

**English 111: Introductory Composition and Research  
Democracy, Deliberation, and Public Life in the United States**

Fall 2013 / Fairchild 4D12

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*...our ordinary citizens, though occupied with the pursuits of industry, are still fair judges of public matters; for, unlike any other nation, we regard the citizen who takes no part in these duties not as unambitious but as useless, and we are able to judge proposals even if we cannot originate them; instead of looking on discussion as a stumbling-block in the way of action, we think it an indispensable preliminary to any wise action at all. —Pericles*

**Overview:** This course aims to develop your capacities as a critical reader, writer, and thinker, and to cultivate intellectual habits that will be essential to your future both within and beyond the Air Force. We will frame our attention to these skills around a central area of inquiry: democracy. Surely in the context of the United States, if not in the world more generally, “democracy” is one of the most frequently invoked but least interrogated terms in public life. In this class, we will critically examine “democracy,” both as ideal and practice, asking such questions as: What is “democracy,” and what does it mean to be “democratic”? What are the various forms that democracy can take? What are the possibilities and problems associated with democracy, particularly with respect to issues of religious belief, military-civilian relations, and public education? What does it mean for a citizen to participate in government, especially in the exercise that is a standard definition of democracy: the act of “self-government”? Moving beyond the notion that voting is the expression *par excellence* of democratic participation, we will study what political theorists refer to as “deliberative democracy,” a form of democracy that requires the active, informed participation of citizens in debates on issues vital to the public interest and the common good. In this regard, we’ll consider the relationship between public dialogue and democracy, and we’ll examine with particular care the ways in which the skills of argumentation, analysis, and research, among others, might be considered crucial democratic capacities.

**Required Texts and Materials** (be sure to purchase the specific editions of the texts below):

- Stuart Greene and April Lidinsky, *From Inquiry to Academic Writing: A Text and a Reader*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2012. ISBN: 9780312601416
  - Rebecca Moore Howard, *Writing Matters: A Handbook for Writing and Research*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2013. ISBN: 9780073405957
  - Access to a printer and healthy paper supply (hard copies of all SharePoint readings and writing assignments are required)
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## SECTION-SPECIFIC ASSIGNMENTS, EXERCISES, AND EXPECTATIONS

**Mission:** In order to test out the limits and possibilities of deliberative democracy, we will try to make our classroom an ideal (or nearly ideal) deliberative space, in which we will engage in an honest, informed, and intellectually rigorous dialogue on important and controversial issues that confront American citizens. Far from backing away from topics that may seem too contentious for discussion—for instance, the place of religious belief in democracy or the proper place of the military in a democracy—we will tackle such issues head on, seeking to understand them fully and in all of their complexity. We'll be able to realize this goal only if we treat each other's ideas with respect, and if we dedicate ourselves to testing and examining not only each other's positions but also our own. This process will require all of us, instructor and students alike, to provide reasoned, cogent, and clear arguments, illuminating examples, and appropriate evidence in our classroom discussions and debates, as in our written work. Above all, it will require us to listen to each other, to remain open to points of view that diverge (often radically so) from our own, and to treat one another with fairness and respect.

**Course Methods:** This course requires you to do three different kinds of work. First, it asks you to complete readings on the course theme of democracy, gleaning key content and critically assessing the arguments, evidence, and rhetorical strategies of the assigned texts. Second, you're expected to engage in a lively discussion of the complicated issues confronting democracy, and, as outlined above, to engage respectfully with the positions of your peers. Finally, this course asks you to write early and often about democracy and its promise and problems. In addition to completing a number of short writing assignments, you will compose three formal essays throughout the term: a definitional essay (1000-1250 words); an argumentative paper (1250-1500 words); and a source-based examination of a problem confronting democracy (1500-1750 words). You'll also complete a final portfolio project, in which you will reflect on your writing holistically. You will regularly work with your classmates, and read and respond to their writing.

**Participation:** This course requires your active, informed, and energetic participation. Participation counts for 10% of your final grade, and as such it will have a significant impact on your overall course performance. You will receive feedback about your class participation at the midpoint of the term. Besides attending all class meetings and bringing the appropriate materials to class (e.g. readings, essays), to receive a strong participation score you must also contribute in a meaningful way to the discussion in every class session. To “contribute in a meaningful way” signifies to answer a question, ask an informed question, respond to a colleague's point, or put forth your own idea, and in so doing to move our conversation forward. In other words, both the quantity and the quality of your contributions matter.

