University of Houston-Downtown

Course Prefix, Number, and Title: COMM 1309 Communication and Public Decision Making

Credits/Lecture/Lab Hours: 3/3/0

Foundational Component Area: Component Area Option-Oral Communication Focus

Prerequisites: None **Co-requisites:** None

Course Description: This course is designed to explore the theory of deliberative democracy and to practice the skills involved in such approach to citizen involvement in public problem solving. The course explores democratic deliberation through in-class deliberation exercises, online discussion with other students, and research and writing about public policy issues.

TCCNS Number:

Demonstration of Core Objectives within the Course:

Assigned Core	Learning Outcome	Instructional strategy or content	Method by which
Objective	Students will be able to:	used to achieve the outcome	students' mastery of this
			outcome will be
			evaluated
Critical Thinking	Prepare an outline and text	Content: Designing deliberations,	Instructors will use rubric
	for presentations in which	presenting alternative ideas,	that includes a
	there is a clear thesis; an	facilitating discussions,	measurement for outline
	engaging introduction;	contrasting debate and	and written preparation to
Communication	multiple, focused supporting	deliberation	evaluate writing portfolio.
	points; a logical and effective		
	organization of ideas; and a	Instructional Strategies: Students	
	conclusion that open up the	will prepare outlines and notes	
	argument to wider	for presentations in which there	
	application.	is a clear thesis; an engaging	
		introduction; multiple, focused	
		supporting points; a logical and	
		effective organization of ideas;	
		and a conclusion that opens up	
		the argument to wider application.	
		Students will develop well-	
		qualified, objective claims with	
		reasons and evidence that are	
		appropriate for various	
		audiences, including an academic	
		audience in deliberative skills	
		workshops.	

Critical Thinking	Use and cite sources	Content: Research skills,	Instructors will use rubric
Critical Hilliking	appropriately.	appropriate use of sources	that measures appropriate citation usage to evaluate
Communication		Instructional Strategies: Students will attend research skills workshop in the library.	writing portfolio and research issue papers.
Critical Thinking	Use research and analysis to develop an oral presentation.	Content: Conducting research, evaluating claims and evidence for support	The instructor will use a rubric that includes a measurement for the quality of research and
Communication		Instructional Strategies: Students will attend research skills workshop in the library.	analysis to evaluate writing portfolio and deliberative exercises.
		Students will be asked to write three research papers to use in the classroom deliberative exercises.	
Critical Thinking	Use nonverbal communication (gestures, dress, eye content, visuals, etc.) to reinforce	Content: Communication in groups, contrasting debate and deliberation, nonverbal awareness	Instructors will use a rubric that includes a measurement for students' use of nonverbal
Communication	the audience.	Instructional strategies: Students will attend lectures and videos, as well as participate in exercise and deliberative skills workshops	communication to evaluate deliberative exercises.
Critical Thinking Communication	Assess the impact of oral and visual communication during presentations and provide feedback.	Content: Content: Communication in groups, contrasting debate and deliberation, verbal and visual awareness, communication in	Instructors will use a rubric to evaluate the quality of the feedback that is provided by the student during
		groups, providing feedback to facilitators	deliberative presentations.
		Instructional strategies: Students will attend lectures and videos, as well as participate in exercises and deliberative skills workshops	Instructor will use a rubric that includes a measure for students' oral and visual communication during presentations and in student self-evaluations.
Critical Thinking	Use active listening to respond to questions, summarize, clarify and facilitate understanding.	Content: Active listening process, responding to questions, summarizing, clarifying, facilitating understanding, providing feedback to facilitators	Instructors will use a rubric that includes a measurement for students' ability to respond to questions,

Communication		Instructional strategies: Students will attend lectures and videos, as well as participate in exercises and deliberative skills workshops	summarize, clarify, and facilitate understanding to evaluate deliberations and final essay exam.	
Critical Thinking Identify strategies for presenting in alternative delivery situations, such as, culturally diverse audiences, teams, and distance presentations.		Content: Cultural diversity (conflict management and intercultural barriers), historical perspectives, issue framing, communication in groups (group climate, norms, and roles to support effectiveness), deliberation in the twenty-first century	Instructors will use a rubric that includes a measurement for student's ability to handle a culturally diverse group during deliberative exercises.	
		Instructional strategies: Instructional strategies: Students will attend lectures and videos, as well as participate in exercises and deliberative skills workshops and issues framing workshops		
Personal Responsibility	Connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making.	Content: Democracy in America, attitudes about politics, power of choice, ethical considerations (choices, actions, and consequences) Instructional strategies: Students will attend lectures and videos, as well as participate in exercises, discussions, and deliberative	Instructors will use a rubric that includes a measurement for student's ability to discuss the connection between choices, ethics, and quality communication to evaluate the students' self-evaluations.	

