

## **SYLLABUS: POLITICAL SCIENCE 469; POLITICAL REPRESENTATION**

**Spring 2013**

**Prof. Andrew McFarland**

**Tuesday, Thursday 11:00 to 12:15, 1171 BSB**

The concept of political representation is basic to the understanding of politics. However, the instructor thinks that representation is less well understood than other basic concepts of politics, such as power or even “justice”. From the Greek language, “democracy” means that “the people rule,” and in some countries the people do vote, participate otherwise in elections, join interest groups to influence government. Yet if one takes a look at American politics at this moment, what does one see? Representation! Some people “representing” other people. Representatives are everywhere, interacting, in great swirls and systems of government policy formation. Even in an authoritarian system, such as China, while major decisions are made at the top, at lower levels in the governing party, or in the 700,000 separate rural villages, people are acting for other people, representing them.

The instructor, working with Professor Sultan Tepe, believes that the common academic understanding of representation needs to be expanded. But before expanding the concept, one must come to terms with present academic (and everyday language) uses of “representation.” The basic political science work on representation is Hanna Fenichel Pitkin’s *The Concept of Representation* which pursues ordinary language and political theorists’ use of the term. She explains such ideas as substantive and symbolic representation, descriptive and principle-agent representation, and the ideas of “standing-for,” and “acting-for.” Pitkin refers to the legislative research distinguishing the representative as a delegate, and the representative as “trustee,” or acting without consulting constituents. We need to grasp these concepts to be able to think about “what is democracy?”

Professor Pitkin mostly deals with representing “interests.” Many political issues are concerned with the short-range material gains or losses of individuals. Definitional ambiguous areas include emotional/values issues in regard to issues such as policy towards racism; altruistic issues such as paying taxes to help with social welfare and claiming that one’s interests include charity; or long-run interests such as paying higher taxes now to build highways that in the long run, save time and money.

The instructor spent years studying “public interest groups,” and eventually wrote three books about them. My conclusion was that I was writing about political representation, and that what we call public interest groups are representing “public goods,” an idea that goes beyond representing short-run material self-interests. A public good, such as clean air, is indivisible, that is if one person in an area has it, then by its very nature, all persons in that area must have it (cleaner air, public television). But from a self-interest standpoint, it might be difficult to get citizens to contribute to lobby groups for public goods, because those who do not contribute get the same public good as those who do contribute. Non-contributors are termed “free riders” by academicians. However, groups representing public goods do exist, indicating that citizens organize for altruistic, public-regarding motives, in addition to organizing to further material

self-interest. Then we get the representation of public goods, in addition to the representation of material self-interest, while at the same time, Pitkin's concepts cut across such categories.

The instructor, consulting with Professor Tepe, is concerned to add a third line of inquiry, called "representing public qualities." A public quality refers to an entire community, not just to certain individuals. Major public qualities include a community's existence in time and space. Preserving a historical neighborhood is representing a community's past in its present. A prophet represents the future in the present. Another public quality emphasized in Muslim and Calvinistic communities, and by some in Israel, is the spiritual well-being of the community as a whole. Sultan Tepe has explored the meaning of such representation in the activities of religious parties in Turkey and Israel.

The instructor and Sultan Tepe expect to develop and explore their idea of representing public qualities, and believe it will be an important addition to the literature in political science. However, working out this idea and its empirical referents is quite difficult, and it will take us two years or more to reach conclusions, which even then may not be final.

Thus, the major purpose of this course is to further the development and exploration of the idea of representing public qualities. The instructor expects to summarize the status of this idea, and the progress that we have made during the last two weeks of the class.

Because the research of about one-third of political scientists is closely connected to assumptions about political representation, the instructor expects to bring to class at least four other political scientists (besides Sultan Tepe) to discuss their own perspectives on representation.

This class is not suitable for exams, since it is based on ongoing research and thought, and the instructor is not making claims to definitive statements of knowledge. Requirements:

Graduate Students will submit written work in consultation with the instructor. Written work is likely to be linked to a graduate student's major concerns. There is a possibility that a question about representation will appear on the 2016 American prelims.

Undergraduates will submit written work to total 20 pages. [This is what I ask of independent study courses for three hours.] A first five page paper is due on February ; the topic will be chosen in consultation with the instructor; the most common topic is likely to be an essay on whether some issue can be considered to be representing a public quality. After this five page paper is turned in, in consultation with the instructor, the student may expand this paper, or write another paper on a different topic, with the total output for the class amounting to twenty pages.

Required texts:

Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation*, University of California, paperback  
Mancur Olson, Jr., *The Logic of Collective Action*, Harvard University paperback or Schocken paperback edition.

These are both landmark books in recent political science.

Andrew McFarland:

[amcfarla@uic.edu](mailto:amcfarla@uic.edu), Office, 1123 BSB; Office hours, Wednesday 100–300 P.M.; 312-413-3776.

## Schedule

**This class meets Tuesday, Thursday, 11:00 to 12:15 in 1171 BSB.**

January 15, 17, 22.

Introduction. Read “Representing Public Qualities,” by McFarland & Tepe, to be supplied by email. January 22 and 24, confer as to first paper topic.

January 24.

Outside speaker, Sultan Tepe invited.

Read Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation*, Ch. 1.

Pitkin classes: To enhance variety, I expect to present a representing public qualities topic in the last part of the class, after a discussion of the Pitkin chapter.

January 29.

Discuss Pitkin, Ch. 1.

Turn in one page summary

Read Pitkin, Ch. 2..

January 31.

Discuss Pitkin, Ch 2.

Turn in one page summary.

Read Pitkin, Ch. 3.

February 5.

Discuss Pitkin, Ch. 3.

Turn in one page summary.

Read Pitkin, Ch. 4.

February 7.

Discuss Pitkin, Ch. 4.

Turn in one page summary.

Read Pitkin, Ch. 5

February 12.

**First five page paper due.**

Discuss Pitkin, Ch. 5.

Turn in one page summary

Read Pitkin, Ch. 6.

Note: an outside speaker class may push down some of

the Pitkin discussions.

February 14

Possible outside speaker

Discuss Pitkin, Ch 6

Turn in one page summary

Read Pitkin, Ch. 7

February 19

Possible guest speaker.

Discuss Pitkin, Ch 7

Turn in one page summary

Read Pitkin, Ch 8

February 21

Possible guest speaker

Discuss Pitkin, Ch 8

Turn in one page summary

Read Pitkin Ch 9

February 26

Discuss Pitkin, Ch. 9

Turn in one page summary.

Read Pitkin, Ch 10

March 5

Discuss Pitkin, Ch 10

Turn in one page summary.

This is the end of *The Concept of Representation*

March 7

**Second writing installment due.**

*The Logic of Collective Action*, begin reading.

The concept of “public goods.”

March 12

*The Logic of Collective Action*, continue reading.

Representing public goods. American public interest groups.

March 14

*The Logic of Collective Action*, finish reading.

Representing public goods. Right-to-work law controversy.

March 19.  
Doctoral student presentation: "Common Cause."

March 21 TBA.

March 26, March 28. Spring vacation.

April 2  
**Third writing installment due.**  
Doctoral student presentation.

April 4.  
Doctoral student presentation.  
An additional article or two may be assigned, TBA.

April 9.  
Sultan Tepe invited to speak.  
An additional article or two may be assigned, TBA.

April 11.  
Outside speaker, TBA//undergraduate presentation (optional).

April 16, 18, 23, 25.  
Instructor will organize ideas regarding representing public qualities.

April 30.  
Class canceled.

May 1. A Thursday.  
**Final writing assignment due.**

**There is no final examination** (finals week 6-10).