Professor David Primo
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http://www.rochester.edu/College/PSC/primo

Spring 2022, Mon. 2:00 – 4:40
Classroom: Meliora 206
Virtual Classroom Link: See Blackboard
Office Hours (Zoom): Tues. 10:30 AM – 12:30 PM or by appt.
Office Hours Link: https://rochester.zoom.us/j/948872840

PSCI 232/PSCI 232W: Disagreement in a Democratic Society
This Version: February 11, 2022

COURSE DESCRIPTION
Is consensus overrated? In this seminar course we will study the role of disagreement in a democratic society. Topics will include the causes and consequences of political polarization, academic freedom and viewpoint diversity on college campuses, and conflict as a tool for innovation.

READINGS
The required readings for this course are available on Blackboard. In addition to the required readings, students should regularly read the news (including *Inside Higher Ed* and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*) to identify current events relating to the themes of the course. We will set aside time each week to discuss relevant articles.

PROFESSOR PRIMO'S PERSPECTIVE ON SEMINAR COURSES
Seminar courses are spaces where ideas should be shared, debated, and challenged, as this is how we strengthen our understandings and beliefs about the world. To that end, Professor Primo will often encourage students to question their beliefs and further refine their arguments. In other situations, Professor Primo may articulate arguments for or against an idea in ways that do not necessarily reflect his own views. When appropriate, he may choose to articulate his own opinions, and students are encouraged to challenge him, as well.

In order to foster an open exchange of ideas and allow for the frank discussion of controversial topics, class sessions will not be recorded. There may be times when class gets "uncomfortable." This is a positive, not a negative, so long as it is clear we are all working together toward a shared end of deeper understandings about the world. To use an analogy, you can go to the gym and sit on an exercise bike pedaling slowly and texting friends. You are likely to be quite comfortable doing so. Alternatively, you can get on the same bike with a heart rate monitor and push yourself hard, to the point that you are quite uncomfortable. Which is the better workout? Think of a seminar course in the same way—as a workout for your mind and your ideas.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
- **Prepare for, attend, and be an active participant in class.** A small seminar of 15-20 students requires the active involvement of all students. Students are expected to attend all classes (health permitting), complete the readings in advance of class, and share their ideas during class discussions.
- **Set the stage for class discussions.** For classes in weeks 2 through 11, you must submit one question to Professor Primo that you would like discussed during class (think of it as a "conversation starter") along with a brief explanation (1 or 2 paragraphs) of why you selected that question. *These conversation starters should be based on the readings for the week.* These conversation starters should be submitted on Blackboard by 8 AM on the day of class under Assignments; late conversation starters will not be accepted except in unusual circumstances.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS (cont.)

- **Complete a project (proposals due on Blackboard by 7 PM on March 1; required peer group workshops will take place the week of April 18, with a brief follow-up survey that should be completed on Blackboard by April 25 at 8 AM; projects due via email by 7 PM on May 3).**
  - Students are required to complete a project on a topic of their choosing. Possible project formats include a traditional, 3,500 word research paper or a non-traditional approach such as a writing a set of op-eds related to the themes of the course. (W students must complete a project with 3,500 words of writing.)
  - The project format and topic must be approved by Professor Primo. Professor Primo will tailor his guidance and project requirements to the specifics of the proposals.
  - In an effort to encourage students to make progress on their papers well in advance of the deadline, in lieu of class on April 18, students will instead participate in a peer group workshop in which students will meet in small groups to offer feedback on each other's projects. Participation in the workshop is required and will be part of your project grade.
  - Additional details regarding this requirement are available in a separate Project Guidelines document available on Blackboard.
  - The bottom line: this project should be one that you are invested in and are excited about. Professor Primo will be there to help along the way.

GRADING

- *Conversation starters* count toward 20% of your course grade. Conversation starters will be graded on a credit/no-credit basis. Questions that are submitted without an explanation or with an explanation that fails to demonstrate a connection to the readings will receive no credit. You can receive credit for a conversation starter even if you do not attend class, so long as it is submitted on time. Following the "life happens" rule, you may skip two conversation starters without penalty.
- *Class participation* counts toward 20% of your course grade. Students are expected to do the reading in advance of class and come prepared for discussion. Students should "take ownership" of the seminar by sharing their ideas, asking questions, challenging each other's ideas (and those of Professor Primo), and keeping up with the news to participate in the "current events" portion of class discussion. *Class attendance factors into class participation. However, please do not come to class if you are not feeling well or it would present a hardship to do so; just give Professor Primo advance notice when possible.*
- *The project* counts toward 60% of your course grade. 5% of your course grade is based on fulfilling all aspects of required participation in the workshop. 55% of your course grade is based on the final project submission. Additional details regarding the grading of the workshop and the project are available in a separate Project Guidelines document available on Blackboard.

PROFESSIONALISM

Professor Primo strives to create a professional atmosphere in class where all are treated with respect. To help achieve this goal, please

- make every effort to attend and be on time for each class meeting
- silence mobile phones and other electronic devices
- keep texting and other non-course-related activities to a minimum
- come to class prepared to engage with others and be open to perspectives that may differ from your own.

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

Note: Topics are subject to change as the course evolves. Readings will go on Blackboard one week in advance of each class meeting. Conversation starters are due by 8 AM on the day of class for weeks 2 - 11.

Date	Topic
1. January 24	Introduction and Course Preliminaries
2. January 31	Foundations
3. February 7	Elite Political Polarization
4. February 14	Mass Political Polarization
5. February 21	Higher Education I: The Campus Speech Climate
6. February 28	Higher Education II: DEI vs. (?) Free Speech
→March 1 @ 7 PM	Project topics due on Blackboard
7. March 14	Higher Education III: Scientific Advancement
8. March 21	Disagreement in the Workplace
9. March 28	Disagreement, Diversity, and Innovation
10. April 4	Disagreement Around the World
11. April 11	Disagreement: A How-To
12. Week of April 18	Peer Group Workshops (in lieu of class meeting)
13. April 25	Course Wrap-Up (Post-workshop survey due April 25 @ 8 AM on Blackboard)
→May 3 @ 7 PM	Final projects due via email

ADDITIONAL COURSE POLICIES

Intellectual Property

No photography, video recording, or audio recording of any kind is allowed during class. In addition, no reproduction or dissemination of course materials, slides, or lectures—electronically or through other means—is allowed.

Academic Honesty

All assignments and activities associated with this course must be performed in accordance with the University of Rochester's Academic Honesty Policy. More information is available at www.rochester.edu/college/honesty.

Statement on Credit Hours

This course follows the College credit hour policy for four-credit courses. This course meets once per week for a total of 150 minutes per week of faculty-led instructional time. The course also includes independent out-of-class activities for 50 minutes per week; specifically, students will read novel academic papers and will be asked to read reputable news sources to identify current events related to the themes of the course.