

## GVPT 429C

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Social Capital

Spring 2010  
M 3:30-6:00 p.m.

This is a seminar on social capital. It is designed to cover the key issues in the literature on social capital—civic engagement, social connections, trust, and even happiness. We shall examine both empirical studies of social capital as well as normative conceptions of whether social capital is good or bad and whether it can make us healthy, wealthy, and wise.

As a seminar, the course will depend heavily upon the contributions of students in the class. I expect everyone to participate and class participation will be a large part of your grade (15 percent). Each student will be expected to prepare and present three questions from the reading or movie for class discussion once during the semester. These questions should be written and handed in for the week you choose and they will help form the basis of the discussion for that week. The questions will count for 10 percent of your grade.

As a seminar, there will be no final examination. Instead, the largest assignment will be a seminar paper of at least 15 pages on a topic of your choosing. The paper may cover:

- A case study of a specific civic organization and its role in social or political life. You may pick any organization that you find of interest and then address questions of whether it provides opportunities for people to get together (or whether it simply is a “checkbox” organization), whether it is bridging or bonding, whether its decision making structure is democratic or not (and how it might lead to greater feelings of solidarity among its members), and whether its mission is designed to foster a more cooperative or conflictual role in society.
- A more analytical or normative study of a particular organization or proposal (such as faith-based charity) and whether it plays a constructive role in building trust and social relations across groups in society or how it may contribute to the solidarity of a specific group in society (such as minorities, be they ethnic, gender-based, religious, etc.). In what ways does the organization or proposal contribute to the different components of social capital?
- If you have taken statistics and are comfortable and interested in doing your own statistical analysis, you may form a hypothesis related to social capital and test it with real survey data. I have access to a wide range of social science survey data that have been used in studies of social capital and participation, from the General Social Survey (see the description in <http://www.norc.org/projects/gensoc.asp>), the Social Capital Benchmark

Survey (<http://www.cfsv.org/communitysurvey/>), the Roper Social and Political Trends data and the DDB Needham Lifestyle Surveys (both used in Putnam's *Bowling Alone* and discussed on <http://www.bowlingalone.com/data.php3>), and several surveys about young people's participation in civic and political life, including the Harvard Institute of Politics surveys on college students' attitudes (see [http://www.iop.harvard.edu/research\\_polling.html](http://www.iop.harvard.edu/research_polling.html)) and the surveys on civic engagement by CIRCLE (<http://www.civicyouth.org>).

- Or alternative topics of your choosing that I approve.

On May 3 and 10, each student will present his/her paper to the class for no more than 15 minutes. The presentation should summarize the chief argument in the paper and the implications for social capital. This presentation will be graded and will count for 10 percent of your grade.

You must have a 3-5 page statement of your proposed paper by March 1. The paper itself will be due on May 3. The paper will count for 35 percent of your course grade. The short statement will not be graded; however if it is not handed in on time, you will lose half a grade on the course paper for each day late unless you have a medical excuse from a doctor.

Papers must integrate course readings with the topic you choose. There is no such thing as a satisfactory answer that does not dwell heavily on course readings. ***An essay that does not have substantial references to the course reading will receive a grade no higher than a C. To receive a C, your answer must have at least 3 citations from the reading. To receive a grade higher than a C, your answer must have substantially more citations from the reading.*** Three references do not guarantee a C.

The other assignments for the course are two short papers due on March 29 and April 19 on the two movies we watch in class, "Lord of the Flies" and "Waking Ned Devine." The papers, which should be between 5-10 pages each and are each worth 15 percent of your grade, should address the following questions:

- Does the movie portray a situation of positive or negative social capital? Describe the social relations among characters in the movie. Give examples of positive and negative social capital in each movie and discuss the balance between the two.
- Where there is negative social capital, what are its roots? Describe each society and examine why some social relations lead to negative social capital.
- What factors might lead to a resolution of the problems of negative social capital in each movie? Is there a possibility for a more cooperative society in either movie? Why or why not?

- Does each movie suggest that social conflict is inevitable in society?

The papers on the movies will be worth 15 percent of your grade for each paper. These papers must also draw from the readings. Any paper that does not have at least three citations to the reading can receive a grade no higher than a C.

For the classes of March 22 and March 29, we shall watch “Lord of the Flies.” For the March 29 class, we shall discuss the movie (after your papers are handed in) in the context of the literature. For the class of April 12, we shall watch “Waking Ned Devine” and the class will end early that day, with the discussion on April 19 (after your papers are handed in).

