
REFLECTIVE SEMINAR in Fall 2019 (RS0001FB9B)

Course Code	RS0001FB9B	Professor(s)	Jessica Feldman
Prerequisites	None	Office Number	305 Grenelle
Class Schedule	R: 15:20-16:40 in Q-509	Office Hours	Thursday 1:15-3:15 or by appointment (subject to change during class trips and travel)
Credits	0	Email	jfeldman@aup.edu
Semester	Fall 2019	Office Tel. Ext.	

Course Description

This is the Reflective Seminar for *Opting In: Democracy, Participation and Digital Life*

How does digitalization affect democracy? While civic mobilization through social media, online discussion and electronic voting seem to enhance democratic participation, “fake news,” opinion polarization and profit-driven algorithms render democratic choice increasingly difficult. The course surveys the ambivalent transformation of democratic life in the digital era through the lenses of communication studies and philosophy. It examines how digital communication changes how we politically speak and relate to each other as citizens as well as how we should understand and evaluate these changes from various philosophical perspectives.

Course Learning Outcomes

General Education

Integrated Inquiry Learning Outcomes for this Course

- **Local and Global Perspectives:** Students will enhance their intercultural understanding of languages, cultures, and histories of local societies and the global issues to which these relate.
- **Exploring and Engaging Difference:** Students will think critically about cultural and

social difference; they will identify and understand power structures that determine hierarchies and inequalities that can relate to race, ethnicity, gender, nationhood, religion, or class.

- **Civic and Ethical Engagement:** Students will demonstrate awareness of ethical considerations relating to specific societal problems, values, or practices (historical or contemporary; global or local) and learn to articulate possible solutions to prominent challenges facing societies and institutions today so as to become engaged actors at various levels in our interconnected world.

FirstBridge Learning Outcomes

- Students will enhance their information literacy, acquiring an understanding of how information is produced, and discovering how to evaluate, create and use it effectively and ethically. Students will develop an awareness of the conversational nature of scholarship and be able to identify appropriate secondary sources to conduct effective research.
- Students will develop public speaking and presentation skills in order to participate effectively and appropriately in academic discussion and as community leaders, in a professional and engaging manner that can convey complex information.
- Students will be able to appreciate place as a site of knowledge, to interrogate the multiple meanings of place and develop a more informed and sensitive understanding of interactions between people and their physical environment.
- Students will learn to formulate questions that can lead to greater learning and productive individual and group research projects.
- Students will strengthen the concrete skills and aptitudes to be successful at AUP and beyond, such as study skills and time management, the mindsets that lead to lifelong learning, and desired classroom behaviors and interpersonal skills.

Course Outline

Course Schedule

Our schedule may be adjusted to accommodate opportunities such as guest speakers, relevant events in Paris, new publications, trips, etc. and to give ample time for discussions and workshopping.

The Reflective Seminar activities are also included in the syllabi for:

Democracy: From Athens to Zuccotti Park, taught by Prof. Julian Culp

&

Speaking Out and Logging In: Digital Participation and Public Life, taught by Prof. Jessica

Feldman

Week 1: Introduction to the Course, Participation & Democracy

Thurs Sept 5: What is a Reflective Seminar? Visit from Study Trips Office, Visit to Library

Week 2: Direct Democracy / Digital Tools / Open Source & P2P

Thurs Sept 12 : Reflective Seminar : **Testing tools for direct democracy** [bring your laptop & smartphone]

Week 3 : Institutions, Laws, Representation, Constitutions, Elections

Thurs Sept 19: Reflective Seminar: **rescheduled due to Assemblée Nationale visit**

Fri Sept 20: **visit to Assemblée Nationale**

Week 4 : Public Sphere and Civil Society

Thurs Sept 26 : Reflective Seminar - group discussion

Week 5: Globalization/Transnationalism of the demos

Thurs Oct 3: Reflective Seminar: **Talk by Marcus Häggrot on the political rights of expatriates**

Week 6: Distorted Discourse: Free Speech, Hate Speech, Regulation, Censorship

Thurs Oct 10 Reflective Seminar: **Library Workshop**

Week 7: Education & Digital Literacy

Thurs Oct 17: **DAY TRIP to the National Education Museum in Rouen**

Week 8: Scientific Knowledge, Truth & Post Truth

Thurs Oct 24: Reflective Seminar - group discussion

Week 9: FALL BREAK

Thurs Oct 31: Reflective Seminar: No class!

Week 10: Elites and Authority

Thurs Nov 7: Reflective Seminar: **Visit to Station F**

Week 11: Popular Sovereignty

Thurs Nov 14: Reflective Seminar: **Visit to Pantheon (TBC)**

Week 12: Populism and Failing Democracies

Thurs Nov 21: Reflective Seminar: **Library Workshop**

Week 13: Civil Disobedience, Protest, and Revolution

Thurs Nov 28: Reflective Seminar - group discussion

Week 14: What is the Human? Who is a political actor and must we be? (AI, algorithmic governance etc.) Do we have to participate?

Thurs Dec 5: Reflective Seminar: **Film Screening of *Hannah Arendt***

Textbooks

This course doesn't have any textbook.

Attendance Policy

Students studying at The American University of Paris are expected to attend ALL scheduled classes, and in case of absence, should contact their professors to explain the situation. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus. The French Department, for example, has its own attendance policy, and students are responsible for compliance. Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students' participation in study trips related to their courses.

Attendance at all exams is mandatory.

IN ALL CASES OF MISSED COURSE MEETINGS, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATION WITH THE PROFESSOR, AND FOR ARRANGING TO MAKE UP MISSED WORK, RESTS SOLELY WITH THE STUDENT.

Whether an absence is excused or not is ALWAYS up to the discretion of the professor or the department. Unexcused absences can result in a low or failing participation grade. In the case of excessive absences, it is up to the professor or the department to decide if the student will receive an "F" for the course. An instructor may recommend that a student withdraw, if absences have made it impossible to continue in the course at a satisfactory level.

Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and especially during the Drop/Add and Exam Periods.

Grading Policy

Please see the syllabi for

Democracy: From Athens to Zuccotti Park, taught by Prof. Julian Culp

&

Speaking Out and Logging In: Digital Participation and Public Life, taught by Prof. Jessica Feldman

Other
