

**POLITICAL SCIENCE 349: SEMINAR IN COMPARATIVE POLITICS
SPRING 2010: MR. MCFARLAND
CREATIVE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

This class meets once a week, Thursday 3:30 to 6:00, in the seminar room, 1171 BSB.

This class meets the writing-in-the-discipline requirement for the Political Science Department.

The required reading consists of two manuscripts written and/or edited by the instructor, which will be posted on Blackboard. Alternative modes of submitting the manuscript will be worked out, if necessary. There are no books to be purchased.

The first set of class meetings consists of lectures by the instructor in presenting the manuscripts to be published as books in 2010 by Paradigm Publishers, Boulder, Colorado. There will be a midterm over these classes. Four meetings at the end will be devoted to 15 minute presentations by students of their papers for this class. There is no final examination.

The main requirement for the class is a 15 page research paper, due at the end of the class. The student is required to write a 3-4 page prospectus, then to revise/add to the prospectus another four pages, then take a midterm, and then to finish the 15 page paper by the end of the semester. This is a writing-in-the-discipline class, and therefore writing and grammar are part of the grading process. Students with writing difficulties are encouraged to work with others in editing the paper to learn from correcting errors, but the research of course must be the student's own work.

The final paper will count 50% of the grade; the first and second paper submissions are each 10% of the grade; the midterm counts 30%. Participation may affect the grade as attendance will be taken during the four student presentation sessions.

Writing the Paper

This class concerns the instructor's theory of creative participation, the topic of the manuscript "Creative Participation" on Blackboard, to be published as *Boycotts and Dixie Chicks: Creative Political Participation at Home and Abroad*. A second manuscript, edited by Michele Micheletti (Stockholm University Sweden) and Andrew S. McFarland, *Creative Participation: Responsibility-Taking in a Political World*, will be posted on Blackboard.

The instructor argues that there are at least five distinct concepts and dialogues about political participation: the discussion forum (e.g. ancient Athens), interests aggregated by institutions (elections, interest groups, institutional politics), creative engagement (the Bowling Alone theory about the importance of social interaction), political movements (groups against the establishment and using noninstitutional methods), and creative participation. The latter concept refers to the actions of scattered individuals, having goals concerning the common good of the entire polity, who lack established political institutions to pursue such common weal goals, and

therefore must create their own vehicles for participation. Creative participation overlaps with social movements, but in my view, can be distinct from movements.

An example of creative participation is the tens of thousands of uprisings of rural villagers in contemporary China against local cliques of corruption. These uprisings are not against the political system as a whole, and typically cite the laws and regulations of the existing regime, support the existing regime, but seek ways to combat local corruption when the regime does not offer institutional support. This example is important since there are 700 million people of the planet living in rural Chinese villages.

Four chapters of my book exemplify important areas of creative participation: the environment, protest against corruption, political consumerism meaning boycotts against businesses, and transnational advocacy networks (environment, human rights, etc.). Currently the internet is usually a part of creative participation, but in McFarland language, while internet usage may be creative as used by political campaigns and interest groups, this type of internet action falls as a means of participation in a different category.

Paper Topics

Paper topics are to be in the area of creative political participation, as defined by the instructor. The student's topic must be approved by the instructor. However, within these boundaries, there are hundreds, and likely thousands of significant paper topics. Probably much of the research will be internet based; for some topics there may be a significant amount of books and articles available in the library. In the case of a paper topic involving events current in Chicago, the research may involved interviews of participants and personal observation of events.

More details about paper topics will be presented in the first and second classes. But here are some creative participation topics:

1. Community uprisings against corruption (McFarland ch 3). These may occur in any country and at any time.
2. Color revolutions and mass protests: Ukraine, Iran, Serbia, etc. I am not referring to most events called "revolutions," but to the mass protest type, in which seeming uncoordinated masses meet in central squares to protest a corrupt regime. Most revolutions are political movements in my terminology, but I think the color revolutions are in a different category.
3. The formation of new international advocacy networks, such as human rights protests, environmental advocacy, women's rights, labor conditions advocacy (Nike factories), and so forth. After a few years, such networks can become institutions, as I regard the Red Cross and Amnesty International as such. But in their formative period, I would see activity as creative participation.
4. Spontaneous community environmental protests, such as the famous Erin Brockovich episode, *Civil Action*, The Love Canal, and even outbreaks of recycling. Protests organized by established environmental groups such as the Sierra Club I put in a different category.
5. Spontaneous protests and boycotts against corporations, now usually organized through the Internet. In my book I refer to boycotts against Nestle, ExxonMobil, and Shell Oil. One or two papers about Wal-Mart are OK, although somewhat over the borderline into union organized actions.

6. Creative use of the internet for organizing widely scattered persons for a goal alleged to be the benefit of the entire society, rather than organizing some economic group or identity group (women, gays, etc). By this I mean a paper giving more emphasis to the internet activity than would be the case in #1 to #5 above.

I am not limiting paper topics to the categories above, which I am stating in order to be specific.

As part of the 15 page paper, there must be three pages (or some equivalent scattered through the paper) of references to the theory of creative participation stated in the course. I really don't care all that much as to whether you agree with me; I would be looking for intelligent argumentation, backed up with evidence such as research in the paper.

Contact Information

e mail amcfarla@uic.edu I do not look at e-mail on Saturdays.

Office Hours: Tuesday 200-400, 1123 BSB. Maibox 1102 BSB. Office phone 312-413-3776

Schedule

January 14. First class. Lecture on McFarland, Chapter 1. Theory of creative participation.

January 21. Lecture on environmental protest, McFarland, Ch. 2.

January 28 Lecture on anti-corruption protests, U.S. public interest movements.
McFarland, Ch. 3.

February 4 Lecture on political consumerism. **The four page paper topic prospectus is due on this date.**

February 11 Lecture on transnational advocacy networks.

February 18 Lecture about U.S. reform and Neo-progressives.

February 25 Go to the Micheletti and McFarland collection. Lecture on the chapters by Michele Micheletti (responsibility), James Guth (clergy), and UIC's own John Watson (green developers in Lake County). **The second four page paper submission is due on this date.**

March 4 Lecture, Micheletti & McFarland: Therese O'Toole (Muslim Youth in the UK); Francesca Forno & Carina Gunnarson (Italian housewives vs. Mafia), Jan van Deth (creative participation and European survey).

March 11 Lecture, Micheletti & McFarland: Alexandra Segerberg (participation as swarming); Kay Lehman Schlozman (critique of creative participation).

March 18 **Midterm over lecture material.**

March 25 **Spring Break.**

April 1 Student presentations (attendance taken).

April 8 Student presentations (attendance taken).

April 15 Student presentations (attendance taken).

April 22 Student presentations (attendance taken).

April 29 **Fifteen page paper due in the afternoon. Late papers will be penalized.
But there is no final.**