

Term Information

Effective Term Spring 2026

Course Change Information

What change is being proposed? (If more than one, what changes are being proposed?)

Return course back to queue for GE status

What is the rationale for the proposed change(s)?

The course has been designed for GE Themes (Citizenship)

What are the programmatic implications of the proposed change(s)?

(e.g. program requirements to be added or removed, changes to be made in available resources, effect on other programs that use the course)?

Add GE Themes status

Is approval of the request contingent upon the approval of other course or curricular program request? No

Is this a request to withdraw the course? No

General Information

Course Bulletin Listing/Subject Area	Civics, Law, and Leadership
Fiscal Unit/Academic Org	Chase Center for Civics - D4260
College/Academic Group	Office of Academic Affairs
Level/Career	Undergraduate
Course Number/Catalog	3300
Course Title	How Politics Breaks Your Brain
Transcript Abbreviation	Political Brains
Course Description	Does politics make people smarter or dumber? Students will leave this class with an increased ability to navigate cognitive and moral errors that corrupt political reasoning among citizens in diverse societies. Topics covered include the intersection of citizen identity and politics, the ethics of partisan loyalty, and the role of social groups in the formation of our individual political beliefs.
Semester Credit Hours/Units	Fixed: 3

Offering Information

Length Of Course	14 Week
Flexibly Scheduled Course	Never
Does any section of this course have a distance education component?	No
Grading Basis	Letter Grade
Repeatable	No
Course Components	Lecture
Grade Roster Component	Lecture
Credit Available by Exam	No
Admission Condition Course	No
Off Campus	Never
Campus of Offering	Columbus, Lima, Mansfield, Marion, Newark, Wooster

Prerequisites and Exclusions

Prerequisites/Corequisites
Exclusions
Electronically Enforced

Yes

Cross-Listings

Cross-Listings

Subject/CIP Code

Subject/CIP Code 30.0000
Subsidy Level Baccalaureate Course
Intended Rank Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior

Requirement/Elective Designation

Citizenship for a Diverse and Just World

The course is an elective (for this or other units) or is a service course for other units

[Previous Value](#)

The course is an elective (for this or other units) or is a service course for other units

Course Details

Course goals or learning objectives/outcomes

- Analyze concepts of citizenship, justice and diversity through the lens of historically influential texts on the topic of political reasoning as well as through the lens of contemporary work in political epistemology.

Content Topic List

- Moral Reasoning, Political Polarization, Social Pluralism, Ethics of Partisanship, Social Identity and Political Belonging, Political Epistemology

Sought Concurrence

Yes

Attachments

- Syllabus v2 (CIVICLL 3300, How Politics Breaks Your Brain).pdf: Syllabus (v2)
(Syllabus. Owner: Fortier,Jeremy)
- CIVICLL, How Politics Breaks Your Brain - GE Worksheet.pdf: GE Worksheet (v2)
(Other Supporting Documentation. Owner: Fortier,Jeremy)
- Cover Letter Regarding Resubmission to GE Subcommittee (CIVICLL 3300, How Politics Breaks Your Brain).pdf: Memo Regarding Resubmission
(Cover Letter. Owner: Fortier,Jeremy)
- Summary of Changes to Syllabus in Response to Feedback from GE Subcommittee (CIVICLL 3300, How Politics Breaks Your Brain).pdf: Detailed Summary of Changes to Syllabus
(Other Supporting Documentation. Owner: Fortier,Jeremy)
- Concurrence Exchanges - Education, Law, Glenn, Arts & Sciences (1).pdf: Concurrence
(Concurrence. Owner: Fortier,Jeremy)

COURSE CHANGE REQUEST
3300 - Status: PENDING

Last Updated: Reed,Kathryn Marie
10/19/2025

Comments

Workflow Information

Status	User(s)	Date/Time	Step
Submitted	Fortier,Jeremy	10/18/2025 03:21 PM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Fortier,Jeremy	10/18/2025 03:21 PM	Unit Approval
Approved	Reed,Kathryn Marie	10/19/2025 05:45 PM	College Approval
Pending Approval	Jenkins,Mary Ellen Bigler Neff,Jennifer Vankeerbergen,Bernadette Chantal Steele,Rachel Lea	10/19/2025 05:45 PM	ASCCAO Approval

CIVICLL 3300: “How Politics Breaks Your Brain”

Cover Letter Explaining Updates

Laura Siscoe

To Whom It May Concern,

I am proposing a novel course through the Salmon P. Chase Center for Civics, Culture, and Society, “How Politics Breaks Your Brain.” The general motivation behind this course offering is to cultivate students’ ability to think critically and effectively about matters of social and political relevance, while equipping them to avoid some of the most common reasoning pitfalls that plague the democratic process. The course is multi-disciplinary in its approach, drawing from philosophy, political science, history, religion, and critical theory. The unifying thread of the topics covered is that they all pertain to the subject of *political reasoning*—how one *does* and *should* think about matters of political salience.

I made various changes to the proposed course syllabus in response to the subcommittee’s requests. One request raised by the subcommittee was to better display how the course design and content serves the GEN category’s goals and ELO’s. I addressed this concern by adding further details to the course description, the GE explanatory paragraph, assignment descriptions, and course schedule. I also changed some of the daily discussion questions included on the syllabus to make it more explicit how they connect students back to the topics of citizenship, diversity, difference, equity, and inclusion. Relatedly, another concern of the subcommittee was that emphasis on the concepts of diversity, difference, equity, and inclusion was lacking in the assessments and course content. I addressed this by adding text to the descriptions of the major course assignments, more explicitly specifying how the readings and assessment mechanisms were chosen to help students better grasp these concepts. I also emphasized the role of culture and difference in one’s articulation and perception of these various concepts.

In response to the concern that there should be more R1 level research included in the syllabus, I made a few notable additions. I’ve added articles from both the *British Journal of Political Science* and *Politics and Religion*, as well as added lengthy explanations for why I chose certain texts. I additionally included a brief justification for the chosen reading beneath each day of the course on the syllabus.

The subcommittee also asked for a further explanation of how the class debates will fuel the goals and ELO’s. In response to this request, I added significant elaboration regarding both the structure of the

debate days as well as the mechanisms by which students will achieve the learning goals and ELO's via the debates, including that it provides an opportunity to synthesize course material with real-world, lived experiences of civil dialogue. The debates are designed to help students process the ways in which their diversity of backgrounds contributes to the particular concepts of citizenship, justice, diversity, difference, equity, and inclusion that they hold.

Finally, I removed any confusing phrasing pertaining to the University's AI policy and the University's general education requirements.

Thank you for the detailed level of feedback as well as your further consideration of my proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Lauren Desese". The signature is written in a dark ink on a white background.

The subcommittee requested the following changes, which are listed below in bold text. I include how I have responded to the committee's request in every case, citing the relevant changes made to the CIVICLL 3300 course syllabus in regular font.

Contingency: The Subcommittee asks that the syllabus provide for students a stronger connection between the GEN category's goals and ELOs and the course content via the course description (pp. 1-2), the GE explanatory paragraph (pp. 3-4), the assignment descriptions (pp. 4-6) and the Course Schedule (pp. 6-8). They note that the connection is more evident in the GE Submission form, and they suggest that the Center incorporate some of the material from this form into the syllabus.

I added the following to the course description (pp. 1-2):

- This course goes beyond what is required in introductory level courses, as it requires reading a number of difficult historical texts as well as a good amount of work that is considered on the cutting edge of political epistemology.
- The study of political epistemology as it relates to political reasoning prompts students to analyze the concepts of citizenship, justice, and diversity at a more advanced and in-depth level than in the Foundations component. It does this by requiring a more in-depth and complex synthesis of various methodological approaches and a more diverse array of author viewpoints, including influential viewpoints from critical theory, the history of philosophy, social psychology, and democratic theory.
- This course is interdisciplinary in design, encouraging students to draw connections between their major/minor field of study, other courses they have taken, and even their own real-world experiences as it pertains to citizenship for a just and diverse world. There is an emphasis on guided classroom discussions on difficult subject matter, helping students draw out these potential connections between differing conceptions of citizenship, justice, and diversity more explicitly.
- One of the key challenges to creating a more just world in the midst of increasing conditions of sociological diversity is that many people disagree over what an ideally just world looks like. Given this plurality of ideas about justice, citizens are often confused about how to engage matters of political and moral significance, as well as how to effectively and respectfully communicate with their neighbors about such topics. This course is designed to fill in this gap, enabling students to engage in critical and logical thinking by diving into cutting-edge philosophical work on the topic of political reasoning. They will also engage various historically influential texts and synthesize various themes pertinent to the topic of political reasoning that have been addressed in various ways throughout intellectual history. Students will implement multiple methodological approaches to the subject matter of political reasoning, borrowing methodologies from various disciplines, which include analytic philosophy (including pieces from Michael Huemer, Michael Hannon, C. Thi Nguyen,

Regina Rini, etc.), political science (Christopher H. Achen, Larry M. Bartels, etc.), social psychology (Cass R. Sunstein), and critical theory (Charles Mills).

I added the following to the GE explanatory paragraph (p. 4):

- The course draws from a very diverse and eclectic pool of individuals across various academic disciplines, many of which hold competing ideas about the nature of justice and citizenship, as well as concerning what role different forms of pluralism should play in our political system. In order to understand certain viewpoints that are amenable to classical liberalism and democratic thought, students will walk through sections of Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* and John Stuart Mill's *On Liberalism*. For work that is more critical of certain aspects of the liberal, democratic conception of citizenship and justice, students will read and discuss Mills's "White Ignorance," Nehaus's *The Naked Public Square*, and various papers in applied political epistemology. The in-class discussions and structured debates will also encourage students to examine notions of justice amid difference, prompting them to engage with their own potential biases, socio-political dispositions, and perceptions of societal belonging.
- Students will demonstrate a stronger and evolving sense of self as a learner through reflection on the most common pitfalls of political reasoning (including polarization, echo chambers, partisan deference, fake news, etc.) in their own lives and within society at large. They will improve at self-assessment as it pertains to political reasoning and engagement, spurring them towards greater and more creative problem-solving capacities, energizing them to apply these capacities to pressing social and political issues.

I added the following to the assignment descriptions (pp. 6-8):

- The *structure* of the class debates helps to combat some of the pernicious trends in political reasoning surveyed in the course. Students are split into two groups, and their group is assigned a controversial claim that they must defend. Since students are assigned a position to defend, this exercise is helpful in combatting trends such as polarization, epistemic bubbles, echo chambers, and identity-driven politics. Students must practice the intellectual virtues to provide the most charitable defense of a position by working together with students who likely do not all agree. Each team can take the first 45 min of class to prepare materials for the debates. The debates themselves consist of a ~5-7 minute opening statement, ~15 minutes of cross examination (~7 minutes per team), ~10 minutes of audience q&a (~5 minutes per team; to be provided by the instructor and other Chase Center faculty), and ~3 minutes for a closing statement. The winning side of the debate will be determined by the Chase Center faculty and will be determined according to the objective rubric provided also to the students.
- Students are increasingly required to have intercultural competence as global citizens. During the first day of class, students establish norms for class discussions and debates. These norms of communication serve to empower and equip students to engage individuals and groups of many different backgrounds, bridging various gender, cultural, religious, and racial divides. Students will communicate more effectively and be emboldened to be active global

citizens in light of both the methodological tools acquired through the course (including that of analytic philosophy, political theory, social psychology, critical theory, etc.) and the skills of civil discourse which are put into praxis through both the discussions and debates.

- Debates are designed to equip students with the ability to view difficult intellectual, political, and social issues from a number of perspectives outside of their own. Students will be assigned a position to defend on a particular issue (regardless if this is the position they *actually* hold), and must employ skills and knowledge acquired throughout the course to persuade their fellow peers of the position in question.
- During the midterm and final exams students will execute analysis and critique of the intersection of concepts of justice, difference, and citizenship, confronting how categories such as race, gender, and religion play into or further bolster existing power structures and democratic processes. Students will grapple with the relevant ethical, epistemological, historical, psychological, and sociological questions pertaining to the way in which these social categories bear on existing power structures and political systems. Students will synthesize the relevant insights offered by multiple methodologies and academic disciplines, spurring more informed engagement with the cultural, social, and political systems within which they are embedded.
- Through this exercise students will demonstrate a stronger and evolving sense of self as a learner through reflection on the most common pitfalls of political reasoning (including polarization, echo chambers, partisan deference, fake news, etc.) in their own lives and within society at large. They will improve at self-assessment as it pertains to political reasoning and engagement, spurring them towards greater and more creative problem-solving capacities, energizing them to apply these capacities to pressing social and political issues.

I added the following to the course schedule (pp. 10-15):

Under Tuesday, Jan 13: Introduction

- Students are increasingly required to have intercultural competence as global citizens. During the first day of class, students establish norms for class discussions and debates. These norms of communication serve to empower and equip students to engage individuals and groups of many different backgrounds, bridging various gender, cultural, religious, and racial divides. Students will communicate more effectively and be emboldened to be active global citizens in light of both the methodological tools acquired through the course (including that of analytic philosophy, political theory, social psychology, critical theory, etc.) and the skills of civil discourse which are put into praxis through both the discussions and debates.

Under Thursday, Jan 29: Debate Day

- Debates are designed to equip students with the ability to view difficult intellectual, political, and social issues from a number of perspectives outside of their own. Students will be assigned a position to defend on a particular issue (regardless if this is the position they *actually* hold), and must employ skills and knowledge acquired throughout the course to persuade their fellow peers of the position in question.

I also changed up the daily discussion questions under various sections to better reflect the goals and ELO's.

- Given the kinds of diversity we have within the U.S., what are some topics where disagreement will be inevitable?
- For the sake of justice, should there be any political limits placed on free speech?
- How do different conceptions of justice, difference, and citizenship lead to political disagreement over contentious issues?
- To what extent do you think the average citizen *should* be informed about political issues, particularly as they bear on promoting societal justice, equity, and inclusion?
- How do you think Tocqueville's implicit view on the value of diversity play into his thoughts?
- Do you think one has a duty of justice to make up their "own" mind about political issues?
- What do you think is the nature of the relationship between trust in experts and institutions and the promotion of societal diversity, equity, and inclusion?
- How do you think one's cultural background influences what they view as an "intellectual virtue"? What do you see as the benefits of having a diverse array of understandings of the intellectual virtues?
- Do you think that placing a strong political emphasis on one's social identity is necessary in order to sufficiently promote diversity, equity, and societal inclusion?
- Do you think that Mill's argument does justice to the distinctions between related categories such as *class*, *race*, *religion*, and *culture*?
- What duties (if any) do you think social media companies bear when it comes to creating a more just and equitable society for all citizens?
- What duties do you think social media companies bear when it comes to allowing for the free discussion of a diversity of ideas?
- Do you think the author places *too* much emphasis on the role of religion in the political process over other categories such as race and culture?

Contingency: The Subcommittee notes and appreciates the discussion of difference, equity, inclusion, diversity, and justice in Course Objectives (syllabus, p. 2); however, they would like these concepts (i.e. ELO 4.1 and 4.2) to be more visible throughout the course, especially in the assessments and course content. They note that coverage of these concepts may be embedded in the course materials, but it is difficult for a non-expert (and likely for students) to see this explicitly in the syllabus and to understand how students will demonstrate their ability to synthesize scholarly ideas around these concepts with the other content in the course.

The following constitute changes made for the Subcommittee regarding the clarification of how course assessments encourage students to synthesize scholarly ideas around concepts of justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion:

I added the following to the description of the "Reading Comprehension Quizzes":

- Quizzes will additionally focus on drawing out themes from the texts that have implications for diversity, equity, and inclusion as political ends, as well as emphasize the way in which the authors' presuppositions about culture, religion, and race inform their viewpoints.

I added the following to the description of the “Midterm and Final Exams”:

- During the midterm and final exams students will execute analysis and critique of the intersection of concepts of justice, difference, and citizenship, confronting how categories such as race, gender, and religion play into or further bolster existing power structures and democratic processes. Students will grapple with the relevant ethical, epistemological, historical, psychological, and sociological questions pertaining to the way in which these social categories bear on existing power structures and political systems. Students will synthesize the relevant insights offered by multiple methodologies and academic disciplines, spurring more informed engagement with the cultural, social, and political systems within which they are embedded.

I added the following to the description of the “Debate Participation”:

- The debates provide a format to practice this skill with their real-life peers, who inevitably represent a wide diversity of racial, cultural, religious, and social backgrounds. The debates are a rich opportunity to draw from this wealth of diverse life experiences (insofar as students are comfortable sharing such experiences) to enrich our common classroom culture and ultimately our future contributions as citizens within a shared society.