**Guiding Question:** In order to help you meet the participation goals above, and to focus your thoughts, be sure to review the Guiding Question posted on our SharePoint site before each class session. At a minimum, you should be prepared to respond to this question. Your comments should emerge from your engagement with the readings, and thus you should be able to refer to specific page numbers to support your points. So that we can engage in genuine face-to-face discussions, laptops are prohibited unless a class activity requires their use.

**Midterm Conference:** Just after the midpoint of the term, you will schedule an individual meeting with me. We will discuss your performance in the course thus far, focusing in particular on your first essay and your class participation, and we will chart out goals for improvement in the second half of

the class, with a particular eye toward the second formal essay. In preparation for this meeting, you will complete a short reflection assignment.

**Assessment:** Your performance in this class will be based on the quality of your three major essays, as well as on the strength of your class participation, your final writing portfolio, and the informal writing that you will complete throughout the term. All written work will be assessed based on the *clarity, complexity, and precision* of the *argument, evidence, and analysis* you put forth. Your final grade will be calculated according to the percentages outlined below.

### Grading Breakdown

*Before PROG*

Short Writing Assignments: 10%

Participation: 5%

Essay 1: 15%

*After PROG*

Short Writing Assignments: 10%

Participation: 5%

Essay 2: 20%

Final Essay: 25%

Final Portfolio Project: 10%

N.B.: Your combined average of Essays 1, 2, and 3 must be above 60% to pass the class.

## POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND OTHER IMPORTANT POINTS

**Course SharePoint Site:** Announcements, course texts, questions to guide your reading, electronic versions of course documents, and other useful information will be available on our SharePoint site, which you can reach at: <https://eis.usafa.edu/academics/english/courses/111/laski/default.aspx>.

**Communication:** E-mail is an official mode of correspondence for this class. As such, you are responsible for all communiqués I send to your USAFA e-mail address. E-mail is also the best way for you to contact me.

**Extra Instruction:** I am available for extra instruction should you need it. Send me an e-mail, and we will work together to arrange a meeting at a mutually convenient time. Please note that while I will not review complete essay drafts, I will gladly listen to your ideas and help you to think through the steps of your argument or a particularly challenging paragraph or two. Should you wish to have someone review a draft of your paper, please visit the Writing Center. Be sure to seek any assistance you may need well in advance of paper deadlines.

**Course Connections:** While not required beyond your oral presentation, finding connections to the ideas and texts we study in class in sources such as songs, popular culture, current events, news articles, etc. is highly encouraged and will only help your participation grade. Post your contributions to the “Course Connections” section of our SharePoint site.

**Reading Assignments:** Reading assignments outlined below on the course calendar will be discussed in class on the day on which they are listed. Please read the assigned piece(s) by this date, review the guiding questions posted on SharePoint, mark up key passages in the text, and come prepared to engage in a lively discussion about the text(s). Note that electronic versions of our readings are not permitted; you must bring a paper copy of whatever reading(s) we are discussing with you to class.

**Writing Assignments:** All written work is to be submitted **in hard copy form** at the **beginning** of the class session in which it is due. Please submit all your major essays in the **blue folder** that I will give to you, and keep your papers in this folder until the end of the term. You must also upload your essays to [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com). Late assignments will be penalized (see the Course Director's memorandum). Because of the frequent writing assignments required for this course, and so that I can return your graded work promptly, extensions will not be granted except under extraordinary circumstances. Only typed papers will be accepted; please double space your essays, set your margins to one inch, and use a standard font (e.g. Times New Roman) at the 12 pt. size. Number your pages in the upper right-hand corner, only print on one side of each page, and staple your essay before turning it in. Be sure to give your paper a provocative title that speaks to the essay's argument (e.g. not "Essay 1"). Finally, follow the guidelines for MLA style forth in *Writing Matters*.

**Documentation and Academic Integrity:** Crucial guidelines and resources regarding documentation standards for your written work and the Dean's policy on academic integrity are posted on our SharePoint site under "Documentation Resources." Be sure to review these items. You are required to abide by these regulations; failure to do so will hurt your grade and may cause you to commit plagiarism inadvertently.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

<u>Class</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Assignment</u>
1	Thurs 8 Aug	Introductions

### I. Democracy, Theory and Practice

#### Defining Democracy

2	Mon 12 Aug	Raymond Williams, "Democracy" Robert Dahl, "What is Democracy?" and "Why Democracy?" <b>Due: Example of Democracy</b>
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3	Wed 14 Aug	Robert Dahl, "Varieties I: Democracy on Different Scales" Publius, <i>Federalist</i> 10 Pericles, Funeral Oration
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4	Fri 16 Aug	Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, "What Deliberative Democracy Means"
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#### Power to the People? (or, The Possibilities and Problems of Democracy)

