

IDS 2935: Communication and Civic Engagement
Fall 2025/ 3 credits

NOTE: This course complies with all UF academic policies. For information on those policies and for resources for students, please see UF's "[Academic Policies and Resources](#)" web page.

I. General Information

Meeting days and times: T 5 (10:40-11:30AM), R 4-5 (10:40am-12:35pm)

Class location: T Tur 2342, R WEIM 1076

Instructor(s):

Name: Dr. Amy Martinelli

Office Building/Number: Rolfs 403

Phone: 352-273-2741

Email: acmart@ufl.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:00-3:00pm

Teaching Assistant(s):

Name: Elie Literski

Office Building/Number: Rolfs 413

Email: e.literski@ufl.edu

Office Hours: TBA

Course Description

In a democratic society, civic engagement can consist of a great many things including voting, social activism, speaking at a community meeting, or taking leadership positions in political organizations and even government institutions. If we are to believe the vast majority of news media and mainstream popular culture, civil civic engagement has reached a breaking point. Political discourse, in particular, is all-too-often categorized by incivility, indecency, and extremity on seemingly all sides of the political divide. Even the family dinner table has become a battleground associated with breakdowns in communication over political discussions. This interdisciplinary Quest 2 course invites students to deepen their understanding of what it means to be a civically engaged citizen by considering the pressing question: How can communication enhance civic engagement in an ever-changing society? Communication and Civic Engagement introduces students to the varied ways historians, social scientists, and communication scholars conceptualize and theorize about the idea of civic engagement. This course overviews definitions of civic engagement and invites students to expand their understanding of what civic engagement is and provides opportunities to reflect on their role as a citizen. Beyond comprehension of course materials, this course equips students with practical communication skills necessary to enhance civic participation.

Prerequisites

None.

General Education Designation: none.

Course Materials

- All resources for readings will be provided on Canvas. Specific sources are described in the annotated schedule.

Materials will be available through the following means:

Materials Fee: N/A

II. Course Goals

Course Objectives

Q2

Quest area objectives can be found [here](#).

A student who successfully completes this course will be able to:

- Identify and describe various definitions of civic engagement and how citizens in a democracy tend to apply those definitions. (Q2)
- Write, present, and debate about issues integral to community engagement. (Q2)
- Analyze and evaluate the role that communication plays in determining beliefs about civic engagement. By identifying differences in perspectives about what a society values, they will more deeply understand what motivates citizens to behave in particular ways. (Q2)

III. Graded Work

Graded Components

Civic Identity Presentation 150 points

- Oral Presentation: Prepare a short speech presentation (3-4 minutes) of introduction that describes their "civic identity."
- Visual Presentation: Prepare a visual presentation that enhances the effectiveness of the Oral Presentation.
- Notes: Students will be expected to present their speeches extemporaneously; using only a note-card

Breakdown of grade:

- Oral Presentation: 80 points
- Visual Presentation: 40 points
- Notes: 30 points

Civic Engagement Workshop 400 points

For this assignment, students will identify an appropriate area of civic engagement in which they will take part during the semester, describe their plan to accomplish their activities outside of class, and reflect on their experience:

- *Civic Engagement Workshop Proposal:* Write a 750-1200 word paper that identifies the student's civic engagement workshop, including justification using evidence-based research, and provide a realistic timeline and description of activities.
- *Civic Engagement Workshop Report and Reflection:* Write a 750-1200 word paper that summarizes the experiences, lessons learned, and personal reflection on the ways that their participation in civic engagement impacted students.

Breakdown of grade:

- Proposal: 200 points
- Report and Reflection: 200 points

Town Hall Meeting 300 points

For this assignment, students will participate in a mock town hall meeting to address a topic of importance. Each student will be assigned a role to play, conduct research from the point of view of their assigned role, craft arguments using evidence and reason to advance their role's point of view, and anticipate and be able to refute counter arguments.

- Town Hall Role Research Brief: Prepare a 1-2 page document that includes details about the assigned role and research done to support their position
- Participation in Town Hall: Attendance and active participation on the day of the Town Hall Meeting is required to receive credit
- Reflection: Write a 1-2 page reflection about Town Hall experience

Breakdown of grade:

- Research Brief: 100 points
- Participation: 100 points
- Reflection: 100 points

In-class Activities 150 points

Discussion and participation is a vital element of this class. Though we will engage in class discussion at many points in a given semester, four activities will be graded. For these activities you must participate and write a 1-2 page reflection for full credit. Activity points vary.

TOTAL: 0%

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Number Grade
A	100-92.5
A-	92.4-89.5
B+	89.4-86.5
B	86.4-82.5
B-	82.4-79.5
C+	79.4-76.5
C	76.4-72.5
C-	72.4-69.5
D+	69.4-66.5
D	66.4-62.5

Letter Grade	Number Grade
D-	62.4-59.5
E	59.4-0

Note: A minimum grade of C is required to earn General Education credit.