I added the following to the description of the “Political Reasoning Paper”:

- Students are encouraged to reflect on how their own experiences have shaped them to hold the views that they hold, as well as to contemplate the role that culture, race, class, and religion play into their conception of justice.

In order to address the Subcommittee’s concern as it relates to the course content, I added a short blurb justifying the selection of that particular text as it relates to better understanding concepts of diversity, difference, equity, and inclusion, as well as how the texts prompt students to synthesize these concepts and themes as they relate to becoming an effective and ethical citizen. All such additions are listed here:

- J.S. Mill, *On Liberty*, [Ch. II](#), (~70 pgs.)

(This is one of the most influential political texts of the 19th century, and it offers a forceful and succinct defense of the value of diversity for promoting a healthy political community full of informed and ethical citizens.)

- Michael Huemer, “[Why People are Irrational about Politics](#)” (16 pgs.)

(Michael Huemer is a leading political, social, and moral philosopher, and this constitutes an influential argument in the political philosophy and psychology spaces. The article prompts the reader to wrestle with the way their “pre-political” identities and commitments regarding culture, morality, religion, etc. actually precede their political commitments and identities.)

- Christopher H. Achen and Larry M. Bartels, “Blind Retrospection: Electoral Responses to Droughts, Floods, and Shark Attacks” in [Democracy for Realists: Why elections do not produce responsive government](#) (29 pgs.)

(This text is one of the most important books in political science on democratic practice to come out in the past couple of decades, and so any current course taught on political reasoning should reference it in some capacity. It helps students to synthesize beliefs about cultural difference, equity, inclusion and justice with the lived realities of democratic governance and participation.)

- Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, II.I.II; II.I.VII; II.I.VIII (~60 pgs.)

(These are famous passages that have influenced political theory and the history of American political thought and which help students to tease apart cultural practices from political ideals.)

- Jonathan Matheson, Introduction and Ch. 1 “Believing (Just) Because Other People Do” in [Why It’s OK Not to Think for Yourself](#) (44 pgs.)

(The author of this book is a leading philosopher in the sub-field of epistemology, which deals with questions about the nature of belief and knowledge. Consideration of the value of “thinking for yourself” is at the heart of building out your conception of what it means to be a responsible and ethical citizen who can promote a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive society, as it gets at the heart of the nature of our democratic responsibilities.)

- Michael Hannon, “[Disagreement or Badmouthing? The Role of Expressive Discourse in Politics](#)” (35 pgs.)

(The author is one of the leading figures in the recent “political epistemology” movement within philosophy and political theory, which pushes for a better understanding of how our beliefs about the world shape our political engagement and vice-versa. This piece illustrates the importance of cultural, racial, religious, and ethical background in shaping one’s political discourse and beliefs.)

- Charles Mills, "[White Ignorance](#)" (27 pgs.)

(This is a famous paper in the fields of critical theory and social epistemology which argues that one's racial identity is crucial in the formation of their political viewpoints, and that historically influential ways of understanding politics have failed to recognize the formative influence of one's racial identity in their formation of concepts such as justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion.)

- Daniel Q. Gillion, Jonathan M. Ladd, and Marc Meredith, "[Party Polarization, Ideological Sorting and the Emergence of the US Partisan Gender Gap](#)," in *British Journal of Political Science* (26 pgs.)

(This article is a recent publication in a leading political science journal which sheds empirical light on a vital cultural trend, which is the growing partisan gender gap. The article is selected to help students reflect on their own experiences of gender and how they have played into the formation of political concepts such as justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion.)

- Robert B. Talisse, "[Problems of Polarization](#)" in *Political Epistemology* (16 pgs.)

(The author is a leading political philosopher who articulates the societal trend of polarization. Understanding polarization is central to students understanding how they can become effective and ethical citizens, who can push for a more just, diverse, and equitable society in a way that avoids the pitfalls of polarization.)

- Cass R. Sunstein, "[The Law of Group Polarization](#)" (39 pgs.)

(This is the most famous paper on polarization written by a social scientist and it offers some more empirical support to the philosophical discussion of polarization previously surveyed. Understanding group polarization is vital to combatting the way in which polarization threatens to undermine societal progress towards justice.)

- C. Thi Nguyen, "[Echo Chambers and Epistemic Bubbles](#)" in *Episteme* (20 pgs.)

(This is the most important philosophical paper ever written on echo chambers and epistemic bubbles. This reading helps students synthesize their experiences with consuming news media as well experiences with their friends and family with the political beliefs they currently hold.)

- Regina Rini, "[Fake News and Partisan Epistemology](#)" (14 pgs.)

(This article is a helpful summary of the relationship between the media/social media and growing partisanship in American politics. In order to be a just citizen, students must grapple with the role social media plays in the uptake of political beliefs and values.)

- Elizabeth Edenberg and Michael Hannon, "[Weaponized Skepticism: An Analysis of Social Media Deception as Applied Political Epistemology](#)" in *Political Epistemology* (17 pgs.)

(This article exposes students to some of the recent R1 scholarship within the growing field of political epistemology, which deals with the nature of political belief and knowledge. It helps students critically reflect on their own social media habits and how these habits either are or are *not* forming them into more just citizens who have nuanced views on such crucial topics as diversity, equity, and inclusion.)

- Dan Koev, [The Influence of State Favoritism on Established Religions and Their Competitors](#)” in *Politics and Religion*

(This is a fairly recent synthesis of empirical and theoretical research on the connection between religion and State power, the study of which prompts students to explore the connection between religion and political power in an ideally just and inclusive society.)

- Richard John Neuhaus, excerpts from [The Naked Public Square: Religion and Democracy in America](#) (~30 pgs.)

(This is a famous and influential text at the intersection of religious, cultural, and political theory, which argues for a particular understanding of the Church-State relationship within American society. Students will be encouraged to think critically about the undergirding concepts of justice, culture, diversity, equity, and inclusion employed by the author, asking if they accord with students’ different conceptions of justice.)

Contingency: The Subcommittee asks that the Center augment the course’s materials to include more “in-depth and scholarly exploration of the theme” (ELO 1.2). Specifically, they request that a variety of scholarly writings be included in the assigned readings for the course, so that students have the opportunity to engage with a range of scholarly perspectives on the issues under debate and the topics of citizenship, justice and diversity. While they note the inclusion of some outside texts, they observe that these are often textbooks or writing for the popular press rather than peer-reviewed academic literature.

- I replaced the *New York Times* and *The Atlantic* articles for Tuesday, March 10th with a peer-reviewed academic publication from a top political science journal. The article is called [“Party Polarization, Ideological Sorting and the Emergence of the US Partisan Gender Gap,”](#) written by Daniel Q. Gillion, Jonathan M. Ladd, and Marc Meredith and published in the *British Journal of Political Science*. I selected this article because it integrates fairly recent empirical data with theoretical reflections on why it is that there is a greater gender gap in US politics than in previous generations. This article is in one of the most prestigious political science journals, and it supports the theory that both perception of polarization and ideological sorting bear responsibility for the increased gender gap.

- I replaced *The Naked Public Square* (which is an academic, but slightly more publicly accessible book) reading assigned for Thursday, April 9th with a peer-reviewed academic publication in a leading interdisciplinary journal at the intersection of political science and religion. The article is called “[The Influence of State Favoritism on Established Religions and Their Competitors](#)” and it is published in *Politics and Religion* by Dan Koev.
- I added the following justification for my selection of the book *Why It’s OK Not to Think For Yourself*: The author of the book *Why It’s OK Not to Think for Yourself* is a current leader within the field of philosophy on the topics of epistemic disagreement and epistemic autonomy. I chose *Why It’s OK Not to Think for Yourself* because it nicely articulates some of the core arguments within this intellectual space in a way that is appropriate for undergraduate students. Many of the author’s other works on these topics require graduate-level training in epistemology in order for the average person to be able to make sense of the arguments. I believe *Why It’s OK Not to Think for Yourself* nicely balances accessibility for undergraduate students and exposure to some of the main arguments that are currently relevant in the field of social epistemology from one of the sub-fields intellectual leaders.
- I added the following justification for my selection of the book *Democracy for Realists: Why elections do not produce responsive government*: This text is written by two influential political scientists Christopher H. Achen (Princeton University) and Larry M. Bartels (Vanderbilt University), and it constitutes a novel critique of some of the most common justifications for a democratic theory of governance. The book was published in 2016 and has won various international awards. Given the popularity of the book in academic circles and its influence on scholarly debates over the merits of democracy, I chose it as one of the primary texts for this course on political reasoning.
- I added the following justification for my selection of the book *The Naked Public Square: Religion and Democracy in America*: This is a classic academic text that continually helps fuel scholarly debate over the place religion has in American politics. One of the major points of this work is that it is not coherent to ask people to appeal to the reasons that matter most to them in the public square while also demanding that they bracket their religious and theological convictions. This book has stood the test of time as a critique of the purportedly neutral status of America as a liberal democracy that can be free of theological underpinnings, and is responsible for many downstream debates in political theory, political philosophy, and religious studies in R1 spaces over the nature of the relationship between the Church and the State.

Contingency: The Subcommittee requests that the Center provide more information about the class debates (syllabus, p. 5) and how they will allow all students in the course to be assessed on their mastery of ELOs 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 3.2, 4.1 and 4.2. In the current syllabus, it is

difficult to discern how all students will have a chance to participate fully in these in-class activities and demonstrate their mastery of so many disparate ELOs.

- The *structure* of the class debates helps to combat some of the pernicious trends in political reasoning surveyed in the course. Students are split into two groups, and their group is assigned a controversial claim that they must defend. Since students are assigned a position to defend, this exercise is helpful in combatting trends such as polarization, epistemic bubbles, echo chambers, and identity-driven politics. Students must practice the intellectual virtues to provide the most charitable defense of a position by working together with students who likely do not all agree.

Each team can take the first 45 min of class to prepare materials for the debates. The debates themselves consist of a ~5-7 minute opening statement, ~15 minutes of cross examination (~7 minutes per team), ~10 minutes of audience q&a (~5 minutes per team; to be provided by the instructor and other Chase Center faculty), and ~3 minutes for a closing statement. The winning side of the debate will be determined by the Chase Center faculty and will be determined according to the objective rubric provided also to the students.

- 1.1 Engage in critical and logical thinking about the topic or idea of the theme.

[The debates help students engage in critical and logical thinking by providing them an opportunity to structure their ideas around a thesis statement. For example, students might be asked to defend the claim that “Citizens should appeal to their religious convictions when participating in the democratic process” or the claim “The government should be able to monitor and penalize social media companies for allowing pervasive ‘fake news’ or ‘misinformation’ to be posted on their platform.” Since students are randomly assigned one “side” of the debate to defend, they must think critically with their peers in order to synthesize a large body of information and competing priorities and ideals in order to articulate a coherent political position to the rest of the class. Each debate is centered around a positive claim (side #1) and the denial of that claim (side #2) that is derived from the content of the previous segment of the course. This forces further competency with the course content as students must think critically about a certain perspective on a given topic related to citizenship in order to be successful in the debates.]

- 1.2 Engage in academic discourse that establishes a foundation for future work.

[The debates allow students the experience of dialoguing in an explicitly academic register that is appropriate for a R1 collegiate experience. They also allow for a sufficient degree of depth regarding

four of the course topics throughout the semester so as to serve as a foundation for future research or informed public facing work on the matter. Students will (for instance) have a stronger grasp on the various pros and cons of allowing the government to enforce guidelines on social media companies than the average college student who has not taken a course on political reasoning. The debates also grow students in their ability to have civil dialogue over contentious issues which is a central skill for being a productive citizen in an increasingly diverse and polarized landscape.]

- 2.1 Demonstrate capacity to combine or synthesize knowledge across general education.
Foundational (applies to all GE themes)

[The multidisciplinary nature of this course encourages the integration and synthesis of materials across general education. The course draws from sociology, history, political science, political theory, critical theory, and philosophy, and thus to be successful in the debates students will have to make use of reasons and arguments from multiple academic disciplines. Students will be challenged to expand their humanities knowledge and the implementation of distinctive disciplinary tools and approaches in order to formulate perspectives on how citizens can reason about politics in such a way as to promote diversity, equity, and justice.]

- 3.2 Analyze and critique how local, national, or global perspectives on citizenship influence individual actions and responsibilities.

[Students will analyze and critique various perspectives on citizenship via the class debates. Since students are assigned a position to defend on a controversial issue and will be teamed up with a random assortment of other students from the class, they will not be able to take a particular local, national, or global perspective on citizenship for granted. For instance, students will have to analyze the claim that “Citizens’ religious convictions should be kept fully out of the democratic process,” anticipating criticisms from those who disagree and fleshing out the implications for this political stance for the individual actions and responsibilities of a diverse array of citizens.]

- 4.1 Examine, critique, and evaluate various expressions and implications of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and explore a variety of lived experiences.

[One of the prompts for the debates will be “Citizens from minority religious, racial, or gender groups are justified in defaulting to the majority opinion of that sub-group” vs. “Citizens from minority religious, racial, or gender groups are not justified in defaulting to the majority opinion of that sub-group, and they must form their own opinions on major political topics via independent research.” This debate prompts students to synthesize various readings from the course, including *Why It’s OK Not to Think for Yourself* and various readings on identity-driven politics. Examination

and critique of various perspectives on the role that identity-based political perspectives should play in the political processes that move society towards greater diversity, equity, and inclusion is a central focal point of the debates.]

- 4.2 Analyze and critique the intersection of concepts of justice, difference, citizenship, and how these interact with cultural traditions, structures of power, and/or advocacy for social change.

[The course structure prompts students to view the concepts of justice, difference, and citizenship through various cultural, religious, gendered, and racial lenses. Since these concepts are multi-faceted in the public square, the debates constitute structured engagement with various working conceptions of the concepts in a type of microcosm of the public square. In having to defend a position that is assigned to them, students will analyze and critique different conceptions of these concepts from the kinds of criticism and resistance that come from alternative cultural and social power structures and groups. In order to activate real-world social change, students will be able to appeal to skills sharpened during class debates as they regard to empathizing with disparate perspectives and practicing intellectual humility and charity in the face of disagreement.]

Contingency: The Subcommittee asks that the Center revise the statement on Artificial Intelligence and Academic Integrity (syllabus, p. 7) to align with Ohio State’s Code of Student Conduct and AI policies. While instructors *are* permitted and expected to set rules in their course for academic integrity, the determination of whether or not a student is in violation of those policies is the charge of the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM). Appropriate statements can be found on the Office of Undergraduate Education’s [Syllabus Policies & Statements webpage](#).

- I copied the following text into the syllabus and deleted any misleading text to clarify the University’s position on student conduct and AI policies:

There has been a significant increase in the popularity and availability of a variety of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools, including ChatGPT, Sudowrite, and others. These tools will help shape the future of work, research and technology, but when used in the wrong way, they can stand in conflict with academic integrity at Ohio State.

All students have important obligations under the Code of Student Conduct to complete all academic and scholarly activities with fairness and honesty. Our professional students also have the responsibility to uphold the professional and ethical standards found in their respective academic honor codes. Specifically, students are not to use unauthorized assistance in the laboratory, on field work, in

scholarship, or on a course assignment unless such assistance has been authorized specifically by the course instructor. In addition, students are not to submit their work without acknowledging any word-for-word use and/or paraphrasing of writing, ideas or other work that is not your own. These requirements apply to all students undergraduate, graduate, and professional.

To maintain a culture of integrity and respect, these generative AI tools should not be used in the completion of course assignments unless an instructor for a given course specifically authorizes their use. Some instructors may approve of using generative AI tools in the academic setting for specific goals. However, these tools should be used only with the explicit and clear permission of each individual instructor, and then only in the ways allowed by the instructor.

Contingency: The Subcommittee asks that the Center re-phrase the statement which describes the way in which this course fits into the new General Education Curriculum (syllabus pg. 2). Since this is a 3-credit hour course, it does not, in and of itself, “fulfill” the General Education Theme, as the requirement is for students to earn 4-6 credit hours in this category; stating that a single course fulfills the requirement can be confusing or misleading for students. Instead, the reviewing faculty suggest wording such as “Civics, Law, and Leadership 3300 is an approved course in the GEN Theme: Citizenship for a Diverse and Just World category”.

- I replaced the potentially confusing phrasing with the following: “Civics, Law, and Leadership 3300 is an approved course in the GEN Theme: Citizenship for a Diverse and Just World category.”