Summary of the calculation of your grades:

Class participation:	15 percent
Discussion topics	10 percent
Short papers on movies:	15 percent each
Course paper presentation	10 percent
Course paper	35 percent

**The term paper will be due IN CLASS (not later) on May 3, 2010. Papers that are late without a verified emergency will be downgraded one full grade for each day late starting at the time the papers are due (the start of class on May 3). There are no exceptions to this policy other than certified medical excuses.**

**IF FOR ANY REASON YOU CANNOT TAKE AN EXAMINATION OR HAND IN AN ASSIGNMENT ON TIME, YOU NEED TO CONTACT ME BEFORE THE ASSIGNMENT IS TO BE HANDED IN. IF I DON'T HEAR FROM YOU BEFORE THE DEADLINE, THERE WILL BE NO POSSIBILITY OF A MAKE-UP FOR EXAMS AND YOU WILL AUTOMATICALLY LOSE A FULL GRADE FOR EACH DAY LATE FOR PAPERS. I SHALL MAKE EXCEPTIONS FOR TRULY EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES, BUT YOU MUST BE ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE TO ME THAT YOU WERE UNABLE TO CONTACT ME. IF YOU DO MISS AN EXAMINATION, YOU NEED A STATEMENT FROM YOUR DOCTOR VERIFYING YOUR ILLNESS.**

**PLEASE ALSO NOTE: THE COURSE PAPER IS DUE IN CLASS ON**

**MAY 3, 2010. THE DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS DOES NOT TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR PAPERS. YOU MUST BE SURE TO GET IT TO ME PERSONALLY. I CANNOT ASSUME THAT YOU LEFT IT IN THE MAIN OFFICE AT A PARTICULAR TIME OR UNDER MY DOOR. I ASSUME THAT ALL LATE PAPERS WERE PLACED UNDER MY DOOR AT THE TIME I RETRIEVE THEM.**

**IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER:**

- \* MARCH 1: SHORT STATEMENT OF YOUR PAPER TOPIC**
- \* MARCH 29: SHORT PAPER ON "LORD OF THE FLIES"**
- \* APRIL 19: SHORT PAPER ON "WAKING NED DEVINE"**
- \* MAY 3 : COURSE PAPER DUE (IN CLASS)**

**ALL PAPERS MUST BE TURNED IN ON TIME AND WITH HARD COPIES. I CANNOT DOWNLOAD YOUR PAPERS. AND, SORRY, I DO NOT DISCUSS GRADES OVER E-MAIL. E-MAILS REQUESTING YOUR GRADES OR TO DISCUSS YOUR GRADES WILL NOT BE ANSWERED. YOU CAN MAKE AN APPOINTMENT BY E-MAIL, BUT I SHALL NOT ANSWER ANY OTHER GRADE-RELATED QUESTIONS BY E-MAIL. IF YOU WANT TO SEE THE COMMENTS ON ANY ASSIGNMENT, YOU MUST EITHER PICK UP THE ASSIGNMENT DIRECTLY FROM US OR YOU MUST GIVE ME A STAMPED, SELF-ADDRESSED ENVELOPE.**

**PLEASE DO NOT SEND ME A PAPER OR FINAL BY E-MAIL -EVEN "JUST IN CASE" I DIDN'T RECEIVE IT. I AUTOMATICALLY DELETE ANY E-MAILS WITH ATTACHMENTS WITHOUT READING THEM. IF YOU WANT TO SEND ME SOMETHING OTHER THAN AN ASSIGNMENT WITH AN ATTACHMENT, PLEASE CONTACT ME FIRST.**

**THERE ARE ABSOLUTELY NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS NO E-MAIL POLICY, REGARDLESS OF YOUR REASON.**

**I TAKE CARE IN GRADING, SO CHANGES ARE EXTREMELY UNLIKELY. IF I DO REREAD YOUR PAPER, YOUR GRADE IS AS LIKELY TO GO DOWN AS IT IS TO GO UP.**

I expect you to take care with your writing. An excessive number of spelling and/or grammatical errors will lead to a reduction in your grade on both the simulation paper and essay questions on examinations. I also expect you to come to class--and to arrive on time. If you miss more than a few classes or come into class late, it will adversely affect your participation grade.

Incompletes will not be granted unless: (1) you die; (2) you have a baby; or (3) you can convince me that something terrible will happen to you if an incomplete is not granted. Failure to request an incomplete prior to April 19 will, except under the most unusual circumstances, eliminate the possibility of receiving an incomplete. Also, I try to be accessible to answer questions that you might have.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

1/25 NO CLASS

2/1 Introductory Meeting

2/15 What Is Social Capital? **Kahneale, Matt, Dave**

Putnam, Bowling Alone, ch. 1

Lemann, N. (1996), "Kicking in Groups," *Atlantic Monthly*, April 1996, 22-24, available at <http://xroads.virginia.edu/%7EHYPER/DETOC/assoc/kicking.html>

Foley, M.W., Edwards, B. (1999), "Is It Time to Disinvest in Social Capital?," *Journal of Public Policy* 19, 2, 199-231, available at [http://arts-sciences.cua.edu/pol/faculty/foley/DIVEST\\_7.htm](http://arts-sciences.cua.edu/pol/faculty/foley/DIVEST_7.htm)

Quibria, M.G. (2003), "The Puzzle of Social Capital. A Critical Review," *Asian Development Review*, 20, 2, available at [http://www.adb.org/Documents/Periodicals/ADR/ADR\\_Vol20\\_2.pdf](http://www.adb.org/Documents/Periodicals/ADR/ADR_Vol20_2.pdf), 22-42.