Additional Course Outcomes:

After completing this course students will be able to:

- 1. Explain the history and theory of public deliberation.
- 2. Describe the uses for oral and visual communication in group deliberations.
- 3. Write a personal assessment of your role and communication in group deliberations.
- 4. Discover and research about complex policy issues that hold competing values.
- 5. Prepare to participate in three group deliberative exercises.
- 6. Identify ways in which deliberation is a unique form of communicating when engaged in decision making.

Course Outline:

THINKING ABOUT DEMOCRACY AND THE PUBLIC VO			
Introduction to the Course			
Diagnosing the Problem	Read: "College Students Talk Politics" Tie to ethics: "What does this mean for how our choices, actions, and consequences are tied to ethical communication?"		
Historical Perspective: What Is the Role of the People?	Read: Federalist #10 and Essay by "Brutus"		
Historical Perspectives on American Experience	Read: Excerpt from Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America		
Changes in American Politics: How Democratic Are We?	Read: Excerpt from James Fishkin, The Voice of the People Tie to ethics: "What does this mean for how our choices, actions, and consequences are tied to ethical communication		
PAPER DUE:	ATTITUDES ABOUT POLITICS		
Debating Deliberative Democracy	Benjamin Barber, "Deliberation, Democracy, and Power" Iris Marion Young, "Communication and the Other" James Bohman, "Deliberative Democracy and Its Critics."		
Deliberation as a Democratic Skill	Video: A Public Voice Read: Dave Mathews, "The Power of Choice" Tie to ethics: "What does this mean for how our choices, actions, and consequences are tied to ethical communication		
Contrasting Debate and Deliberation	Read: "Communication in Groups" "Deliberation and Debate: Not One or the Other" "Some Key Characteristics of Debate" Tie to ethics: "What does this mean for how our choices, actions, and consequences are tied to ethical communication		
Workshop at Library	Learning Research Skills		
Workshop	Learning Deliberative Skills		
Workshop	Learning Deliberative Skills		
THINKING ABOUT PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES			
Public Schools: Are they Making the Grade?	Read: Issue book on public education		
PAPER DUE:	ISSUE		
Deliberative Exercise #1: Public Schools			
The Role of Higher Education in Society	Video: The Role of Higher Education Read: Issue book on Higher Education		

Deliberative Exercise #2: The Role of Higher			
Education in Society			
PAPER DUE:	ISSUE		
Politics for the Twenty-First Century: What Should	Read: Issue book on politics for the twenty-first		
Be Done on Campus?	century		
Deliberative Exercise #3:	Politics for the Twenty-First Century		
PAPER DUE:	ISSUE		
FRAMING ISSUES FOR PUBLIC DISCUSSION			
Introduction to Issue Framing	Read: Alcohol: Controlling the Toxic Spill		
Issue Framing Workshop	Read: Excerpts from "Framing Issues for Public		
	Deliberation."		
RETHINKING DEMOCRATIC POLITICS			
Imagining a Different Politics	Read: Excerpts from "College Students Talk		
	Politics"		
	And "Seeing the Problems of Politics Anew:		
	Redefining the Challenge"		
	Tie to ethics: "What does this mean for how our		
	choices, actions, and consequences are tied to		
	ethical communication		
FINAL TAKE-HOME ESSAY DUE			

Grading/Course Content which Demonstrates Student Achievement of Core Objectives:

Course Grade	A: 90-100	B: 80-89	C: 70-79	D: 60-69	F: 0-59
	Summary of Course Exams, Quizzes, Activities, and Final				
Writing Portf	olio - written				60%
Preparation /	Preparation / Participation in Deliberative Exercises –				30%
oral, written					
Exam – writte	en				10%
					100%