Recommendation: The Subcommittee recommends that the Center explain more fully the exam procedures (syllabus, p. 5). When will students need to decide whether they will use a blue book or a lock-down browser? Will the exams be given via CarmenCanvas to ensure the use of the lock-down browser?

- I’ve added the following clarification to the syllabus: “Exams will be given via CarmenCanvas to utilize the use of the lock-down browser feature.”

CIVICLL 3300:

How Politics Breaks Your Brain

[Semester]

Instructor: Professor Laura Siscoe

Email: siscoe.4@osu.edu

Office:

Office Hours:

Format of Instruction: Lecture and discussion

Meeting Day /Time:

Classroom Location:

Contact Hours: 3



I. Course Description:

If you hope to be a fully engaged and effective citizen in an increasingly diverse society, you must critically reflect on your habits of political reasoning. Good political reasoning is inextricably linked to the pursuit of justice both locally and globally, as well as to individual and societal-level flourishing. In the past decade there has been *a lot* of attention paid to such subjects as political polarization, echo chambers, declining trust amongst citizens, identity politics, and the role of religion in government. And for good reason. In recent years, the United States (along with many other liberal democracies) has become increasingly politically fractured, with a rising percentage of Americans stating that those who disagree politically cannot even agree on basic, non-political facts about the world. There is also strong evidence that a majority of citizens across a smattering of democratic societies wish to see substantial changes to their nation's current governmental system. All of this is set against a backdrop of rising sociological diversity and increasing pluralism about what an ideally just society looks like. It is widely agreed that our public political discourse, institutions, and systems have become increasingly fractured and dysfunctional in a myriad of ways.

Alongside much popular-level speculation and theorizing, there has also been an explosion of academic work on the topic of political reasoning. This is a large umbrella term, under which falls work in a variety of disciplines, including philosophy, social psychology, religion, critical theory, and political science. The common thread of academic work under the banner of political reasoning is that it pertains to how it is that you *do* and *should* reason about matters of political relevance. One of the key challenges to creating a more just world in the midst of increasing conditions of sociological diversity is that many people disagree over what an ideally just world looks like. Given this plurality of ideas about justice, citizens are often confused about how to engage matters of political and moral significance, as well as how to effectively and respectfully communicate with their neighbors about such topics. This course is designed to fill in this gap, enabling students to engage in critical and logical



thinking by diving into cutting-edge philosophical work on the topic of political reasoning. They will also engage various historically influential texts and synthesize various themes pertinent to the topic of political reasoning that have been addressed in various ways throughout intellectual history. Students will implement multiple methodological approaches to the subject matter of political reasoning, borrowing methodologies from various disciplines.

This 3000-level class will familiarize you with some of the best and most recent scholarly contributions on this subject, featuring a number of important texts and debates from various intellectual disciplines—as well as some popular-level work. Readings draw from analytic philosophy (including pieces from Michael Huemer, Michael Hannon, C. Thi Nguyen, Regina Rini, etc.), political science (Christopher H. Achen, Larry M. Bartels, etc.), social psychology (Cass R. Sunstein), and critical theory (Charles Mills). This course goes beyond what is required in introductory level courses, as it requires reading a number of difficult historical texts as well as a good amount of work that is considered on the cutting edge of political epistemology. The study of political epistemology as it relates to political reasoning prompts students to analyze the concepts of citizenship, justice, and diversity at a more advanced and in-depth level than in the Foundations component. It does this by requiring a more in-depth and complex synthesis of various methodological approaches and a more diverse array of author viewpoints, including influential viewpoints from critical theory, the history of philosophy, social psychology, and democratic theory.

This course is interdisciplinary in design, encouraging students to draw connections between their major/minor field of study, other courses they have taken, and even their own real-world experiences as it pertains to citizenship for a just and diverse world. There is an emphasis on guided classroom discussions on difficult subject matter, helping students draw out these potential connections between differing conceptions of citizenship, justice, and diversity more explicitly. Topics covered include the intersection of citizen identity and politics, the ethics of partisan loyalty, and the role of social groups in the formation of our individual political beliefs. Through a combination of readings, lectures, discussions, and structured debates, you will leave this class with an increased ability to navigate many of the cognitive and moral errors that serve to corrupt your political reasoning as a citizen in a diverse society. Put differently, you will better understand *how politics breaks your brain* and what you can do about it.

II. Course Objectives:

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- Analyze concepts of citizenship, justice and diversity through the lens of historically influential texts on the topic of political reasoning as well as through the lens of contemporary work in political epistemology.
- Integrate approaches to understanding citizenship for a just and diverse world by making connections to real-world experiences of political reasoning as it connects to concrete political issues.
- Examine differing conceptions of justice and how these inform ideal methods of political reasoning.
- Engage in critical and logical thinking about how methods of political reasoning can make you a better local and global citizen.



- Engage in advanced, in-depth, scholarly exploration of methods to effectively think through and discuss matters of political and moral significance for life in a diverse and complex society.
- Identify, describe, and synthesize various methodological approaches including that of analytic philosophy, critical theory, and social psychology, applying these methods to the topic of citizenship for a just and diverse world.
- Demonstrate a stronger and evolving sense of self as a learner through reflection on the most common pitfalls of political reasoning.
- Describe and analyze a range of different perspectives on the link between citizenship and political reasoning.
- Reflect on various topics in political reasoning for life as a global citizen.
- Examine, critique, and evaluate various expressions and implications of diversity, equity, and inclusion as it relates to political reasoning.
- Analyze the intersection of concepts of justice, difference, and citizenship, confronting how categories such as race, gender, and religion play into or further bolster existing power structures and democratic processes.
- Apply tools of political reasoning and intercultural competency in controversial social, political, and cultural discussions.

III. GEN Goals & Learning Outcomes

Civics, Law, and Leadership 3300 is an approved course in the **GEN Theme: Citizenship for a Diverse and Just World** category.

GEN Goals

- **Goal 1:** Successful students will analyze an important topic or idea at a more advanced and in-depth level than in the Foundations component.
- **Goal 2:** Successful students will integrate approaches to the theme by making connections to out-of-classroom experiences with academic knowledge or across disciplines and/or to work they have done in previous classes and that they anticipate doing in the future.
- **Goal 3:** Successful students will explore and analyze a range of perspectives on local, national, or global citizenship and apply the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that constitute citizenship.
- **Goal 4:** Successful students will examine notions of justice amid difference and analyze and critique how these interact with historically and socially constructed ideas of citizenship and membership within society, both within the United States and around the world.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

Successful students are able to:

- 1.1. Engage in critical and logical thinking about the topic or idea of the theme.
- 1.2 Engage in advanced, in-depth, scholarly exploration of the topic or idea of the theme.
- 2.1. Identify, describe, and synthesize approaches or experiences as they apply to the theme.

- 2.2. Demonstrate a developing sense of self as a learner through reflection, self assessment, and creative work, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts.
- 3.1. Describe and analyze a range of perspectives on what constitutes citizenship and how it differs across political, cultural, national, global, and/or historical communities.
- 3.2. Identify, reflect on, and apply the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required for intercultural competence as a global citizen.
- 4.1. Examine, critique, and evaluate various expressions and implications of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and explore a variety of lived experiences.
- 4.2. Analyze and critique the intersection of concepts of justice, difference, citizenship, and how these interact with cultural traditions, structures of power, and/or advocacy for social change.

How this connects to the Theme: Citizenship for a Diverse and Just World

In order to be a fully engaged and effective citizen in the context of an increasingly diverse society, you must be aware of and critically reflect on your habits of political reasoning. Good political reasoning is inextricably linked to the pursuit of just citizenship both locally and globally. This course synthesizes work from a variety of academic disciplines as it pertains to the topic of citizenship for a diverse and just world. The course draws from a very diverse and eclectic pool of individuals across various academic disciplines, many of which hold competing ideas about the nature of justice and citizenship, as well as concerning what role different forms of pluralism should play in our political system. In order to understand certain viewpoints that are amenable to classical liberalism and democratic thought, students will walk through sections of Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* and John Stuart Mill's *On Liberalism*. For work that is more critical of certain aspects of the liberal, democratic conception of citizenship and justice, students will read and discuss Mills's "White Ignorance," Nehaus's *The Naked Public Square*, and various papers in applied political epistemology.

The in-class discussions and structured debates will also encourage students to examine notions of justice amid difference, prompting them to engage with their own potential biases, socio-political dispositions, and perceptions of societal belonging. Students will implement multiple methodological approaches to the subject matter of political reasoning, including those from analytic philosophy, political science, social psychology, and critical theory. Students will also exercise critical thinking by evaluating and reflecting on their own processes of political reasoning through the paper assignment where they examine a political view that was formed via a non-ideal political reasoning. Students will demonstrate a stronger and evolving sense of self as a learner through reflection on the most common pitfalls of political reasoning (including polarization, echo chambers, partisan deference, fake news, etc.) in their own lives and within society at large. They will improve at self-assessment as it pertains to political reasoning and engagement, spurring them towards greater and more creative problem-solving capacities, energizing them to apply these capacities to pressing social and political issues.

IV. Course Reading

Most of the required readings for this course will be made available via CarmenCanvas, but please purchase the following three texts, which are available at Barnes & Noble, on Amazon, and on other online outlets.

Jonathan Matheson, *Why It's OK Not to Think for Yourself* (Routledge, 2023), ISBN: 9781032438252

- The author of the book *Why It's OK Not to Think for Yourself* is a current leader within the field of philosophy on the topics of epistemic disagreement and epistemic autonomy. I chose *Why It's OK Not to Think for Yourself* because it nicely articulates some of the core arguments within this intellectual space in a way that is appropriate for undergraduate students. Many of the author's other works on these topics require graduate-level training in epistemology in order for the average person to be able to make sense of the arguments. I believe *Why It's OK Not to Think for Yourself* nicely balances accessibility for undergraduate students and exposure to some of the main arguments that are currently relevant in the field of social epistemology from one of the sub-fields intellectual leaders.

Richard John Neuhaus, *The Naked Public Square: Religion and Democracy in America* (Eerdmans, 1988), ISBN: 9780802800800

- This is a classic academic text that continually helps fuel scholarly debate over the place religion has in American politics. One of the major points of this work is that it is not coherent to ask people to appeal to the reasons that matter most to them in the public square while also demanding that they bracket their religious and theological convictions. This book has stood the test of time as a critique of the purportedly neutral status of America as a liberal democracy that can be free of theological underpinnings, and is responsible for many downstream debates in political theory, political philosophy, and religious studies in R1 spaces over the nature of the relationship between the Church and the State.

Christopher H. Achen and Larry M. Bartels, *Democracy for Realists: Why elections do not produce responsive government* (Princeton University Press, 2016), ISBN: 9780691169446

- This text is written by two influential political scientists Christopher H. Achen (Princeton University) and Larry M. Bartels (Vanderbilt University), and it constitutes a novel critique of some of the most common justifications for a democratic theory of governance. The book was published in 2016 and has won various international awards. Given the popularity of the book in academic circles and its influence on scholarly debates over the merits of democracy, I chose it as one of the primary texts for this course on political reasoning.

V. Assignments and Grading

Instructions for All Essay Assignments

- Papers should be double-spaced, use 12-point Times New Roman font, and be carefully edited.

- Essays will be due at 11:59pm on the due date listed in the syllabus.

Grading Breakdown:

Reading Comprehension Quizzes: 20%

Midterm Exam: 20%

Final Exam: 20%

Debate Participation: 20%

Political Reasoning Paper: 10%

Attendance and Participation: 10%

Reading Comprehension Quizzes

Reading comprehension quizzes are a combination of multiple choice, T/F, and short answer questions, and they are administered at the beginning of class every day a particular reading(s) is due. Every quiz is comprised of ten questions. They cover the content of the assigned reading *due that day*. The quiz will be administered at the beginning of class, before any of the reading content is discussed as a group. You are encouraged to read the assigned texts closely. This may include annotating, taking notes, highlighting key points, etc., whatever method(s) helps you to best retain and comprehend the core content. Quizzes will not be focused on obscure or highly peripheral elements of the readings, but rather will be focused on matters pertaining to the heart of the main argument(s), which will inevitably deal with the link between political reasoning and what it takes to be a fully engaged and effective citizen in a diverse world. Quizzes will additionally focus on drawing out themes from the texts that have implications for diversity, equity, and inclusion as political ends, as well as emphasize the way in which the authors presuppositions about culture, religion, and race inform their viewpoints. There is no way to make-up missed quizzes, but your *five* lowest quiz grades will be automatically dropped at the end of the semester. There are twenty quizzes total, so this means that your quiz grade is determined by the average of your *fifteen* highest quiz grades. There are no quizzes the first day of class, on scheduled debate days, exam review days, or on exam days. Your overall quiz average makes up 20% of your final grade.

Midterm and Final Exams

The midterm exam covers the readings and lectures from Jan 13-Feb 24 and the final exam covers only the readings and lectures from Feb 26-April 23. Both exams will consist of three short essay questions. You will choose two to respond to in multiple-paragraph format. Responses should be roughly between 500-750 words per question. Exams will be given via CarmenCanvas to utilize the use of the lock-down browser feature. Students will need to install [LockDown Browser](#) before the exam. Each exam makes up 20% of your final grade.

During the midterm and final exams students will execute analysis and critique of the intersection of concepts of justice, difference, and citizenship, confronting how categories such as race, gender, and religion play into or further bolster existing power structures and democratic processes. Students will

grapple with the relevant ethical, epistemological, historical, psychological, and sociological questions pertaining to the way in which these social categories bear on existing power structures and political systems. Students will synthesize the relevant insights offered by multiple methodologies and academic disciplines, spurring more informed engagement with the cultural, social, and political systems within which they are embedded.

Debate Participation

The class time is structured partially around lectures and partially around structured, in-class debates regarding the course content. There will be four planned debates throughout the semester, each worth 5% of your grade (20% total). Further instructions about the debates will be given the first week of class, including a rubric outlining assessment criteria. You will be graded on your use of evidence, understanding of the topic, organization, oral presentation, and active, civil participation. The purpose of the debates is to practice applying the processes and methods of ideal political reasoning to concrete topics. This skill is an essential feature of ethical citizenship, necessary for effectively advocating for justice in a diverse and complex world. The debates provide a format to practice this skill with their real-life peers, who inevitably represent a wide diversity of racial, cultural, religious, and social backgrounds. The debates are a rich opportunity to draw from this wealth of diverse life experiences (insofar as students are comfortable sharing such experiences) to enrich our common classroom culture and ultimately our future contributions as citizens within a shared society.

The *structure* of the class debates helps to combat some of the pernicious trends in political reasoning surveyed in the course. Students are split into two groups, and their group is assigned a controversial claim that they must defend. Since students are assigned a position to defend, this exercise is helpful in combatting trends such as polarization, epistemic bubbles, echo chambers, and identity-driven politics. Students must practice the intellectual virtues to provide the most charitable defense of a position by working together with students who likely do not all agree.

Each team can take the first 45 min of class to prepare materials for the debates. The debates themselves consist of a ~5-7 minute opening statement, ~15 minutes of cross examination (~7 minutes per team), ~10 minutes of audience q&a (~5 minutes per team; to be provided by the instructor and other Chase Center faculty), and ~3 minutes for a closing statement. The winning side of the debate will be determined by the Chase Center faculty and will be determined according to the objective rubric provided also to the students.

Political Reasoning Paper

This is a short paper writing assignment (*roughly* 3-4 single-spaced, typed pages in 12 point font) that is worth 10% of your overall grade. The assignment can be completed and submitted anytime after the first week of class, as long as it is submitted by midnight on the day of the final exam. You will be graded on the quality of your writing, whether you properly followed the directions of the assignment, and how thoughtfully you engage with the writing prompts. Here are the instructions:

Step 1: Identify a view you hold (whether weakly or strongly) on a political issue, which upon further reflection, you might have come to hold through a method of non-ideal political reasoning. The political issue you choose could be anything: abortion, immigration policy, school choice, wealth redistribution, placing legal restrictions on speech, etc. The topic does *not* have to be one covered in the scope of this class, but it does need to be an issue of explicitly *political* relevance (e.g. *not* about a rule change in the NFL or a kind of music I dislike), and it does need to be specific (e.g. “my views on government” or “my views on social justice” are too broad). Identify which factors or mechanisms may have played a role in helping you to land in this place, employing concepts and terminology discussed during the first two weeks of the course where relevant.