In this class, we shall also discuss the relationship among the different components of social capital and how they may or may not relate to each other. We shall also discuss how one can investigate this empirically.

3/1 Civic Engagement Among Young People **Holly, Emily, Andrew, Luke**

Dalton, The Good Citizen, entire.

3/1 Social Capital and Government **Kristen, Melanie, Matt, Angela**

Hetherington, Why Trust Matters, entire.

Citrin, Jack (1974). "Comment: The political relevance of trust in government," American Political Science Review, 68, 973-988, available on JSTOR.

Rothstein, Bo (2000) "Trust, Social Dilemmas, and Collective Memories," Journal of Theoretical Politics, 12:477-501, available at <http://jtp.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/12/4/477> (download paper from there on campus).

**Paper proposal due on 3/1**

3/8 Is Social Capital Good? **Shaman, Andy**

Putnam, Bowling Alone, chs. 10-12, 15-20, 23

Arneil, Diverse Communities, ch. 4

Uslaner, Eric M. (2000) "Producing and Consuming Trust," *Political Science Quarterly*, 115:569-590. available at

[http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0032-3195\(200024%2F200124\)115%3A4%3C569%3APACT%3E2.0.CO%3B2-8](http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0032-3195(200024%2F200124)115%3A4%3C569%3APACT%3E2.0.CO%3B2-8) and at

<http://www.bsos.umd.edu/gvpt/uslaner/communpsq.pdf> (prepublication version).

Granovetter, M. (1973), "The Strength Of Weak Ties," *American Journal of Sociology*, 78, 1360-80, available at JSTOR.

3/15 SPRING BREAK

3/22-

3/29 Movie: Lord of the Flies/Is Social Capital Bad? **Paul, Brian, Kevin**

Putnam, Bowling Alone, chs. 4, 22.

Arneil, Diverse Communities, chs. 1-3, 5-7.

Van Staveren, I. (2002), "Social Capital: What Is In It for Feminist Economics?," Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, Working Paper No. 368, available at

<http://ideas.repec.org/p/iss/wpaper/368.html>

Portes, A., Landolt, P. (1996), "The Downside of Social Capital," *The American Prospect* no. 26 (May-June 1996), 18-21, 94, available at

<http://www.prospect.org/print-friendly/print/V7/26/26-cnt2.html>

Berman, Sheri. 1997. "Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic," *World Politics*, 49:401-429, available at JSTOR.

Levi, Margaret. 1996. "Social and Unsocial Capital," *Politics and Society*, 24:45-55, available on JSTOR.

**Short paper on "Lord of the Flies" due on 3/29.**

4/5 Social Capital and Minorities **Johnny, Sam**

Hero, Racial Diversity and Social Capital, entire

Putnam, "E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and Community in the Twenty-first Century," *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 30: 137-173 at

<http://www.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/socialchange/aboutus/news/documents/Putnam2007.pdf>.

Uslaner, "Trust, Diversity, and Segregation in the United States and the United Kingdom," available at

<http://umd.academia.edu/EricUslaner/Papers/118888/Trust--Diversity--and-Segregation-in-the-United-States-and-the-United-Kingdom>

Marschall, Melissa and Dietlind Stolle (2004) "Race and the City: Neighborhood Context and the Development of Generalized Trust," *Political Behavior*, 26: 125-154.

available at

<http://www.profs-polisci.mcgill.ca/stolle/Final%20published%20version.pdf>

4/12 Movie: “Waking Ned Devine”

4/19 Open discussion on the importance of social capital and on “Waking Ned Devine”

**Alex, Jason**

**Short paper on “Waking Ned Devine” due April 19.**

4/26 Social Capital, Participation, and Media **Bradley, Melissa, Jen, Brett**

Video, “Frontline: Growing Up Online” (in class)

Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, chs. 2-3, 5-9, 13

Drezner and Farrell, “The Power and Politics of Blogs,” available at

<http://www.danieldrezner.com/research/blogpaperfinal.pdf>.

Uslaner, Eric M. (1998) “Social Capital, Television, and the ‘Mean World’: Trust, Optimism, and Civic Participation,” *Political Psychology*, 19:441-467, available on JSTOR and prepublication copy at

<http://www.bsos.umd.edu/gvpt/uslaner/meanw.pdf>

5/3 Social Capital and Identity **Nick, Rosanna, Courtney**

Theiss-Morse, *Who Counts as an American?*, entire.

**Course paper due May 3.**

5/10 General discussion and wrap-up