	Deliberation Case Study: Disasters	Patricia A. Wilson "Deliberative Planning for Disaster Recovery: Re-membering New Orleans," Journal of Public Deliberation: Vol. 5: No. 1, Article 1, (2009).	We will add materials from Hurricane Sandy.
4-Apr	Deliberative Communities and Societies	Gastil Ch. 8	

Date	Topic	Reading	
9-Apr	Virtual Communities	"[Are Virtual and Democratic Communities Feasible](#)?" Democracy and New Media, Henry Jenkins and David Thorburn, editors, 2003, pp. 85-100.	
11-Apr	Online gaming communities	Ducheneaut, N., Yee, N., Nickell, E., Moore, R, "[The life and death of online gaming communities: a look at guilds in World of Warcraft](#)," CHI 2007, 839-848, San Jose, CA, 2007	
16-Apr	Social Networking	Valenzuela, S., Park, N., & Lee, K. F. "[Lessons from Facebook: The effect of social network sites on college students' social capital.](#)" 9th Symposium on Online Journalism, pp 1-39, (2008).	
18-Apr	International Deliberation	Gastil Ch. 9	
23-Apr	Deliberative Case Studies: Global responses to climate change	2009 Brookings Blum Roundtable "Climate Crisis, Credit Crisis" "[Climate Change Policy: Recommendations to Reach Consensus](#)." The Brookings Institution, (September 2009).	
25-Apr	Community Deliberation Project Research & Team meetings		
30-Apr	Community Deliberation Project Research & Team meetings		
2-May	Toward a Deliberative Democracy	Gastil Ch. 10	
	Final Exam	As determined by USC master schedule	

Course Policies

Academic Integrity - The Annenberg School for Communication is committed to upholding the University's academic integrity code. It is the policy of the School of Communication to report all violations of the code. Any serious violation or pattern of violations of the academic integrity code will result in the student's expulsion from the Communication major or minor. The University presumes that you are familiar with its standards and policies; should you be found to have committed a violation, ignorance of these standards and policies will not be accepted as an excuse. You should be familiar with the following resources:

* "Guide to Avoiding Plagiarism" addresses issues of paraphrasing, quotations and citations in written assignments, drawing heavily upon materials used in the university's Writing Program (by Student Judicial Affairs) http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/docs/tig.pdf

* "Understanding and Avoiding Academic Dishonesty" addresses more general issues of academic integrity, including guidelines for adhering to standards concerning examinations and unauthorized collaboration (by Student Judicial Affairs) http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/docs/tio.pdf

* The "2012-2013 SCampus" (the student handbook) contains the university's Student Conduct Code and other student-related policies. http://www.usc.edu/scampus

Late & Unfinished Work – Students must complete all assignments in order to earn a grade in the course. Any material turned in late will be reduced one letter grade per calendar day late. Each presentation must be given on the day assigned.

Grievance Procedure - Occasionally, students are dissatisfied with some dimension of a course. In such cases, students should first provide a written argument in support of their position to the instructor and request a meeting with the instructor. All grade appeals on specific assignments must be made within one week of the return of the assignment.

Special Assistance - Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure that the letter is delivered as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday and can be reached at (213) 740-0776.