Step 2: Identify which factors or mechanisms may have played a role in helping you to land in this place, employing concepts and terminology discussed during the course where relevant. You should also cite course readings where relevant. Be sure to explain the course concepts you employ in sufficient depth, as if you’re explaining them to someone who has no prior knowledge of the topic. You should choose and explain in significant detail at least one of the concepts of political reasoning discussed in the course.

Step 3: Explain ways in which you intend to conduct further research into this political issue in order to correct for these deficiencies in your political reasoning. This section of the paper should be highly practical, including steps such as “reading paper X on this particular topic,” “having a 15 minute discussion with someone I disagree with on this issue,” or “listening to podcast episode X that challenges my viewpoint.” You should aim to include a minimum of three practical steps like this, though you’re welcome to include even more if you like. If any of your practical steps involve reading material on the chosen topic, they should not be readings that have also been assigned during the course of the class.

Step 4: After completing the tasks, you propose for yourself in step three, write up how your view on the political issue has evolved. Importantly, it does *not* have to be the case that your view on the issue has fundamentally changed. It could just be the case that you now have established better reasons for holding the same position. Of course, if your view does significantly change, you should discuss this, as well as explain what factor(s) led to this transition.

Through this exercise students will demonstrate a stronger and evolving sense of self as a learner through reflection on the most common pitfalls of political reasoning (including polarization, echo chambers, partisan deference, fake news, etc.) in their own lives and within society at large. They will improve at self-assessment as it pertains to political reasoning and engagement, spurring them towards greater and more creative problem-solving capacities, energizing them to apply these capacities to pressing social and political issues. Students are encouraged to reflect on how their own experiences have shaped them to hold the views that they hold, as well as to contemplate the role that culture, race, class, and religion play into their conception of justice.

Attendance, Participation, and Late Work Policy

Regular attendance is required in order to do well in this course, as the majority of class days involve a quiz, exam, or structured debate. Missed quizzes cannot be made up (barring extenuating circumstances) because the lowest five quiz scores will be automatically dropped. If you must miss an exam day or a debate day, please contact me directly beforehand to arrange a plan for you to make-up this missed assignment. Please note the following course policies:

- For each unexcused absence from class, students will be docked 5% of their participation grade. Students who miss 25% or more of the class sessions will receive a 0 for this portion of the course. Missing classes for illness or religious holidays does not count, but for an absence to be considered “excused,” you must contact the instructor within one week. Please reach out to the instructor with any questions about this policy.
- Consistent, high-quality participation—including respectful listening, contributing to discussion, and building on peers’ insights—is expected each week. Occasional informal writing or group exercises may be used to facilitate discussion and deepen reflection. Students will be docked 1 point of their participation grade (1/100 pts) for every day they do not bring their assigned text *or* do not speak up in class. If you are struggling to participate in discussion, please come to office hours or reach out.

Grading scale

93% – 100%	A
90% – 92.9%	A-
87% – 89.9%	B+
83% – 86.9%	B
80% – 82.9%	B-
77% – 79.9%	C+
73% – 76.9%	C
70% – 72.9%	C-
67% – 69.9%	D+
60% – 66.9%	D
Below 60%	E

Artificial Intelligence and Academic Integrity

- There has been a significant increase in the popularity and availability of a variety of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools, including ChatGPT, Sudowrite and others. These tools will help shape the future of work, research and technology but when used in the wrong way, they can stand in conflict with academic integrity at Ohio State. All students have important obligations under the Code of Student Conduct to complete all academic and scholarly activities with fairness and honesty. Our professional students also have the responsibility to uphold the professional and ethical standards found in their respective academic honor codes. Specifically, students are not to use unauthorized assistance in the laboratory, on field work,



in scholarship or on a course assignment unless such assistance has been authorized specifically by the course instructor. In addition, students are not to submit their work without acknowledging any word-for-word use and/or paraphrasing of writing, ideas or other work that is not your own. These requirements apply to all students undergraduate, graduate, and professional. To maintain a culture of integrity and respect, these generative AI tools should not be used in the completion of course assignments unless an instructor for a given course specifically authorizes their use. Some instructors may approve of using generative AI tools in the academic setting for specific goals. However, these tools should be used only with the explicit and clear permission of each individual instructor, and then only in the ways allowed by the instructor.

VI. Course Schedule:

Tuesday, Jan 13: Introduction

Syllabus day; establish debate and discussion norms

- Students are increasingly required to have intercultural competence as global citizens. During the first day of class, students establish norms for class discussions and debates. These norms of communication serve to empower and equip students to engage individuals and groups of many different backgrounds, bridging various gender, cultural, religious, and racial divides. Students will communicate more effectively and be emboldened to be active global citizens in light of both the methodological tools acquired through the course (including that of analytic philosophy, political theory, social psychology, critical theory, etc.) and the skills of civil discourse which are put into praxis through both the discussions and debates.

Thursday, Jan 15: The Value of Disagreement

J.S. Mill, *On Liberty*, Ch. II, (~70 pgs.)

(This is one of the most influential political texts of the 19th century, and it offers a forceful and succinct defense of the value of diversity for promoting a healthy political community full of informed and ethical citizens.)

- Why does American society historically value free speech and public disagreement for its citizens?
- Given the kinds of diversity we have within the U.S., what are some topics where disagreement will be inevitable?
- For the sake of justice, should there be any political limits placed on free speech?

Tuesday, Jan 20: Why are People Irrational about Politics?

Michael Huemer, “Why People are Irrational about Politics” (16 pgs.)

(Michael Huemer is a leading political, social, and moral philosopher, and this constitutes an influential argument in the political philosophy and psychology spaces. The article prompts the reader to wrestle with the way their “pre-political” identities and commitments regarding culture, morality, religion, etc. actually precede their political commitments and identities.)



- Why do people disagree so strongly about politics and morality?
- Is most of our political and moral disagreement because some people just don't know all of the facts?
- How do different conceptions of justice, difference, and citizenship lead to political disagreement over contentious issues?

Thursday, Jan 22: Why are People Irrational about Politics?

Christopher H. Achen and Larry M. Bartels, "Blind Retrospection: Electoral Responses to Droughts, Floods, and Shark Attacks" in *Democracy for Realists: Why elections do not produce responsive government* (29 pgs.)

(This text is one of the most important books in political science on democratic practice to come out in the past couple of decades, and so any current course taught on political reasoning should reference it in some capacity. It helps students to synthesize beliefs about cultural difference, equity, inclusion and justice with the lived realities of democratic governance and participation.)

- Do you agree with the author's thesis that we tend to reward or punish politicians in irrational ways?
- To what extent do you think the average citizen *should* be informed about political issues, particularly as they bear on promoting societal justice, equity, and inclusion?
- Do you think the authors express too much pessimism about human rationality?

Tuesday, Jan 27: Do You *Ever* Think for Yourself?

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, II.I.II; II.I.VII; II.I.VIII (~60 pgs.)

(These are famous passages that have influenced political theory and the history of American political thought and which help students to tease apart cultural practices from political ideals.)

- What is Tocqueville's primary insight about the ability of Americans to think freely?
- How do you think Tocqueville's implicit view on the value of diversity play into his thoughts?
- What (if anything) do you think Tocqueville misses about the nature of American society in his reflections?

Thursday, Jan 29: Debate Day

- Debates are designed to equip students with the ability to view difficult intellectual, political, and social issues from a number of perspectives outside of their own. Students will be assigned a position to defend on a particular issue (regardless if this is the position they *actually* hold), and must employ skills and knowledge acquired throughout the course to persuade their fellow peers of the position in question.

Tuesday, Feb 3: Arguments *Against* Thinking for Yourself

Jonathan Matheson, Introduction and Ch. 1 "Believing (Just) Because Other People Do" in *Why It's OK Not to Think for Yourself* (44 pgs.)

(The author of this book is a leading philosopher in the sub-field of epistemology, which deals with questions about the nature of belief and knowledge. Consideration of the value of "thinking for yourself" is at the heart of building out your conception of what it means to be a responsible and



ethical citizen who can promote a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive society, as it gets at the heart of the nature of our democratic responsibilities.)

- Do you typically think it's better to come to your "own" conclusions about things?
- Are there certain *areas of life* or *topics* where you do not want to have to decide things for yourself?
- Do you think one has a duty of justice to make up their "own" mind about political issues?

Thursday, Feb 5: Arguments *Against* Thinking for Yourself

Jonathan Matheson, Ch. 2 "The Argument from Expertise," and Ch. 3 "The Argument from Evidential Swamping" in *Why It's OK Not to Think for Yourself* (35 pgs.)

(The author of this book is a leading philosopher in the sub-field of epistemology, which deals with questions about the nature of belief and knowledge. Consideration of the value of "thinking for yourself" is at the heart of building out your conception of what it means to be a responsible and ethical citizen who can promote a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive society, as it gets at the heart of the nature of our democratic responsibilities.)

- Do you think America would be better off if we deferred to political experts to make the decisions we currently outsource to democratic processes?
- What is the expert-identification problem and do you think it has any promising solutions in the context of our current society?
- What do you think is the nature of the relationship between trust in experts and institutions and the promotion of societal diversity, equity, and inclusion?

Tuesday, Feb 10: Arguments *For* Thinking for Yourself

Jonathan Matheson, Ch. 4 "The Autonomy Objection," Ch. 5 "The Free-Rider Objection," and Ch. 6 "The Socratic Objection" in *Why It's OK Not to Think for Yourself* (63 pgs.)

(The author of this book is a leading philosopher in the sub-field of epistemology, which deals with questions about the nature of belief and knowledge. Consideration of the value of "thinking for yourself" is at the heart of building out your conception of what it means to be a responsible and ethical citizen who can promote a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive society, as it gets at the heart of the nature of our democratic responsibilities.)

- What does it mean to be intellectually autonomous according to the author?
- What does the author mean by the term "free-riding," and do you agree that his view avoids this criticism?
- On what topics (if any) must you be free to form your own opinion in order to have a good life?

Thursday, Feb 12: Arguments *For* Thinking for Yourself

Jonathan Matheson, Ch. 7 "The Vulnerability Objection," Ch. 8 "The Understanding Objection," and Ch. 9 "The Intellectual Virtue Objection" in *Why It's OK Not to Think for Yourself* (60 pgs.)

(The author of this book is a leading philosopher in the sub-field of epistemology, which deals with questions about the nature of belief and knowledge. Consideration of the value of "thinking for yourself" is at the heart of building out your conception of what it means to be a responsible and

ethical citizen who can promote a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive society, as it gets at the heart of the nature of our democratic responsibilities.)

- What is an intellectual virtue?
- How important is it that you *understand* the views you hold, so long as you hold the “correct” views?
- How do you think one’s cultural background influences what they view as an “intellectual virtue”? What do you see as the benefits of having a diverse array of understandings of the intellectual virtues?

Tuesday, Feb 17: Debate Day

- Debates are designed to equip students with the ability to view difficult intellectual, political, and social issues from a number of perspectives outside of their own. Students will be assigned a position to defend on a particular issue (regardless if this is the position they *actually* hold), and must employ skills and knowledge acquired throughout the course to persuade their fellow peers of the position in question.

Thursday, Feb 19: Midterm Exam Review Day

Tuesday, Feb 24: Midterm Exam

Thursday, Feb 26: Identity and Political Reasoning

Michael Hannon, “Disagreement or Badmouthing? The Role of Expressive Discourse in Politics” (35 pgs.)

(The author is one of the leading figures in the recent “political epistemology” movement within philosophy and political theory, which pushes for a better understanding of how our beliefs about the world shape our political engagement and vice-versa. This piece illustrates the importance of cultural, racial, religious, and ethical background in shaping one’s political discourse and beliefs.)

- Do you agree with the author’s thesis that party loyalty shapes peoples’ political behavior more than convictions on particular political issues?
- What is the concept of “social identity” employed by the author, and why does he see this concept as so important for his overall argument?
- Do you think that placing a strong political emphasis on one’s social identity is necessary in order to sufficiently promote diversity, equity, and societal inclusion?

Tuesday, March 3: Identity and Political Reasoning

Christopher H. Achen and Larry M. Bartels, “Partisan Hearts and Spleens: Social Identities and Political Change” in *Democracy for Realists: Why elections do not produce responsive government*

(This text is one of the most important books in political science on democratic practice to come out in the past couple of decades, and so any current course taught on political reasoning should reference it in some capacity. It helps students to synthesize beliefs about cultural difference, equity, inclusion and justice with the lived realities of democratic governance and participation.)



- Do you think there is anything ethically objectionable about adopting your parent's political beliefs, simply because they are your parent's beliefs?
- Do you think there is anything fundamentally irrational about adopting your parent's political beliefs, simply because they are your parent's beliefs?
- In what ways is adopting your political beliefs from a partisan platform similar or different from adopting your beliefs from your family of origin?

Thursday, March 5: Race, Gender, and Political Reasoning

Charles Mills, "[White Ignorance](#)" (27 pgs.)

(This is a famous paper in the fields of critical theory and social epistemology which argues that one's racial identity is crucial in the formation of their political viewpoints, and that historically influential ways of understanding politics have failed to recognize the formative influence of one's racial identity in their formation of concepts such as justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion.)

- What does Mills mean by the phrase "white ignorance"?
- Why does Mills separate the categories of "the structural" and "the individual"?
- Do you think that Mill's argument does justice to the distinctions between related categories such as *class, race, religion, and culture*?

Tuesday, March 10: Race, Gender, and Political Reasoning

Daniel Q. Gillion, Jonathan M. Ladd, and Marc Meredith, "[Party Polarization, Ideological Sorting and the Emergence of the US Partisan Gender Gap](#)," in *British Journal of Political Science* (26 pgs.)

(This article is a recent publication in a leading political science journal which sheds empirical light on a vital cultural trend, which is the growing partisan gender gap. The article is selected to help students reflect on their own experiences of gender and how they have played into the formation of political concepts such as justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion.)

- What does the author mean by "gender gap" in this context?
- What role does the author assign to the "elites" in the emergence of the gender gap?
- What is the most surprising conclusion of the author's findings?

Thursday, March 12: Debate Day

- Debates are designed to equip students with the ability to view difficult intellectual, political, and social issues from a number of perspectives outside of their own. Students will be assigned a position to defend on a particular issue (regardless if this is the position they *actually* hold), and must employ skills and knowledge acquired throughout the course to persuade their fellow peers of the position in question.

Tuesday, March 24: Polarization

Robert B. Talisse, "[Problems of Polarization](#)" in *Political Epistemology* (16 pgs.)

(The author is a leading political philosopher who articulates the societal trend of polarization. Understanding polarization is central to students understanding how they can become effective and

ethical citizens, who can push for a more just, diverse, and equitable society in a way that avoids the pitfalls of polarization.)

- How does the author distinguish between “belief” and “group” polarization?
- Do you agree with the author's analysis that polarization is responsible for producing a number of other political problems, or do you think there might be better explanations for the problems he raises?
- What are potential strengths or shortcomings of the author's proposed solutions to polarization at the end of the article?

Thursday, March 26: Polarization

Cass R. Sunstein, “The Law of Group Polarization” (39 pgs.)

(This is the most famous paper on polarization written by a social scientist and it offers some more empirical support to the philosophical discussion of polarization previously surveyed. Understanding group polarization is vital to combatting the way in which polarization threatens to undermine societal progress towards justice.)

- What is the law of group polarization?
- Reflecting on your own experiences, does the law *seem* true?
- How do the author's major points bear on the belief vs. group polarization distinction we discussed last class session?

Tuesday, March 31: Epistemic Bubbles and Echo Chambers

C. Thi Nguyen, “Echo Chambers and Epistemic Bubbles” in *Episteme* (20 pgs.)

(This is the most important paper philosophical paper ever written on echo chambers and epistemic bubbles. This reading helps students synthesize their experiences with consuming news media as well experiences with their friends and family with the political beliefs they currently hold.)

- What is an echo chamber?
- What is an epistemic bubble?
- Do you think there is a practically important reason to make the distinction between these two categories, or is the distinction merely a theoretical and abstract one?

Thursday, April 2: Social Media

Regina Rini, “Fake News and Partisan Epistemology” (14 pgs.)

(This article is a helpful summary of the relationship between the media/social media and growing partisanship in American politics. In order to be a just citizen, students must grapple with the role social media plays in the uptake of political beliefs and values.)

- What does the author mean by the term “partisan epistemology”?
- What do you take the author's overarching *opinion about* or *attitude towards* partisan epistemology to be?
- What duties (if any) do you think social media companies bear when it comes to creating a more just and equitable society?