5	Tues 20 Aug	Dana D. Nelson, " <i>The People v. Presidentialism</i> " Alexis de Tocqueville, "The Use Americans Make of Public Associations in Civil Life"
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6	Thurs 22 Aug	Thomas Jefferson, letter to William S. Smith Alexis de Tocqueville, "The Social State of the Anglo-Americans" Joseph A. Schumpeter, from <i>Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy</i>
7	Mon 26 Aug	Stuart Greene and April Lidinsky, <i>From Inquiry to Academic Writing</i> , 139-152, 182-186
8	Wed 28 Aug	Writing Workshop: Quoting, Paraphrasing, Summarizing
9	Fri 30 Aug	<b>Due: Short Writing 1</b>
<i>Parents' Weekend/Labor Day</i>		
10	Wed 4 Sept	Writing Workshop: Concepts and/vs. Examples
11	Fri 6 Sept	Greene and Lidinsky, <i>From Inquiry to Academic Writing</i> , 180-181 Rebecca Moore Howard, <i>Writing Matters</i> , 288-335 <b>Due: Essay 1 Sources</b>
12	Tues 10 Sept	<b>Due: Essay 1</b>
<i>Commandant's Training Days</i>		

## II. Democratic Deliberation: Three Cases

### Religion and Democracy

13	Mon 16 Sept	Mark W. Roche, "Voting Our Conscience, Not Our Religion" Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein, "Entering the Conversation"
14	Wed 18 Sept	Jeffrey Stout, "Religious Reasons in Political Argument"
15	Fri 20 Sept	Greene and Lidinsky, <i>From Inquiry to Academic Writing</i> , 51-57, 60-63

### Democracy, Civilians, and the Military

16	Tues 24 Sept	Elizabeth Samet, "On War, Guilt, and 'Thank You For Your Service'" Rebecca Moore Howard, <i>Writing Matters</i> , 142-144
17	Thurs 26 Sept	Bruce Fleming, "Bridging the Military-Civilian Divide"
18	Mon 30 Sept	<b>Due: Short Writing 2</b>

Racial Inequality, Schools, and Democracy

19	Wed 2 Oct	Danielle S. Allen, Prologue to <i>Talking to Strangers</i> Howard, <i>Writings Matters</i> , 239-241, 74-81
<i>Navy Game</i>		
20	Mon 7 Oct	<i>The Boys of Baraka</i> , dirs. Heidi Ewing and Rachel Grady (documentary film available for viewing on USAFA network)
21	Wed 9 Oct	Jonathan Kozol, "Introduction" and "Hitting Them Hardest When They're Small"
22	Fri 11 Oct	Greene and Lidinsky, <i>From Inquiry to Academic Writing</i> , 58-61
<i>Columbus Day</i>		
23	Wed 16 Oct	Conferences (No English 111 Class)
24	Fri 18 Oct	Conferences (No English 111 Class)
25	Tues 22 Oct	Conferences (No English 111 Class)
26	Thurs 24 Oct	<b>Due: Essay 2</b>

**III. Democracy and Knowledge**Democracy, Media, and (Mis)Information

27	Mon 28 Oct	Thomas Jefferson, letter to Judge John Tyler James Fallows, "News and Democracy"
28	Wed 30 Oct	<b>Due: 29 Oct News Stories Comparison</b>

*Commandant's Training Day*The Final Paper in Process

29	Mon 4 Nov	<b>Due: Two Potential Topics</b>
30	Wed 6 Nov	Library Visit (meet at McDermott Library) Howard, <i>Writing Matters</i> , 206-243
31	Fri 8 Nov	<b>Due: Final Paper Proposal (bring 3 copies)</b>

*Veterans Day*Final Paper Presentations

32	Wed 13 Nov	Mini-presentations of your final paper projects
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33	Fri 15 Nov	Mini-presentations of your final paper projects
34	Tues 19 Nov	Mini-presentations of your final paper projects
35	Thurs 21 Nov	Mini-presentations of your final paper projects

*Thanksgiving Break*

Final Paper: From Process to Product

36	Mon 2 Dec	<b>Due: Argument Delineation Exercise</b>
37	Wed 4 Dec	<b>Due: Outline Exercise</b>
38	Fri 6 Dec	Writing Workshop: Final Essay Drafting
39	Tues 10 Dec	<b>Due: Final Essay</b> <b>(submit essay in your portfolio containing all your writing assignments)</b>
40	Thurs 12 Dec	Conclusions