



COMMISSION ON PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES

POLITICAL COMMUNICATION EA 4365W/PO3310/CM9303

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This course in Political Communication is an experiential learning course centered around the national Debate Watch program (<http://www.debates.org/>) which has been sponsored by the Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD) since 1996. Debate Watch provides an opportunity for us to gather as a community to watch the televised debates, discuss what we have learned, and then share this information with CPD. This course provides us an opportunity to organize and facilitate this program at St. Mary's University for our campus and local communities.



Along with classroom readings and discussions, we will be inviting various on-campus and off-campus constituencies to participate in **Debate Watch** as well as facilitating their participation. Students also will be researching, writing, and distributing a **voter's guide** in preparation for the election.

Goal of the Course

To engage the community in the electoral enterprise as an extension of a sense of Marianist hospitality and Catholic concern for the common good.



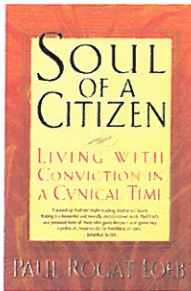
**DebateWatch
2004**

Objectives of the Course

- To offer three opportunities for the class to facilitate Debate Watch programs.
- To offer three opportunities for our larger community to participate in Debate Watch.
- To articulate and demonstrate the necessity of the relationship between communication and democracy in practical ways.
- To hone public communication skills.

Readings

What we are doing by engaging in this course: *Communication Planning: An Integrated Approach*.



Why we are engaging in this course:

- *Characteristics of Marianist Universities;*
- *Vision 2006;*
- *Soul of A Citizen: Living with Conviction in a Cynical Time;*
- “Democracy and Good Writing: An Inseparable Bond,” by Bob Kerrey.

College Board Review’s special issue on *The Art and Craft of Writing* (On Reserve); NCCB Statement, *Faithful Citizenship*.

Helpful Tools: Politics Chart and Resources on Blackboard and Library. *The New York Times*; *USA Today*; *San Antonio Express News*; *Christian Science Monitor*; *Chronicle of Higher Education*; *U.S. News and World Report*; *The Economist*; *The National Catholic Reporter*; NPR; C-Span; BBC.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance for class periods and for the three presidential debates (September 30, October 8, and October 13, 2004) is mandatory. Because this course is an experiential team learning course, your presence is required. Your colleagues and your University are depending upon your presence as well as the faithful execution of the tasks assigned to you.

Production Assignments

These assignments will include a wide range of activities and will be divided amongst class members depending upon interests. Examples of these assignments include: drafting, editing, and distributing the invitation letter to discussion leaders or video taping our class and the Debate Watch programs. We will keep a log (who did what, when, how, etc) of these and other activities throughout the semester on our Blackboard account.

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debate
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Integrated Writing Assignments

In these assignments, you will articulate connections with a social issue which is of concern to you. You will explore two news sources on your issue. One source must be print, another can be video, radio, or Internet. (Attach copy of print materials, web materials, or a summary of the video or audio piece).

Then, articulate how what you have learned about this issue connects with the CMU and with what you are learning in at least one other aspect of your education (another course, a service learning project, a University retreat, a conversation with someone connected with the issue, PPC event, etc).

Write an integrated reflection (500-750 words maximum limit) in which you articulate the connections you have observed surrounding this issue. Genre is negotiable. MLA format and citation is always required. Be prepared to share these reflections in class on the following dates: September 8, 2004, September 22, 2004, October 27, 2004, November 10, 2004.



Common Cause and Vote For America

Vote for America is a non-partisan effort to increase voter turnout in election 2004 through face-to-face communication and encouragement. Class members will participate in this effort as Voter Volunteers for the PLEDGE, LEARN, and VOTE program, while faculty will participate in this effort as Democracy Leaders.

Voter Volunteers (VV) recruit from among their colleagues, neighbors, and friends at least ten people who do not vote regularly or who do not vote at all. The VVs encourage these prospective voters to take the Pledge to Vote; return their Pledge Cards to Vote for America office; make sure that Pledged Voters have the information they need to cast informed votes; and ensure that Pledged Voters get to the polls on Election Day.

Democracy Leaders recruit a team of at least ten Voter Volunteers to recruit Pledged Voters; serve as experts, motivators, and trainers for Voter Volunteers on matters of democracy and voting; help Voter Volunteers promote PLEDGE, LEARN, and VOTE; drives in their organization or community; and promote Vote for America through events, publications, e-mails, sponsorship of PLEDGE, LEARN, and VOTE days, and competitions among Voter Volunteers. www.commoncause.org/voteforamerica



Political Autobiography & Final Presentation

Throughout the semester, you will engage others in political activities as well as participate in them, yourself. For some of you, this will be familiar territory; for others, it will be an adventure into the contact zone. For this assignment, you will write a political autobiography in which you will reflect upon your own political involvement or decision not to be involved over the course of your life. You will make a formal presentation to the class on your growth and development in this area on December 1, 2004 (World AIDS Day). Some of the questions which may serve as starting points for you are the following:

What is your first political or public memory?

What political event has had the greatest impact on your life?

How is your daily life impacted by the political world?

What personal stories have framed your civic involvement or your reluctance to become involved?

What have you learned about the electoral process this semester?

What have you learned about yourself this semester?

Be sure to include the assessment of your participation as a Voter Volunteer.

Student Evaluations of Each Other

Over the course of the semester, we will have to work together closely to complete our task successfully. Because of this close interaction with each other, each student will have the opportunity to grade his/her colleagues. We will do this on December 1, 2004.

Assessment

Participation (Class, Debates)	250
Production Assignments (includes Voter's Guide)	250
Integrated Writing Assignments (4 at 25 points)	100
Common Cause Voting Project	75
Political Autobiography & Final Presentation	200
Student Evaluations of Each Other	125

Important Dates to Remember: Monday, September 6, 2004 is Labor Day; Thursday-Friday, October 21-22, 2004, is fall break; Thursday-Friday, November 25-26, 2004, is Thanksgiving Break; Monday-Friday, December 13-17, 2004, is final exams.