Tuesday, April 7: Social Media

Elizabeth Edenberg and Michael Hannon, “Weaponized Skepticism: An Analysis of Social Media Deception as Applied Political Epistemology” in *Political Epistemology* (17 pgs.)

(This article exposes students to some of the recent R1 scholarship within the growing field of political epistemology, which deals with the nature of political belief and knowledge. It helps students critically reflect on their own social media habits and how these habits either are or are *not* forming them into more just citizens who have nuanced views on such crucial topics as diversity, equity, and inclusion.)

- What do the authors mean by “testimony”?
- Do the kinds of concerns highlighted by this article provide justification for banning certain social media platforms altogether?
- What duties do you think social media companies bear when it comes to allowing for the free discussion of a diversity of ideas?

Thursday, April 9: Religion and Political Reasoning

Dan Koev, [The Influence of State Favoritism on Established Religions and Their Competitors](#)” in *Politics and Religion*

(This is a fairly recent synthesis of empirical and theoretical research on the connection between religion and State power, the study of which prompts students to explore the connection between religion and political power in an ideally just and inclusive society.)

- What do you think is the best interpretation of what the American founders intended by “the separation of church and state?”
- What role (if any) do you think religion should play in political discourse?
- Do you agree with the sociological relationship the author posits between religion and politics is intuitively correct—why or why not?

Tuesday, April 14: Religion and Political Reasoning

Richard John Neuhaus, excerpts from *The Naked Public Square: Religion and Democracy in America* (~30 pgs.)

(This is a famous and influential text at the intersection of religious, cultural, and political theory, which argues for a particular understanding of the Church-State relationship within American society. Students will be encouraged to think critically about the undergirding concepts of justice, culture, diversity, equity, and inclusion employed by the author, asking if they accord with students’ different conceptions of justice.)

- What do you make of the subject of patriotism, and do you agree with the author that patriotism can often be a virtue?
- If patriotism can sometimes be a morally virtuous attitude, what are the conditions or traits that a society must have in order to warrant such patriotism?
- What is your reaction to the author’s claim that shared religion is necessary to establish a stable moral basis for society?

Thursday, April 16: Religion and Political Reasoning

Richard John Neuhaus, excerpts from *The Naked Public Square: Religion and Democracy in America* (~30 pgs.)

(This is a famous and influential text at the intersection of religious, cultural, and political theory, which argues for a particular understanding of the Church-State relationship within American

society. Students will be encouraged to think critically about the undergirding concepts of justice, culture, diversity, equity, and inclusion employed by the author, asking if they accord with students' different conceptions of justice.)

- Do you think all religions should be granted the same rights and privileges in public life, or do certain religions merit greater or less support from the State?
- Do you think the author places *too* much emphasis on the role of religion in the political process over other categories such as race and culture?
- Do you think the American emphasis on “the separation of church and State” ends up unfairly privileging those with a secular view of the world over religious individuals?

Tuesday, April 21: Debate Day

- Debates are designed to equip students with the ability to view difficult intellectual, political, and social issues from a number of perspectives outside of their own. Students will be assigned a position to defend on a particular issue (regardless if this is the position they *actually* hold), and must employ skills and knowledge acquired throughout the course to persuade their fellow peers of the position in question.

Thursday, April 23: Final Exam Review Day

Final Exam

VII. University Policy Statements

Academic Misconduct

- It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee ([Faculty Rule 3335-5-48.7 \(B\)](#)). For additional information, see the [Code of Student Conduct](#).

Disability Services

- The university strives to maintain a healthy and accessible environment to support student learning in and out of the classroom. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic, or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion.



- If you are ill and need to miss class, including if you are staying home and away from others while experiencing symptoms of a viral infection or fever, please let me know immediately. In cases where illness interacts with an underlying medical condition, please consult with Student Life Disability Services to request reasonable accommodations. You can connect with them at slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; or slds.osu.edu.

Religious Accommodations

- Ohio State has had a longstanding practice of making reasonable academic accommodations for students' religious beliefs and practices in accordance with applicable law. In 2023, Ohio State updated its practice to align with new state legislation. Under this new provision, students must be in early communication with their instructors regarding any known accommodation requests for religious beliefs and practices, providing notice of specific dates for which they request alternative accommodations within 14 days after the first instructional day of the course. Instructors in turn shall not question the sincerity of a student's religious or spiritual belief system in reviewing such requests and shall keep requests for accommodations confidential.
- With sufficient notice, instructors will provide students with reasonable alternative accommodations with regard to examinations and other academic requirements with respect to students' sincerely held religious beliefs and practices by allowing up to three absences each semester for the student to attend

or participate in religious activities. Examples of religious accommodations can include, but are not limited to, rescheduling an exam, altering the time of a student's presentation, allowing make-up assignments to substitute for missed class work, or flexibility in due dates or research responsibilities. If concerns arise about a requested accommodation, instructors are to consult their tenure initiating unit head for assistance.

- A student's request for time off shall be provided if the student's sincerely held religious belief or practice severely affects the student's ability to take an exam or meet an academic requirement and the student has notified their instructor, in writing during the first 14 days after the course begins, of the date of each absence. Although students are required to provide notice within the first 14 days after a course begins, instructors are strongly encouraged to work with the student to provide a reasonable accommodation if a request is made outside the notice period. A student may not be penalized for an absence approved under this policy.
- If students have questions or disputes related to academic accommodations, they should contact their course instructor, and then their department or college office. For questions or to report discrimination or harassment based on religion, individuals should contact the [Civil Rights Compliance Office](#). (Policy: [Religious Holidays, Holy Days and Observances](#)).

Intellectual Diversity

- Ohio State is committed to fostering a culture of open inquiry and intellectual diversity within the classroom. This course will cover a range of information and



may include discussions or debates about controversial issues, beliefs, or policies. Any such discussions and debates are intended to support understanding of the approved curriculum and relevant course objectives rather than promote any specific point of view. Students will be assessed on principles applicable to the field of study and the content covered in the course. Preparing students for citizenship includes helping them develop critical thinking skills that will allow them to reach their own conclusions regarding complex or controversial matters.

GE Theme course submission worksheet: Citizenship for a Diverse and Just World

Overview

Courses in the GE Themes aim to provide students with opportunities to explore big picture ideas and problems within the specific practice and expertise of a discipline or department. Although many Theme courses serve within disciplinary majors or minors, by requesting inclusion in the General Education, programs are committing to the incorporation of the goals of the focal theme and the success and participation of students from outside of their program.

Each category of the GE has specific learning goals and Expected Learning Outcomes (ELOs) that connect to the big picture goals of the program. ELOs describe the knowledge or skills students should have by the end of the course. Courses in the GE Themes must meet the ELOs common for **all** GE Themes and those specific to the Theme, in addition to any ELOs the instructor has developed specific to that course. All courses in the GE must indicate that they are part of the GE and include the Goals and ELOs of their GE category on their syllabus.

The prompts in this form elicit information about how this course meets the expectations of the GE Themes. The form will be reviewed by a group of content experts (the Theme Advisory) and by a group of curriculum experts (the Theme Panel), with the latter having responsibility for the ELOs and Goals common to all themes (those things that make a course appropriate for the GE Themes) and the former having responsibility for the ELOs and Goals specific to the topic of **this** Theme.

Briefly describe how this course connects to or exemplifies the concept of this Theme (Citizenship)

In a sentence or two, explain how this class “fits” within the focal Theme. This will help reviewers understand the intended frame of reference for the course-specific activities described below.

(enter text here)

How Politics Breaks Your Brain Worksheet Responses

Briefly describe how this course connects to or exemplifies the concept of this Theme (Citizenship)

This course understands citizenship as far more than a static condition. Readings, discussions, and assignments will challenge students to see citizenship as a *relationship* between diverse individuals and their national or global community, one that carries with it certain rights and responsibilities. To be a fully engaged and effective citizen in an increasingly diverse society, one must specifically cultivate good habits of political reasoning. “How Politics Breaks Your Brain” asks students to do so, critically reflecting on the role of political reasoning in sustaining a just and diverse body politic, and improving their own political reasoning skills in the process.

ELO 1.1

This course synthesizes work from a variety of academic disciplines as it pertains to the topic of citizenship for a diverse and just world. It will enable students to engage in critical and logical thinking by diving into cutting-edge philosophical work on the topic of political reasoning (for example, Regini Rini’s “Fake News and Partisan Epistemology,” and Richard John Neuhaus’s *The Naked Public Square*). Students will also engage various historically influential texts such as Alexis de Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America*, critically investigating these authors’ insights about freedom of consciousness (for example, on Tuesday, January 27th, students will be asked to consider Tocqueville’s primary insight about the ability of Americans to think freely) and to share their own perspective on the matter. Students will also synthesize various themes pertinent to the topic of political reasoning (e.g. pluralism, social identity, party politics, echo chambers, and mass media) through several assignments: their political reasoning paper, their participation in debates, and their midterm and final exams. In their political reasoning paper, for example, students will critically reflect on their own processes of political reasoning by 1) identifying a view they hold that was formed via a non-ideal political reasoning, 2) drawing on course readings and concepts of political reasoning to identify which factors or mechanisms may have played a role in shaping these views, 3) explaining the future research and other specific steps they will take correct the deficiencies in their political reasoning, and 4) articulating how their view on a political issues has evolved. Students will also exercise critical thinking regarding citizenship by engaging in four structured debates throughout the semester. These debates will surround topics such as the desirability of deferring to political experts rather than democratic political processes.

ELO 1.2:

Students will engage in advanced, in-depth, scholarly exploration of the topic of political reasoning, which is of central importance to the topic of citizenship for a just and diverse world. This course helps students engage with the topic of political reasoning through a series of carefully chosen readings, in-class discussions, and structured debates. In week 4, for example, students will

critically explore Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* through class discussion on the following questions: What is Tocqueville's primary insight about the ability of Americans to think freely? Do you agree with Tocqueville's conclusion on this matter? What (if anything) do you think Tocqueville misses about the nature of American society in his reflections? Students will also critically examine the work of political theorists (J.S. Mill), critical theorists (Charles Mills), social psychologists (Regina Rini), religious scholars (Richard John Neuhaus), and analytic philosophers (C. Thi Nguyen), applying and testing their knowledge through daily quizzes on the subject matter. They will also have to select at least one concept that is central to political reasoning (e.g. polarization, partisan deference, the expert-identification problem, etc.) and spell out the connection between this concept and a particular political belief they currently hold (e.g. pro-life, pro-choice, universal healthcare, open borders, etc.).

ELO 2.1:

In all of the course activities—daily discussions, reading comprehension quizzes, four debates, a midterm and final exam, and a political reasoning paper—students will be challenged to identify, describe, and synthesize multiple methodological approaches to the subject matter of political reasoning, including those from analytic philosophy (C. Thi Nguyen), political theory (J.S. Mill), social psychology (Regina Rini), and critical theory (Charles Mills). They will apply these methods to the topic of citizenship for a just and diverse world by responding to questions (through writing and speaking) such as: What are the potential strengths and shortcomings of Robert Talisse's proposed solutions to polarization? What responsibilities (if any) do social media companies have as it pertains to policing the content on their platforms? Many of the exam questions and class discussions will prompt contemplation of how the course themes apply to real-world experiences, which will activate and empower students to apply the theoretical content of the course to their day-to-day lives. For example, students will be asked to discuss what they see as the boundaries of the concept of citizenship, and whether they think citizenship should be a necessary requirement for participation in certain parts of the democratic process. They will also be asked to consider what the potential benefits and limits of diverse perspectives are when it comes to deliberating about matters of justice, including as it applies to very controversial moral and political issues.

ELO 2.2:

Students will demonstrate a stronger and evolving sense of self as a learner through reflection on the most common pitfalls of political reasoning (including polarization, echo chambers, partisan deference, fake news, etc.) in their own lives and within society at large. They will be challenged to do this through class discussions, exam questions such as: Are there certain *areas of life* or *topics* where you do not want to have to decide things for yourself? If so, where do you think this sentiment derives from (your parents, what you're taught in school, social media, etc.)? As another example, the political reasoning paper will require that students identify and reflect on how a method of non-ideal political reasoning has affected their perspective on a political view they hold. Please see the assignment description on the syllabus for more comprehensive details. Through

these activities, students will improve at self-assessment as it pertains to political reasoning and engagement, spurring them towards greater and more creative problem-solving capacities, energizing them to apply these capacities to pressing social and political issues.

ELO 3.1:

Citizenship is a multi-faceted, constantly evolving concept, and the readings and course structure reflect this. Course readings are selected from authors of various backgrounds and political viewpoints so as to help students learn how to describe and analyze a range of perspectives on what constitutes citizenship for a just and diverse world. For example, Charles Mills's "White Ignorance" constitutes one of the most important contributions of critical theory to the shaping of the modern dialectic surrounding race, politics, and the role of higher education in knowledge production. It is also put into conversation with other, more recent pieces within the tradition of analytic philosophy that have been either explicitly or implicitly shaped by Mill's work (including some of the readings in applied political epistemology). Also, Richard John Neuhaus's *The Naked Public Square* is a foundational and vital book for the intersection of public policy and religion in American life, enabling students to grapple with culturally influential religious and theological conceptions of citizenship that are prominent both in the United States and around the world.

ELO 3.2:

Students are increasingly required to have intercultural competence as global citizens, and this course will help them develop it. During the first day of class, for example, students will establish norms for class discussions and debates. These norms of communication serve to empower and equip students to engage individuals and groups of many different backgrounds, bridging various gender, cultural, religious, and racial divides. Through daily discussion and participation in 4 debates throughout the semester (graded in part on their active and civil participation), students will learn how to communicate more effectively across lines of difference. The debates are especially designed to equip students with the ability to view difficult intellectual, political, and social issues from a number of perspectives outside of their own. Students will be assigned a position to defend on a particular issue (regardless of if this is the position they *actually* hold), and must employ skills and knowledge acquired throughout the course to persuade their fellow peers of the position in question. Through exposure to culturally and ideologically diverse authors (from J.S. Mill to C. Thi Nguyen, Cass Sunstein to Alexis de Tocqueville), and to diverse methodological tools for understanding political issues (including analytic philosophy, political theory, social psychology, critical theory, etc.), students will gain intercultural competency—a key skill for healthy global citizenship.

ELO 4.1:

Much of the motivation for the recent work in political reasoning involves matters of diversity, equity, and inclusion. There is also a lot of philosophical work and political science scholarship pertaining to the phenomenon of deferring to the platform of a group or political party. This course reflects these scholarly emphases, challenging students to examine, critique, and evaluate their political expressions and implications. Through reading assignments, discussion, four debates, and the political reasoning papers, students will grapple with intellectual arguments about the value of disagreement and diversity (e.g. Neuhaus's *The Naked Public Square* and J.S. Mill's *On Liberty*), as well as some of the political and social challenges presented by various kinds of diversity (echo

chambers, expressive discourse, polarization, etc.). Students will synthesize streams of thought from multiple academic disciplines and apply this synthesis to active discussions and debates. On Tuesday, April 7, for example, students will consider the political power of social media to weaponize skepticism and encourage forms of political and social exclusion, reading Elizabeth Edenberg and Michael Hannon's "Weaponized Skepticism." In Week 8, students will also read Charles Mills' "White Ignorance" and discuss the relationship between systemic racism and political processes as well as what Mills means by the phrase "white ignorance." Through considering Mills juxtaposition of the categories of "the structural" and "the individual," students will consider the effect of systems of political, social, and religious power on individuals' lived experiences. There are a number of questions that arise in regard to the ethics, epistemology, history, etc. of this kind of partisan deference, and students will engage many of these questions in this course. In discussion, reading comprehensive, and exam questions, they will be asked to think critically about whether they agree with Mills' and others' arguments and the effect of institutional and societal structures on individuals' freedom of consciousness. In Weeks 12 and 13, students will also consider the diverse roles that religion plays in political reasoning, democratic participation, and political polarization.

ELO 4.2:

Students will analyze and critique the intersection of concepts of justice, difference, and citizenship, confronting how categories such as race, gender, and religion challenge or bolster existing power structures and democratic processes. For example, on Tuesday, March 10, students will consider the relationship between race, gender, and political reasoning by reading Claire Cain Miller's "Many Gen Z Men Feel Left Behind. Some See Trump as an Answer," and Rose Horowitz's "Are Gen Z Men and Women Really Drifting Apart?" In four structured debates throughout the semester, students will also apply logical reasoning and political reasoning concepts to develop arguments about the appropriate role of religion in political discourse, the effect of race and social identities on political polarization, and the feasibility of in a highly pluralistic society. In class discussions, students will also examine the cultural, social, and political systems shaping academic disciplines and scholars' methodological approaches and arguments (for example, how has Cass Sunstein's sociopolitical context shaped his perspective on the law of group polarization, and how might Neuhaus's *The Naked Public Square* reflect his own religious beliefs?)