IV. Calendar

Date	Topic	Readings/Preparation	Work Due
August 21, 2025	Introduction to course content and standards		
August 26, 2025	Creating Community Standards	Wheatley, M. J. (2002). Willing to be Disturbed chapter from Turning to One Another: Simple Conversations to Restore Hope to the Future San Francisco: Berrett-Koshler Publishers, Inc. [available on Canvas]	
August 28, 2025	What is Civic Engagement?	Adler, R.P. & Goggins, J. (2002). What do we mean by "Civic Engagement"? Journal of Transformative Education, 236-253.	
September 2, 2025	Civic Engagement Skill Building: Public Speaking	Mapes, M. (2019). Speak Out, Call in: Public Speaking as Advocacy. University of Kansas Libraries. [links provided on Canvas]	
September 4, 2025	Students will build upon their knowledge of civic engagement and will develop their civic engagement skills by crafting a presentation with visual aids.		Activity 1—My Civic Identity
September 9, 2025	Speech Practice	Students will practice and finalize Civic Identity Presentations	Reflection for Activity 1
September 11, 2025	Civic Identity Presentations		Civic Identity Presentations (visual aid due today)
September 16, 2025	Civic Identity Presentations (recorded)		Civic Identity Presentations

Date	Topic	Readings/Preparation	Work Due
September 18, 2025	Introduction to Community Engagement	Community engagement is a primary means through which civic communication takes place. This week, students reflect on their role in a democracy by identifying the communities that they are part of as a means to develop their initial conceptualization of the Civic Engagement Workshop assignment.	Activity 2: What Does Community Membership Mean?
September 23, 2025	Virtual Activity and Lecture	Virtual Lecture: The Civic Engagement Workshop Assignment [available on Canvas]	
September 25, 2025	Civic Engagement Skill Building: Decision Making in Groups	Hollingsworth, S., Weinland, K., Hanrahan, S., Walker, M. Elwood, T. & Linsenmeyer, M. (Eds.). (2021). Introduction to speech communication. Oklahoma State University Libraries. https://open.library.okstate.edu/speech2713/ [available on Canvas]	Reflection for Activity 2
September 30, 2025	Civic Engagement Skill Building: Decision Making in Groups		Activity 3: Consensus v. Majority-Dissent Decision Making
October 2, 2025	Civic Engagement Skill Building—Argumentation	Hallsby, A. (2022). The Rhetoric Untextbook. [available on Canvas]	Civic Engagement Workshop Proposal
October 7, 2025	Virtual Lecture: Town Hall Assignment	Students will learn about the Town Hall Assignment	Reflection for Activity 3
October 9, 2025	Civic Engagement Skill Building: Building an Argument	Prepare and research for Town Hall	
October 14, 2025	Civic Engagement Knowledge Building: Metaphor in Political Rhetoric	Lakoff, George, author. (2004). Don't think of an elephant! : know your values and frame the debate : the essential guide for progressives. White River Junction, Vermont :Chelsea Green Publishing Company [selection available on Canvas]	
October 16, 2025	Experiential Learning—Role Play as a Community in Need		Town Hall Meeting and Research Brief
October 21, 2025	Civic Engagement		

Date	Topic	Readings/Preparation	Work Due
	Workshop Work Day		
October 23, 2025	Civil Discourse: Lecture	Lecture materials can be found on Canvas.	Town Hall Reflection
October 28, 2025	Civil Discourse Dialogue		
October 30, 2025	Interpersonal Communication and Civic Engagement	Levinson, K and Yndigegn, C. (2015). Political Discussions with Family and Friends: Exploring the impact of political distance. The Sociological Review, 72-91.	
November 4, 2025	Civic Engagement Workshop Work Day	Use class time to work on Civic Engagement Workshop	
November 6, 2025	Contemporary Political Engagement		Activity 4: What can we learn from Jubilee?
November 11, 2025	Veterans Day		No Class
November 13, 2025	Contemporary Political Engagement		Activity 4: What can we learn from Jubilee? part 2
November 18, 2025	Civic Engagement Workshop Work Day	Use class time to work on Civic Engagement Workshop	
November 20, 2025	Culminating Dialogue		Reflection for Activity 4
November 25, 2025	Thanksgiving		No Class
November 27, 2025	Thanksgiving		No Class
December 2, 2025	Last Day of Class		Due: Civic Engagement Workshop Reflection

V. Procedure for Conflict Resolution

Any classroom issues, disagreements or grade disputes should be discussed first between the instructor and the student. If the problem cannot be resolved, please contact Dr. Emily Butler (erbutler@ufl.edu, [352-392-5471](tel:352-392-5471)). Be prepared to provide documentation of the problem, as well as all graded materials for the semester. Issues that cannot be resolved departmentally will be referred to the University Ombuds Office (<http://www.ombuds.ufl.edu>; [352-392-1308](tel:352-392-1308)) or the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu>; [352-392-1261](tel:352-392-1261)).