

## Syllabus

Bruce Jacobs

Fall, 2013

Harkness 337

Office Hours: MW 10-11

## PSC 232

### Controversies in Public Policy

The primary objective of this course is not to convince you one or the other side of a controversy is the right one. Rather, it is to make sure you know the arguments on both sides of the issue.

The requirements for this course include two papers of moderate length (6 pages) and a longer research paper (10-12 pages). The schedule for these is listed on page 4. Papers handed in late will have their grades reduced. To pass the course all assignments must be submitted. Students are expected to attend class and use materials from lectures and the assignments when writing the papers. The only book for purchase is Controversies in American Policy edited by Hird, Reese, and Shilvock. Most all the rest of the readings are on web sites with links in the syllabus.

Since this is a new course the dates for the controversies may be adjusted as needed.

1. Should abortion be legal? (9/9 – 9/11)

pro.con <http://abortion.procon.org/>

Should minors be required to obtain parental permission before they have an abortion?

Controversies, Ch. 8

2. Should medical marijuana be legal? (9/16 – 9/18)

pro.con <http://medicalmarijuana.procon.org/>

Should all drugs be legal?

Pro.con <http://aclu.procon.org/view.answers.php?questionID=000730>

3. Should assisted suicide be legal? (9/23 – 9/30)

<http://euthanasia.procon.org/>

Should we ration end of life healthcare?

<http://intelligencesquaredus.org/debates/past-debates/item/768-ration-end-of-life-care>

4. Should Social Security be privatized? (10/2 – 10/9)

Controversies, Ch 4.

pro.con <http://socialsecurity.procon.org/>

Can we support the elderly?

Controversies, Ch 16

5. Should there be a constitutional amendment to balance the federal budget?  
(10/14 – 10/16)

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/george-will-an-amendment-to-bind-the-spenders/2013/02/06/c93fda9c-6fc7-11e2-8b8d-e0b59a1b8e2a\\_print.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/george-will-an-amendment-to-bind-the-spenders/2013/02/06/c93fda9c-6fc7-11e2-8b8d-e0b59a1b8e2a_print.html)

David Primo, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-02-25/constitution-is-only-way-to-cut-u-s-deficit-commentary-by-david-m-primo.html>

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-02-18/balanced-budget-amendment-still-a-terrible-idea-ramesh-ponnuru.html>

6. Does America still need affirmative action? (10/21 – 10/23)

<http://aclu.procon.org/view.answers.php?questionID=000697>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/17/opinion/sunday/does-affirmative-action-do-what-it-should.html?pagewanted=print>

7. Should we attack Syria? (10/28)

<http://intelligencesquaredus.org/debates/past-debates/item/900-the-us-has-no-dog-in-the-fight-in-syria>

8. Can Israel live with a nuclear Iran? (10/30)

<http://intelligencesquaredus.org/debates/past-debates/item/793-israel-can-live-with-a-nuclear-iran>

9. Should same-sex marriage be legal? (11/4)

<http://aclu.procon.org/view.answers.php?questionID=000707>

10. Should fracking be halted? (11/6)

<http://intelligencesquaredus.org/debates/past-debates/item/698-no-fracking-way-the-natural-gas-boom-is-doing-more-harm-than-good>

11. Should the US make the reduction of green house emissions a top priority?  
(11/11)

Controversies, Ch 8

12. Should the US admit fewer immigrants? (11/13)

Controversies, Chapter 6

13. Has the 1996 welfare reform achieve its goals? (11/18 – 11/20)

Controversies, Ch. 9

(and others)

14. Instead of Obamacare should we have a universal single payer health care system? (11/25 – 12/2)

Controversies, Ch. 10

15. Should the death penalty be allowed? (12/4)

Pro.con <http://deathpenalty.procon.org/>

## Written assignments

	<u>Handed Out</u>	<u>Due</u>
Paper #1	10/16	10/28
Paper #2	11/11	11/20
Research paper	12/2	12/16