Connect this course to the Goals and ELOs shared by *all* Themes

Below are the Goals and ELOs common to all Themes. In the accompanying table, for each ELO, describe the activities (discussions, readings, lectures, assignments) that provide opportunities for students to achieve those outcomes. The answer should be concise and use language accessible to colleagues outside of the submitting department or discipline. The specifics of the activities matter—listing “readings” without a reference to the topic of those readings will not allow the reviewers to understand how the ELO will be met. However, the panel evaluating the fit of the course to the Theme will review this form in conjunction with the syllabus, so if readings, lecture/discussion topics, or other specifics are provided on the syllabus, it is not necessary to reiterate them within this form. The ELOs are expected to vary in their “coverage” in terms of number of activities or emphasis within the course. Examples from successful courses are shared on the next page.

Goal 1: Successful students will analyze an important topic or idea at a more advanced and in-depth level than the foundations. In this context, “advanced” refers to courses that are e.g., synthetic, rely on research or cutting-edge findings, or deeply engage with the subject matter, among other possibilities.

Goal 2: Successful students will integrate approaches to the theme by making connections to out-of-classroom experiences with academic knowledge or across disciplines and/or to work they have done in previous classes and that they anticipate doing in future.

	Course activities and assignments to meet these ELOs
ELO 1.1 Engage in critical and logical thinking.	
ELO 1.2 Engage in an advanced, in-depth, scholarly exploration of the topic or ideas within this theme.	
ELO 2.1 Identify, describe, and synthesize approaches or experiences.	
ELO 2.2 Demonstrate a developing sense of self as a learner through reflection, self-assessment, and creative work, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts.	

Example responses for proposals within “Citizenship” (from Sociology 3200, Comm 2850, French 2803):

ELO 1.1 Engage in critical and logical thinking.	<i>This course will build skills needed to engage in critical and logical thinking about immigration and immigration related policy through: Weekly reading response papers which require the students to synthesize and critically evaluate cutting-edge scholarship on immigration; Engagement in class-based discussion and debates on immigration-related topics using evidence-based logical reasoning to evaluate policy positions; Completion of an assignment which build skills in analyzing empirical data on immigration (Assignment #1)</i>
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	<i>Completion 3 assignments which build skills in connecting individual experiences with broader population-based patterns (Assignments #1, #2, #3)</i> <i>Completion of 3 quizzes in which students demonstrate comprehension of the course readings and materials.</i>
ELO 2.1 <i>Identify, describe, and synthesize approaches or experiences.</i>	<i>Students engage in advanced exploration of each module topic through a combination of lectures, readings, and discussions.</i> <u><i>Lecture</i></u> <i>Course materials come from a variety of sources to help students engage in the relationship between media and citizenship at an advanced level. Each of the 12 modules has 3-4 lectures that contain information from both peer-reviewed and popular sources. Additionally, each module has at least one guest lecture from an expert in that topic to increase students' access to people with expertise in a variety of areas.</i> <u><i>Reading</i></u> <i>The textbook for this course provides background information on each topic and corresponds to the lectures. Students also take some control over their own learning by choosing at least one peer-reviewed article and at least one newspaper article from outside the class materials to read and include in their weekly discussion posts.</i> <u><i>Discussions</i></u> <i>Students do weekly discussions and are given flexibility in their topic choices in order to allow them to take some control over their education. They are also asked to provide information from sources they've found outside the lecture materials. In this way, they are able to explore areas of particular interest to them and practice the skills they will need to gather information about current events, analyze this information, and communicate it with others.</i> <i>Activity Example: Civility impacts citizenship behaviors in many ways. Students are asked to choose a TED talk from a provided list (or choose another speech of their interest) and summarize and evaluate what it says about the relationship between civility and citizenship. Examples of Ted Talks on the list include Steven Petrow on the difference between being polite and being civil, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's talk on how a single story can perpetuate stereotypes, and Claire Wardle's talk on how diversity can enhance citizenship.</i>
ELO 2.2 <i>Demonstrate a developing sense of self as a learner through reflection, self-assessment, and creative work, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts.</i>	<i>Students will conduct research on a specific event or site in Paris not already discussed in depth in class. Students will submit a 300-word abstract of their topic and a bibliography of at least five reputable academic and mainstream sources. At the end of the semester they will submit a 5-page research paper and present their findings in a 10-minute oral and visual presentation in a small-group setting in Zoom.</i> <i>Some examples of events and sites:</i> <i>The Paris Commune, an 1871 socialist uprising violently squelched by conservative forces</i>

	<i>Jazz-Age Montmartre, where a small community of African-Americans—including actress and singer Josephine Baker, who was just inducted into the French Pantheon—settled and worked after World War I.</i> <i>The Vélodrome d’hiver Roundup, 16-17 July 1942, when 13,000 Jews were rounded up by Paris police before being sent to concentration camps</i> <i>The Marais, a vibrant Paris neighborhood inhabited over the centuries by aristocrats, then Jews, then the LGBTQ+ community, among other groups.</i>
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Goals and ELOs unique to Citizenship for a Diverse and Just World

Below are the Goals and ELOs specific to this Theme. As above, in the accompanying Table, for each ELO, describe the activities (discussions, readings, lectures, assignments) that provide opportunities for students to achieve those outcomes. The answer should be concise and use language accessible to colleagues outside of the submitting department or discipline. The ELOs are expected to vary in their “coverage” in terms of number of activities or emphasis within the course. Examples from successful courses are shared on the next page.

GOAL 3: Successful students will explore and analyze a range of perspectives on local, national, or global citizenship, and apply the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that constitute citizenship.

GOAL 4: Successful students will examine notions of justice amidst difference and analyze and critique how these interact with historically and socially constructed ideas of citizenship and membership within societies, both within the US and/or around the world.

	Course activities and assignments to meet these ELOs
ELO 3.1 Describe and analyze a range of perspectives on what constitutes citizenship <u>and</u> how it differs across political, cultural, national, global, and/or historical communities.	
ELO 3.2 Identify, reflect on, and apply the knowledge, skills and dispositions required for intercultural competence as a global citizen.	
ELO 4.1 Examine, critique, and evaluate various expressions and implications of diversity, equity, inclusion, and explore a variety of lived experiences.	
ELO 4.2 Analyze and critique the intersection of concepts of justice, difference, citizenship, and how these interact with cultural traditions, structures of power and/or advocacy for social change.	

Example responses for proposals within “Citizenship” (Hist/Relig. Studies 3680, Music 3364; Soc 3200):

ELO 3.1 Describe and analyze a range of perspectives on what constitutes citizenship <u>and</u> how it differs across political, cultural,	<i>Citizenship could not be more central to a topic such as immigration/migration. As such, the course content, goals, and expected learning outcomes are all, almost by definition, engaged with a range of perspectives on local, national, and global citizenship.</i>
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<i>national, global, and/or historical communities.</i>	<i>Throughout the class students will be required to engage with questions about what constitutes citizenship and how it differs across contexts.</i> <i>The course content addresses citizenship questions at the global (see weeks #3 and #15 on refugees and open border debates), national (see weeks #5, 7-#14 on the U.S. case), and the local level (see week #6 on Columbus). Specific activities addressing different perspectives on citizenship include Assignment #1, where students produce a demographic profile of a U.S.-based immigrant group, including a profile of their citizenship statuses using U.S.-based regulatory definitions. In addition, Assignment #3, which has students connect their family origins to broader population-level immigration patterns, necessitates a discussion of citizenship. Finally, the critical reading responses have the students engage the literature on different perspectives of citizenship and reflect on what constitutes citizenship and how it varies across communities.</i>
<i>ELO 3.2</i> <i>Identify, reflect on, and apply the knowledge, skills and dispositions required for intercultural competence as a global citizen.</i>	<i>This course supports the cultivation of "intercultural competence as a global citizen" through rigorous and sustained study of multiple forms of musical-political agency worldwide, from the grass-roots to the state-sponsored. Students identify varied cultural expressions of "musical citizenship" each week, through their reading and listening assignments, and reflect on them via online and in-class discussion. It is common for us to ask probing and programmatic questions about the musical-political subjects and cultures we study. What are the possibilities and constraints of this particular version of musical citizenship? What might we carry forward in our own lives and labors as musical citizens Further, students are encouraged to apply their emergent intercultural competencies as global, musical citizens in their midterm report and final project, in which weekly course topics inform student-led research and creative projects.</i>
<i>ELO 4.1</i> <i>Examine, critique, and evaluate various expressions and implications of diversity, equity, inclusion, and explore a variety of lived experiences.</i>	<i>Through the historical and contemporary case studies students examine in HIST/RS 3680, they have numerous opportunities to examine, critique, and evaluate various expressions and implications of diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as a variety of lived experiences. The cases highlight the challenges of living in religiously diverse societies, examining a range of issues and their implications. They also consider the intersections of religious difference with other categories of difference, including race and gender. For example, during the unit on US religious freedom, students consider how incarcerated Black Americans and Native Americans have experienced questions of freedom and equality in dramatically different ways than white Protestants. In a weekly reflection post, they address this question directly. In the unit on marriage and sexuality, they consider different ways that different social groups have experienced the regulation of marriage in Israel and Malaysia in ways that do not correspond simplistically to gender (e.g. different women's groups with very different perspectives on the issues).</i> <i>In their weekly reflection posts and other written assignments, students are invited to analyze the implications of different regulatory models for questions of diversity, equity, and inclusion. They do so not in a simplistic sense of assessing which model is</i>

	<i>"right" or "best" but in considering how different possible outcomes might shape the concrete lived experience of different social groups in different ways. The goal is not to determine which way of doing things is best, but to understand why different societies manage these questions in different ways and how their various expressions might lead to different outcomes in terms of diversity and inclusion. They also consider how the different social and demographic conditions of different societies shape their approaches (e.g. a historic Catholic majority in France committed to laicite confronting a growing Muslim minority, or how pluralism *within* Israeli Judaism led to a fragile and contested status quo arrangement). Again, these goals are met most directly through weekly reflection posts and students' final projects, including one prompt that invites students to consider Israel's status quo arrangement from the perspective of different social groups, including liberal feminists, Orthodox and Reform religious leaders, LGBTQ communities, interfaith couples, and others.</i>
ELO 4.2 <i>Analyze and critique the intersection of concepts of justice, difference, citizenship, and how these interact with cultural traditions, structures of power and/or advocacy for social change.</i>	<i>As students analyze specific case studies in HIST/RS 3680, they assess law's role in and capacity for enacting justice, managing difference, and constructing citizenship. This goal is met through lectures, course readings, discussion, and written assignments. For example, the unit on indigenous sovereignty and sacred space invites students to consider why liberal systems of law have rarely accommodated indigenous land claims and what this says about indigenous citizenship and justice. They also study examples of indigenous activism and resistance around these issues. At the conclusion of the unit, the neighborhood exploration assignment specifically asks students to take note of whether and how indigenous land claims are marked or acknowledged in the spaces they explore and what they learn from this about citizenship, difference, belonging, and power. In the unit on legal pluralism, marriage, and the law, students study the personal law systems in Israel and Malaysia. They consider the structures of power that privilege certain kinds of communities and identities and also encounter groups advocating for social change. In their final projects, students apply the insights they've gained to particular case studies. As they analyze their selected case studies, they are required to discuss how the cases reveal the different ways justice, difference, and citizenship intersect and how they are shaped by cultural traditions and structures of power in particular social contexts. They present their conclusions in an oral group presentation and in an individually written final paper. Finally, in their end of semester letter to professor, they reflect on how they issues might shape their own advocacy for social change in the future.</i>

Subject: RE: Chase Center Concurrence Request
Date: Thursday, July 17, 2025 at 2:19:43 PM Eastern Daylight Time
From: Snyder, Anastasia
To: Fortier, Jeremy
CC: Schoen, Brian
Attachments: image001.png, image002.png

Hello. I've heard back from everyone in EHE and there are no concurrence concerns about the course syllabi you forwarded. Best of luck with your new academic programs.

Sincerely,
Tasha



Anastasia R. Snyder
Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs
College of Education and Human Ecology
The Ohio State University
Snyder.893@osu.edu
614-688-4169

From: Fortier, Jeremy <fortier.28@osu.edu>
Sent: Monday, July 14, 2025 8:20 AM
To: Snyder, Anastasia <snyder.893@osu.edu>
Cc: Schoen, Brian <schoen.110@osu.edu>
Subject: Re: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Hi Tasha,

I wanted to reach out regarding the concurrence requests below, because while the exigencies of building a new program compel Brian Schoen I to press ahead in the concurrence process, we also had constructive discussions with several units last week, and hope to do the same with Education this week if it would be helpful. I don't want to burden your calendar, but let us know if we can answer any questions over the next few days.

All best,

Jeremy

From: Snyder, Anastasia <snyder.893@osu.edu>

Date: Thursday, July 3, 2025 at 10:30 AM

To: Fortier, Jeremy <fortier.28@osu.edu>

Cc: Schoen, Brian <schoen.110@osu.edu>

Subject: RE: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Hi Jeremy,

Thank you for your email. I will share these syllabi with the relevant programs to get their feedback and concurrence. I will follow up when I hear back from them. Being summer time, many faculty are slow to respond to email since they are off-duty. I will request a review as soon as possible though.

Sincerely,
Tasha



Anastasia R. Snyder
Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs
College of Education and Human Ecology
The Ohio State University
Snyder.893@osu.edu
614-688-4169

From: Fortier, Jeremy <fortier.28@osu.edu>

Sent: Wednesday, July 2, 2025 12:54 PM

To: Snyder, Anastasia <snyder.893@osu.edu>

Cc: Schoen, Brian <schoen.110@osu.edu>

Subject: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Hi Tasha,

This summer, I've been working with the Chase Center's incoming faculty and Associate Director Brian Schoen (copied on this e-mail) to develop a suite of courses for a Civics, Law, and Leadership degree Chase will be offering (CIVICLL). The result is the twelve syllabi attached to this e-mail. The courses cover a lot of territory in terms of subject matter and disciplinary approaches, but the course titles should give you a good sense of which syllabi may be most

relevant to the College of Education and Human Ecology for concurrence purposes.

Let me know if we can answer any questions as the concurrence process moves forward. I know there's a lot to dig into here, but we're eager to move forward with some exciting courses as we build a new program.

All best,

Jeremy

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THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

CHASE CENTER FOR CIVICS, CULTURE,
AND SOCIETY

Jeremy Fortier

Assistant Director, Salmon P. Chase Center for Civics, Culture, and Society

The Ohio State University

Latest Article: "[Why to be a Civic Constitutionalist](#)"

Subject: Re: Chase Center Concurrence Request
Date: Tuesday, July 15, 2025 at 11:07:58 AM Eastern Daylight Time
From: Ralph, Anne
To: Fortier, Jeremy
CC: Schoen, Brian
Attachments: image001.png, image003.png

Jeremy and Brian,

We have had the chance to review the syllabi you sent. Law is pleased to grant concurrence.

As you may know, Law is hoping to have an undergraduate course that fulfills the new American Civic Literacy requirement. I hope we can count on your partnership and support in that endeavor going forward.

Thanks,
Anne



Anne E. Ralph
Morgan E. Shipman Professor in Law
Associate Dean for Academic Affairs & Strategic Initiatives
Michael E. Moritz College of Law
55 West 12th Avenue | Columbus, OH 43210
614-247-4797 Office | ralph.52@osu.edu
Pronouns: she/her/hers

From: Ralph, Anne <ralph.52@osu.edu>
Date: Monday, July 14, 2025 at 3:08 PM
To: Fortier, Jeremy <fortier.28@osu.edu>
Cc: Schoen, Brian <schoen.110@osu.edu>
Subject: Re: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Hi, Jeremy and Brian,
Thanks for your email. We are partway through reviewing these, and I will get our concurrence note to you as soon as I can.
AER

Anne E. Ralph

Morgan E. Shipman Professor in Law

Associate Dean for Academic Affairs & Strategic Initiatives

Michael E. Moritz College of Law

55 West 12th Avenue | Columbus, OH 43210

614-247-4797 Office | ralph.52@osu.edu

Pronouns: she/her/hers

From: Fortier, Jeremy <fortier.28@osu.edu>
Date: Monday, July 14, 2025 at 8:18 AM
To: Ralph, Anne <ralph.52@osu.edu>
Cc: Schoen, Brian <schoen.110@osu.edu>
Subject: Re: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Hi Anne,

I wanted to reach out regarding the concurrence requests below, because while the exigencies of building a new program compel Brian Schoen I to press ahead in the concurrence process, we also had constructive discussions with several units last week, and hope to do the same with Moritz this week if it would be helpful. I don't want to burden your calendar, but let us know if we can answer any questions over the next few days.

