

FALL 2015 HONORS/ETHICS COURSE

TITLE: CAS/POL SCI 297H – Democratic Leadership for Deliberative Government and Social Change

INSTRUCTOR: John Gastil (CAS, POL SCI)

ENROLLMENT: Capped at 25 students

LOCATION: Oak Building, formerly “Executive Education” [EXE] bldg., which is adjoining the Nittany Lion Inn at the corner of Atherton and Park.

SHORT DESCRIPTION: This course introduces students to deliberative democratic theory and encourages them to reflect on effective strategies for changing governance and society, with an eye toward participating in Penn State’s Nevins Leaders internship program.

MEETING TIMES

Wednesday, Sept 30, 4-6pm	Intro to democracy, deliberation, and politics
Sunday, October 4, 9am-4pm	Deliberative innovators in the US (lunch provided)
Wednesday, October 7, 4-6pm	Reflections on the workshop
Friday, October 30, 4:30-6:30pm	Brown Medal lecture on “caring democracy” by Joan Tronto
Wednesday, November 4, 4-6pm	Theorizing a different kind of democracy
Sunday, November 8, 9am-4pm	Strategies for democratic social change (w/ lunch)
Wednesday, November 11, 4-6pm	Reflections on opportunities for making change
November 16 [not a class session]	Application essays due for internships

Penn State has a special opportunity to create a generation of leaders who learn deliberative approaches to politics and public life. This one-credit course provides a broad background for this approach to democratic leadership, and it also prepares students for a unique Penn State paid internship program (the Nevins Leaders project). Those who complete this course will have first priority when awarding these dozen or more internships beginning in 2016.

The centerpiece of this course are two day-long Sunday workshops where students get to interact directly with the kind of leaders they may aspire to become. The first workshop introduces students to two democratic innovators across the United States from government and non-profit organizations (TBD). These special guests will give public lectures (open to the wider community) and lead workshop discussions with the students in this course on the new democratic practices they have helped to create and the ideas behind them. The second workshop will bring in a new pair of leaders (TBD) who will share their strategies for creating a more deliberative kind of government and engendering democratic social change. The second workshop will also feature recent Nevins Leaders interns (Anna Foley and Brendan Lounsbury from Summer 2015), who will share their experiences in the program.

Bracketing these workshops are two-hour seminars, which introduce ideas, discuss brief reading assignments, and reflect on the experiences of the workshop. In addition to short reaction papers due for each class session, students will produce a single six-page narrative essay at the end of the course that describes how they could see themselves advancing democracy in the United States (or elsewhere) and what kind of internship/work experience will help them prepare for such a career. For those who opt to seek an internship in 2016, this will be a supplement to their formal application.

Credit for the course requires attendance at every class meeting, workshop, and the Brown Democracy Medal lecture. Required work includes readings assigned for each class, the short reaction papers, and the final essay.