All best,

Jeremy

From: Fortier, Jeremy <fortier.28@osu.edu>
Date: Wednesday, July 2, 2025 at 11:59 AM
To: Ralph, Anne <ralph.52@osu.edu>
Cc: Schoen, Brian <schoen.110@osu.edu>
Subject: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Hi Anne,

This summer, I've been working with the Chase Center's incoming faculty and Associate Director Brian Schoen (copied on this e-mail) to develop a suite of courses for a Civics, Law, and Leadership degree Chase will be offering (CIVICLL). The result is the twelve syllabi attached to this e-mail (more to follow down the road).

The courses cover a lot of territory in terms of subject matter and disciplinary approaches, but the course titles should give you a good sense of which syllabi may be most relevant to the Moritz College of Law for concurrence purposes.

Let me know if we can answer any questions as the concurrence process moves forward. I know there's a lot to dig into here, but we're eager to move forward with some exciting courses as we build a new program.

All best,

Jeremy

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THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

CHASE CENTER FOR CIVICS, CULTURE,
AND SOCIETY

Jeremy Fortier

Assistant Director, Salmon P. Chase Center for Civics, Culture, and Society

The Ohio State University

Latest Article: "[Why to be a Civic Constitutionalist](#)"

Subject: RE: Chase Center Concurrence Request
Date: Friday, July 18, 2025 at 12:16:50 PM Eastern Daylight Time
From: Greenbaum, Rob
To: Fortier, Jeremy
CC: Schoen, Brian, Clark, Jill
Attachments: image001.png, image002.png

Hi Jeremy,

The Glenn College is pleased to provide concurrence for the following eight classes:

American Religions
American Witch-Hunts
Freedom and Equality in American Literature
God and Science
Historical Political Economy
Love and Friendship
Shakespear's Lessons in Leadership
Pursuit of Happiness

While we do not necessarily have concerns about the remaining four,
Civic Friendship and Dialogue in American Democracy
How Politics Breaks your Brain
Presidential Crises in War and Peace
Evolution of Citizenship

we would prefer to have the relevant faculty in the college review the syllabi when they are back from summer break. Those are all proposed new GE classes, but I don't think our waiting until August does anything now to slow their getting into the queue for GE review.

I've also copied my colleague Jill Clark, who chairs our undergraduate studies committee.

Sincerely,

Rob



Robert T. Greenbaum

Associate Vice Provost for Academic Programs

Office of Academic Affairs

Professor, Associate Dean for Curriculum

John Glenn College of Public Affairs

350E Page Hall, 1810 College Road, Columbus, OH 43210

614-292-9578 Office / 614-292-2548 Fax

<https://glenn.osu.edu/rob-greenbaum>

Pronouns: he/him/his

From: Fortier, Jeremy <fortier.28@osu.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, July 2, 2025 1:03 PM
To: Greenbaum, Rob <greenbaum.3@osu.edu>
Cc: Schoen, Brian <schoen.110@osu.edu>
Subject: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Hi Rob,

This summer, I've been working with the Chase Center's incoming faculty and Associate Director Brian Schoen (copied on this e-mail) to develop a suite of courses for a Civics, Law, and Leadership degree Chase will be offering (CIVICLL). The result is the twelve syllabi attached to this e-mail (more to follow down the road).

The courses cover a lot of territory in terms of subject matter and disciplinary approaches, but the course titles should give you a good sense of which syllabi may be most relevant to the Glenn College for concurrence purposes.

Let me know if we can answer any questions as the concurrence process moves forward. I know there's a lot to dig into here, but we're eager to move forward with some exciting courses as we build a new program.

All best,

Jeremy

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THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

CHASE CENTER FOR CIVICS, CULTURE,
AND SOCIETY

Jeremy Fortier

Assistant Director, Salmon P. Chase Center for Civics, Culture, and Society

The Ohio State University

Latest Article: "[Why to be a Civic Constitutionalist](#)"

Subject: Re: Chase Center Concurrence Request
Date: Friday, August 15, 2025 at 2:52:08 PM Eastern Daylight Time
From: Schoen, Brian
To: Vankeerbergen, Bernadette, Martin, Andrew, Fortier, Jeremy
Attachments: image001.png, image002.png, image003.png, image001.png

Thank you Bernadette.



Brian Schoen
Associate Director, Salmon P. Chase Center for Civics, Culture, and Society
The Ohio State University
614-247-0672 | (c) 740-517-6967
Faculty and Associate Director for Academic Affairs
[Settling Ohio: First Peoples and Beyond](#), National Book Festival, Allen G. Noble Book Award
[Continent in Crisis: The Civil War in North America](#)

From: Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu>
Date: Friday, August 15, 2025 at 2:31 PM
To: Martin, Andrew <martin.1026@osu.edu>, Fortier, Jeremy <fortier.28@osu.edu>
Cc: Schoen, Brian <schoen.110@osu.edu>
Subject: RE: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Hello all,

I do not have any information that contradicts what we have below. So to the best of my knowledge, it's all accurate to me.

Thanks,
Bernadette

From: Martin, Andrew <martin.1026@osu.edu>
Sent: Friday, August 15, 2025 9:57 AM
To: Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu>; Fortier, Jeremy <fortier.28@osu.edu>
Cc: Schoen, Brian <schoen.110@osu.edu>
Subject: RE: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Sure, I think we are on the same page, but do take a look.

Andrew W. Martin

Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education
Professor of Sociology
114 University Hall, 230 North Oval Mall
Columbus, OH 43210
614-247-6641 Office
martin.1026@osu.edu

From: Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu>
Sent: Friday, August 15, 2025 9:57 AM
To: Fortier, Jeremy <fortier.28@osu.edu>; Martin, Andrew <martin.1026@osu.edu>
Cc: Schoen, Brian <schoen.110@osu.edu>
Subject: RE: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Hi Andrew and all,

Would you like me to look over all this to make sure it syncs with what I have? Or if you feel comfortable that you already have the necessary information, please let me know. I am happy to do whatever. But if you want me to double-check, please give me a bit of time this morning since it is, as everyone has noted, a bit messy and complex.

Many thanks,
Bernadette

Bernadette Vankeerbergen, Ph.D.

Assistant Dean, Curriculum
College of Arts and Sciences
114F University Hall, 230 North Oval Mall.
Columbus, OH 43210
Phone: 614-688-5679
<http://asccas.osu.edu>

From: Fortier, Jeremy <fortier.28@osu.edu>
Sent: Friday, August 15, 2025 9:34 AM
To: Martin, Andrew <martin.1026@osu.edu>; Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu>
Cc: Schoen, Brian <schoen.110@osu.edu>
Subject: Re: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Brian should follow up with you shortly (I know that he's always happy to engage departments but hasn't heard anything direct from PSYCH over the past month, including in the two weeks since we received the specific claim regarding overlap with PSYCH 2303 – which looks like a great course!).

Thanks for bearing with us. The system we've established for the second round of courses should be easier to manage...

From: Martin, Andrew <martin.1026@osu.edu>
Date: Friday, August 15, 2025 at 8:17 AM
To: Fortier, Jeremy <fortier.28@osu.edu>, Vankeerbergen, Bernadette
<vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu>
Cc: Schoen, Brian <schoen.110@osu.edu>
Subject: RE: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Ok, this is helpful. Brian, would you mind pinging psychology one more time, say early next week, and cc me? I can then ask them to respond more substantively.

Best
Andrew



Andrew W. Martin
Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education
Professor of Sociology
114 University Hall, 230 North Oval Mall
Columbus, OH 43210
614-247-6641 Office
martin.1026@osu.edu

From: Fortier, Jeremy <fortier.28@osu.edu>
Sent: Friday, August 15, 2025 9:15 AM
To: Martin, Andrew <martin.1026@osu.edu>; Vankeerbergen, Bernadette
<vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu>
Cc: Schoen, Brian <schoen.110@osu.edu>
Subject: Re: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Hi Andrew –

Thanks for this. Responses regarding three outstanding issues below (I should emphasize I don't mean to litigate the substance of these issues here, just clarifying the state of play for everyone's sake).

Let me know if I can add anything further.

All best,

Jeremy

From: Martin, Andrew <martin.1026@osu.edu>
Date: Friday, August 15, 2025 at 7:21 AM
To: Fortier, Jeremy <fortier.28@osu.edu>, Vankeerbergen, Bernadette
<vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu>
Cc: Schoen, Brian <schoen.110@osu.edu>

Subject: RE: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Hi Jeremy

Below are my responses in red, Berandette may have additional feedback. Broadly (with a couple of minor exceptions) I think we are in agreement where things are at.

We'll continue to update you on the most recent round of courses. I agree that this new process is working well.

Best

Andrew



Andrew W. Martin

Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education

Professor of Sociology

114 University Hall, 230 North Oval Mall

Columbus, OH 43210

614-247-6641 Office

martin.1026@osu.edu

From: Fortier, Jeremy <fortier.28@osu.edu>

Sent: Thursday, August 14, 2025 2:47 PM

To: Martin, Andrew <martin.1026@osu.edu>; Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu>

Cc: Schoen, Brian <schoen.110@osu.edu>

Subject: Re: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Here are my notes on where each course we submitted on 6/2 currently stands within ASC. Correct or clarify as appropriate:

- “American Religion(s).” Initial non-concurrence from SOCIOL and HISTORY. We have worked with SOCIOL to address their concerns (Cynthia Colen approved a revised syllabus this week, not sure if she’s been in touch with you). HISTORY continues to deny concurrence (Brian Schoen and Scott Levi have been in extensive and even productive discussions about these matters, but some deadlock appears inevitable).

ASC understood this course was delayed. Could you send Sociology’s concurrence?

Cynthia Colen emailed Brian Schoen and I on 8/12 to note that changes to the course satisfied SOCIOL’s concerns. You may want to follow up with her to confirm that this results in formally withdrawing non-concurrence.

- “American Witch-Hunts.” Non-concurrence from COMPSTD. This seems like a deadlock (Brian Schoen reached out to Hugh Urban, but hasn’t heard back in a while).

This is ASC’s understanding too. Feel free to cc me if you reach out to Hugh again.

- “Civic Friendship and Dialogue in American Democracy.” Initial concerns from CEHV have been addressed to everyone’s satisfaction.

Agreed, seems ok to move forward

- “Freedom and Equality in American Literature.” ENGLISH’s initial non-concurrence on our courses dealing with American literature has moved to “neither concurrence nor non-concurrence” (which we gather will remain their policy for our courses dealing with American literature, at least in the near future).

Agreed, seems ok to move forward

- “God and Science.” COMPSTD and PHILOS both provided non-concurrence. We have withdrawn the course.

This was ASC’s understanding too

- “Shakespeare’s Lessons in Leadership.” ENGLISH provided non-concurrence. We are reworking the proposal, which if it proceeds will not include Shakespeare in the title, and the course content will also be reconceived. So right now, this one is on the shelf but will come back in terms that ENGLISH should find more acceptable.

Also understood that Theatre had concerns regarding overlap with THEATRE 5771.10

Right, I should have noted this, but since we’re reworking the course, it’s not a pressing matter.

- “Presidential Crises in War and Peace.” We have reworked this syllabus substantially, and gather that the revision have satisfied POLITSC. They have also made progress with HISTORY, but full concurrence seems to require revising the syllabus further to a degree that we think constitutes “micro-management” of our curriculum (changing specific readings and case studies). We can’t agree to this (particularly since the course instructor has already gone a long way towards making the course material more inter-disciplinary, in the service of his initial learning objectives). So here as elsewhere, we’re deadlocked with HISTORY.

Thanks for the update on this, ASC knew about concerns from History and PS, thanks for letting us know about the latter

- “Love and Friendship.” This course appears broadly acceptable.

Agreed, seems ok to move forward

- “How Politics Breaks Your Brain.” This course appears broadly acceptable.

Agreed, seems ok to move forward

- “Historical Political Economy.” GEOG’s initial non-concurrence has shifted to “neither concurrence nor non-concurrence” (as communicated to Brian Schoen via email).

Understood that Political Science saw this as overlapping some with their POLITSC 3280 course, The Politics of Markets. If PS has concurred, please let us know

- “The Evolution of Citizenship.” HISTORY does not concur.

This was ASC’s understanding too

- “The Pursuits of Happiness.” We addressed initial concerns from CLASSICS, PSYCH has dropped its initial non-concurrence, and HISTORY does not concur.

Can you send us Psychology’s concurrence (last we saw was non-concurrence from them)

I may have over-stated here. We submitted the course on 7/2; on 7/17 PSYCH requested extension until 9/15 to review Pursuits of Happiness; on 7/31 PSYCH denied concurrence based on claim of overlap with PSYCH 2303, with syllabus for that course attached; later that same day Brian Schoen sent detailed response regarding overlap between those courses to Sarah Schoppe-Sullivan and Lisa Cravens-Brown, but did not receive a response then; Brian followed up on 8/12 with no response. So it seems that PSYCH is denying concurrence based on a particular point of claimed overlap, but is not responsive regarding the details of that claim.

In short: there are points of deadlock with HISTORY and COMPSTD. Other initial concerns have been allayed (albeit to varying degrees). Am I missing anything key?

Thanks again for your time with this (I think the system we’ve established for courses moving forward will be more efficient...)

All best,

Jeremy

From: Martin, Andrew <martin.1026@osu.edu>

Date: Thursday, August 14, 2025 at 12:47 PM

To: Fortier, Jeremy <fortier.28@osu.edu>, Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu>

Cc: Schoen, Brian <schoen.110@osu.edu>

Subject: Re: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Good idea! Can you send me what you have? I’ve been keeping a record of where I think we are at. We could then compare notes,

The Ohio State University

Andrew W. Martin

Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education

Professor of Sociology

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martin.1026@osu.edu

From: Fortier, Jeremy <fortier.28@osu.edu>

Sent: Thursday, August 14, 2025 1:14:01 PM

To: Martin, Andrew <martin.1026@osu.edu>; Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu>
Cc: Schoen, Brian <schoen.110@osu.edu>
Subject: Re: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Hi Andrew and Bernadette,

Would it be possible to send us an updated statement of where concurrence stands in Arts & Sciences for our initial set of course submissions?

I know the original submission procedure was a bit unwieldy (and I'm pleased we've settled on a more efficient procedure for courses moving forward), but there have been updates regarding the first set of courses, so it would be helpful to summarize where things stand with the various units (e.g., I know that we've worked with SOCIOL to navigate their initial concerns re: "American Religion(s)", but HISTORY's non-concurrence is probably still standing, etc).

If it's helpful, I could send you a summary of my understanding of where things stand on each course, and you could confirm or clarify.

I apologize for the burden! Thanks for your time with this. - Jeremy

From: Martin, Andrew <martin.1026@osu.edu>
Date: Monday, August 4, 2025 at 6:58 AM
To: Fortier, Jeremy <fortier.28@osu.edu>, Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu>
Cc: Schoen, Brian <schoen.110@osu.edu>
Subject: RE: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Hi Jeremy and Brian

Do you mind if I share this with the units that have denied concurrence, such as History and comparative studies (You may already have done so, but I wanted to make sure they were aware of your perspective on the courses). Again, if units continue to consider the course to be overlapping to a substantial degree to their existing offering, then that will be a matter for OAA to adjudicate.

Thanks
Andrew



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From: Fortier, Jeremy <fortier.28@osu.edu>

Sent: Saturday, August 2, 2025 2:58 PM
To: Martin, Andrew <martin.1026@osu.edu>; Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu>
Cc: Schoen, Brian <schoen.110@osu.edu>
Subject: Re: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Thanks, Andrew. I've responded to your questions in bold font below – just let me know if I can clarify further.

Let me add that although we've reached certain points of deadlock, this has been a learning process, and we will continue to work to engage everyone constructively moving forward.

From: Martin, Andrew <martin.1026@osu.edu>
Date: Friday, August 1, 2025 at 4:01 PM
To: Fortier, Jeremy <fortier.28@osu.edu>, Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu>
Cc: Schoen, Brian <schoen.110@osu.edu>
Subject: RE: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Hi Jeremy

Thanks for sharing this detailed response, this is very helpful. Couple of quick questions/updates for you:

1. It sounds like Chase has had some conversations with units like History and Comp Studies, but that you disagree about the concerns they've raised with potential overlap. That is of course your right. My question is, do you foresee any additional conversation with those units? Typically when there is disagreement and a solution cannot be found Randy Smith will get involved to adjudicate the matter.

Our engagement with these units will be ongoing (and, in fact, we've already been in touch with them about courses in the pipeline). However, we don't expect to reach agreement about our first slate of courses. Among the courses at issue, we have made some modifications to several syllabi and even removed one from consideration. If these changes are not satisfactory, we're at a deadlock.

2. As you know, a number of units have asked for more time to review courses. Fortunately, many of the larger units with more courses have already provided feedback. That being said, we do have a few remaining departments (many that are smaller with faculty performing multiple service roles) that have asked for more time. I will reach out to them and ask if, from the existing set of courses, are there any that raise immediate concerns about potential overlap and to share that feedback.

Our position is unchanged. We can't delay until the Fall. We recognize that we're making some big asks, but It's not feasible to build a new academic program by taking summers off. We also didn't anticipate that circulating courses over the summer would pose an insuperable obstacle since the College of Arts & Science's Concurrence Request [Form](#), and ASC's Curriculum and Assessment Operations [Manual](#), refer only to a two-week timeline (not qualified by time of year). OAA's Academic Organization, Curriculum, and Assessment [Handbook](#) also indicates no restrictions about sending courses for concurrence

over the summer. Brian Schoen's diligent research of previous program proposals indicated that constructive work can happen over the summer and that concurrence has been assumed when the two week limit has passed. I also received repeated requests for extra time during the concurrence process in the spring semester. So at some point we're just obligated to press ahead, and we're at that point.

I would add: we have been generous already and in effect gone well over two weeks beyond the original deadline and in another instance, we're going yet further where a unit has presented clear, constructive claims to us. Cases where we are pressing ahead involve syllabi where we believe the prima facie case against overlap is overwhelming, so that the burden of explanation reasonably falls on the units requesting more time. We are not trying to foreclose conversation, but we are balancing competing imperatives.

3. The Civic Friendship and How Politics Breaks Your Brain courses have indeed drawn little comment. We are asking Political Science and Philosophy to alert us quickly to any possible reservations. I'm hoping that will happen quite soon

We have been in touch with both departments, and have not received objections, and so we think concurrence should be assumed (as we take to be standard practice when details are not provided within the official two-week timeline).

4. On the political science front, they were a unit that did ask for more time, but have been providing some initial feedback (it looks like Marcus highlighted potential areas of overlap). Have you had a chance to engage with Marcus about these courses? A more definitive response from Political Science would be helpful, and I've nudged Marcus (as in the case of the two courses above).

We met with Marcus and our assessments of the courses did not seem far apart, but we have not had a more official statement from Political Science beyond that. The memo I provided on Friday gives a detailed account of how our courses are distinct from offerings in POLITSC, if that helps to produce a definitive statement from the department.

Best
Andrew



Andrew W. Martin

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From: Fortier, Jeremy <fortier.28@osu.edu>

Sent: Friday, August 1, 2025 3:43 PM

To: Martin, Andrew <martin.1026@osu.edu>; Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu>

Cc: Schoen, Brian <schoen.110@osu.edu>

Subject: Re: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Hi Andrew and Bernadette,

The Chase Center has spent the past several weeks consulting with individual departments in the College of Arts and Sciences about our first slate of course proposals. Those consultations have led to constructive adjustments in several courses, withdrawal of select proposals, and deadlock on several others which we are obligated to press ahead with.

Here is the state of play for each course submitted, followed by some remarks about the general principles that have guided our work in this process. Moreover, attached to this email you will find Word and PDF versions of a file which includes the information provided below, plus detailed, individualized responses regarding each ASC unit that provided a statement of non-concurrence.

- **“American Religion(s)”**. We are holding off on this course for another week, in order to revise in response to constructive discussions with SOCIOL. COMPSTD’s initial non-concurrence has been tempered if not rescinded after email exchanges, as detailed in the attached file; HISTORY’s objections are not germane, for reasons explained at length in the attached file.
- **“American Witch-Hunts.”** COMPSTD objects, on grounds we cannot agree to, for reasons detailed in the attached file.
- **“Civic Friendship and Dialogue in American Democracy.”** Initial concerns from CEHV have been resolved following consultations with that unit.
- **“Freedom and Equality in American Literature.”** Following extensive engagement between our units, the ENGLISH department has settled on providing neither concurrence nor non-concurrence for this course. We will proceed with the course, and will continue to engage with ENGLISH’s concerns moving forward.
- **“God and Science.”** COMPSTD objects, and we have decided to withdraw this course from the submission process, in order to study Ohio State’s full slate of course offerings more extensively. We may revisit this course in the future.
- **“Shakespeare’s Lessons in Leadership.”** ENGLISH and THEATRE both object. We do not fully assent to the rationales provided by these units, but we found our engagement with ENGLISH constructive and have opted to withdraw this course from our current round of submissions, and will subsequently submit a related but substantially revised course with a new title, that will survey culturally significant depictions of leadership. We gather that this procedure should at least partly allay ENGLISH’s concerns.
- **“Presidential Crises in War and Peace.”** HISTORY objects and POLITSC has tentative reservations. We have made some modifications to the syllabus in response, but do not find either unit’s claims compelling enough to prevent proceeding with the course proposal, for reasons detailed in the attached file.

- **“Love and Friendship.”** This course appears to be broadly acceptable, so we will proceed with it as is.
- **“How Politics Breaks Your Brain.”** This course appears to be broadly acceptable, so we will proceed with it as is.
- **“Historical Political Economy.”** GEOG initially objected, and then revised its position to neither concurrence nor non-concurrence. POLITSC expressed more tentative reservations. We respond to both units in detail in the attached file and will be proceeding with the course.
- **“The Evolution of Citizenship.”** HISTORY has declined to provide concurrence. We have made some modifications to the syllabus in response, but do not find HISTORY’s claims compelling enough to prevent proceeding with the course proposal, for reasons detailed in the attached file
- **“The Pursuit of Happiness.”** Initial concerns from CLASSICS were addressed via revisions to the syllabus. HISTORY objects more strongly, and PSYCH more tentatively. We have made some modifications to the syllabus in response, but do not find either unit’s claims compelling enough to prevent proceeding with the course proposal, for reasons detailed in the attached file.

As this summary indicates, we have made several substantive changes to our courses during this process. No less importantly, the concurrence process has driven our development of programmatic learning goals and outcomes for the Chase Center (listed on p. 10 of the attached file). These principles – which will be included with all our syllabi moving forward – should help to clarify, for students and faculty, what is distinct about the Chase Center’s curriculum.

Our development of programmatic learning goals and outcomes is partly a response to the inevitable conundrum that while the Chase Center is an intentionally interdisciplinary unit, “interdisciplinarity” is often more of a generally agreeable slogan than well-defined curricular approach. The Chase Center’s work is exciting and necessary because it promises to approach and define multi-disciplinarity in a more precise way, which does not replicate the distinct expertise of the disciplines housed in the Colleges of Arts & Sciences, but rather gives students and faculty incentives to engage with disciplines they might have otherwise not engaged. Our engagement with individual units in Arts & Sciences has sharpened our thinking about how to address this challenge most constructively.

That said, precisely because our work is interdisciplinary, we take it as axiomatic that particular topics, texts, or analytical tools cannot be claimed as the sole or even primary preserve of any one unit. Such a position would be inconsistent with standard curricular practices (particularly in the Arts & Sciences), at odds with the standards for concurrence we gather to be controlling from the Office of Academic Affairs (which emphasizes distinctness of learning outcomes and the overall objectives of a course, rather than the intricacies of day-to-day lectures and reading assignments), and fail to fulfill the Chase Center’s legislative mission (which directs us towards inter-disciplinarity).

It would be impossible to fulfill our mandate – and nor do we think it is in the general curricular interest of Ohio State – if particular topics, texts, or analytical tools are treated as the presumptive property of any unit. And notwithstanding the explicit or implicit premise of

comments we received from a few units, standard practices support our position. For instance: at Ohio State, students are regularly offered HISTART 2007, “Buddha to Bollywood: The Arts of India” and SASIA 3625 “Understanding Bollywood, Knowing India” – courses in different units that draw on shared artifacts in the service of distinct curricular objectives. Similarly, in the upcoming Autumn semester, students will be able to enroll in both POLITSCI 4553, “Game Theory for Political Scientists” and ECON 5001, “Game Theory in Economics” – courses which explore how shared analytical tools are used to address the interests of different disciplines. Moreover, in the past OSU’s Department of Political Science has offered a course in urban politics using as its primary text HBO’s *The Wire*. This was a common practice in Political Science departments during the first two decades of the twenty-first century. But *The Wire* certainly could be (and at many institutions has been) used as a primary “text” for courses in Sociology, Film & Television Studies, American Studies, or English, since there is a substantial body of scholarship on *The Wire* emerging from each of these disciplines. As this example indicates, building an inter-disciplinary curriculum which respects the distinctive expertise of different departments is a challenge for all of us, and reflects the reality that disciplinary boundaries are always being contested (both within disciplines and between them), while knowledge production and dissemination is an inherently interdisciplinary process. The Chase Center’s aim is to develop a well-defined and mutually beneficial approach to this curricular challenge (which certainly will not preclude alternative approaches to interdisciplinarity).

This is a learning process that we hope will continue, but we cannot make further progress without moving forward with our curriculum. We believe that the changes we have made so far provide a reasonable basis for moving forward with our curriculum.

The attached file provides more detailed responses to statements of non-concurrence from individual units, organized alphabetically.

From: Martin, Andrew <martin.1026@osu.edu>

Date: Thursday, July 17, 2025 at 11:12 AM

To: Fortier, Jeremy <fortier.28@osu.edu>, Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu>

Cc: Schoen, Brian <schoen.110@osu.edu>

Subject: RE: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Hi Jeremy and Brian

Attached please find ASC’s response to the Chase request for concurrence for 12 courses. As indicated, a number of units did either grant concurrence or did not respond. However, there are also a number of units that either indicated non-concurrence due to course overlap, or requested an extension until early Autumn semester when faculty are back on duty. So, given this, ASC cannot provide concurrence for the proposed courses.

I will note that the units that raised concerns about course overlap indicated a desire to engage with Chase to ensure that the proposed courses do not duplicate ASC offerings.

Note that we asked for a deadline of tomorrow for feedback, so it is possible that additional comments will be sent our way by then. We will be sure to forward them to you.

Best
Andrew



Andrew W. Martin

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From: Fortier, Jeremy <fortier.28@osu.edu>
Sent: Monday, July 14, 2025 7:52 AM
To: Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu>; Martin, Andrew <martin.1026@osu.edu>
Cc: Schoen, Brian <schoen.110@osu.edu>
Subject: Re: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Hi Bernadette and Andrew (who I think is back on the grid this week),

Over the last week Brian Schoen and I have benefited from the opportunity to discuss our concurrence requests with some departmental representatives, leading us to see more clearly paths forward for both the courses in question and for our larger curricular initiatives. It's genuinely rewarding to think through these issues with people who've done so much brilliant work on related matters, and our own work is better off for it.

This constructive work confirms the importance of the timeline considerations detailed in my earlier email. We can't position ourselves to build a new academic program by taking summers off (so to speak). Everything from the practical exigencies of offering courses to the principled substance of designing those courses within the context of a coherent curricular vision requires making tangible progress on matters large and small. To that end we're bound to forge ahead but hope to engage constructively with others along the way.

I mention all this because Brian will be occupied with conference travel on Thursday and Friday, and although I'm happy to field any queries as might be helpful, discussion with Brian earlier in the week promises to be most productive.

Andrew – I apologize for welcoming you back with this fresh stack of requests, but that's the state of the work ahead of us...

All best,

Jeremy

From: Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu>
Date: Monday, July 7, 2025 at 1:53 PM
To: Fortier, Jeremy <fortier.28@osu.edu>, Martin, Andrew <martin.1026@osu.edu>
Cc: Schoen, Brian <schoen.110@osu.edu>
Subject: RE: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Dear Jeremy,

I am afraid that it is routine practice to grant extensions & this is especially not uncommon during the Summer months. For example, we are currently waiting for a concurrence from the Dept of Computer Information Science (in Engineering) and they have told us that they cannot provide a response until the beginning of the Fall semester. About the concurrences for the Chase Center courses, we have already heard from 3 ASC departments who have indicated that they cannot fully respond until their faculty are back after August 15. (On the other hand, we have received full concurrences from three other depts.)

As an aside, I do know that Beth Hewitt (Chair of English) has a meeting planned with Brian Schoen this week & will share some of her concerns then.

Best,
Bernadette



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From: Fortier, Jeremy <fortier.28@osu.edu>
Sent: Monday, July 7, 2025 1:33 PM
To: Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu>; Martin, Andrew <martin.1026@osu.edu>
Cc: Schoen, Brian <schoen.110@osu.edu>
Subject: Re: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Thanks, Bernadette.

I am afraid that a Fall concurrence deadline is not feasible for us, given the deadlines for getting on the spring course schedule and proceeding with General Education submissions, as well as our interests in working with new faculty and thinking through possibilities for degree design.

I am obliged to note that, as a procedural matter, we didn't anticipate circulating courses over the summer to pose a problem since the College of Arts & Science's Concurrence Request [Form](#), and ASC's Curriculum and Assessment Operations [Manual](#), refer only to

two-week timeline (not qualified by time of year). OAA's Academic Organization, Curriculum, and Assessment [Handbook](#) also indicates no restrictions about sending courses for concurrence over the summer. It may be worth adding that when circulating concurrence requests in the spring I was asked by one department to delay until after the final exam period – so it seems like some calendar conflicts are unavoidable one way or another.

In short: the Chase Center can't accede to a Fall term concurrence deadline, though I expect that Brian Schoen I would both be happy to use this time to confer with department chairs who have 12-month appointments.

Thanks for your time and consideration,

Jeremy

From: Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu>
Date: Monday, July 7, 2025 at 9:33 AM
To: Fortier, Jeremy <fortier.28@osu.edu>, Martin, Andrew <martin.1026@osu.edu>
Cc: Schoen, Brian <schoen.110@osu.edu>
Subject: RE: Chase Center Concurrence Request
Dear Jeremy,

At least one of our departments (I suspect more will have the same request) has requested a deadline of early Fall term for the concurrences. Our regular 9-month faculty are off duty until August 15, and thus robust departmental conversations about possible overlap with their own courses cannot happen until those faculty are back on campus. This is especially important given the number of syllabi that need to be reviewed.

My best,
Bernadette



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From: Vankeerbergen, Bernadette
Sent: Wednesday, July 2, 2025 2:51 PM
To: Fortier, Jeremy <fortier.28@osu.edu>; Martin, Andrew <martin.1026@osu.edu>
Cc: Schoen, Brian <schoen.110@osu.edu>
Subject: RE: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Dear Jeremy,

I will send out the request for concurrences now (Andrew is taking some time off). Please know that I will start by giving our units a due date of Friday, July 18. It is possible/likely that this being the middle of the summer some units will ask for more time. I will keep you posted.

My best,
Bernadette



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From: Fortier, Jeremy <fortier.28@osu.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, July 2, 2025 1:06 PM
To: Martin, Andrew <martin.1026@osu.edu>; Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu>
Cc: Schoen, Brian <schoen.110@osu.edu>
Subject: Chase Center Concurrence Request

Hi Andrew and Bernadette,

This summer, I've been working with the Chase Center's incoming faculty and Associate Director Brian Schoen (copied on this e-mail) to develop a suite of courses for a Civics, Law, and Leadership degree Chase will be offering (CIVICLL). The result is the twelve syllabi attached to this e-mail (more to follow down the road).

The courses cover a lot of territory in terms of subject matter and disciplinary approaches, but the course titles should give you a good sense of which syllabi may be most relevant to the College of Arts and Sciences for concurrence purposes.

Let me know if we can answer any questions as the concurrence process moves forward. I know there's a lot to dig into here, but we're eager to move forward with some exciting courses as we build a new program.

All best,

Jeremy

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Jeremy Fortier

Assistant Director, Salmon P. Chase Center for Civics, Culture, and Society

The Ohio State University

Latest Article: "[Why to be a Civic Constitutionalist](#)"