

# SE223: Styles of Civic Engagement

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Office Hours: By Appointment

## Course Description

This network course will examine historical, philosophical, and practical elements of civic engagement while asking what it means to be an engaged citizen in the early 21st century. Themes include citizenship, political participation, social activism, and notions of personal responsibility. Guest speakers and field trips will help students find their own ways of becoming engaged, while interaction with other network institutions will allow students to explore how civic engagement differs between countries. Most sessions will be divided between “theory” parts for discussing historical and philosophical readings and “practice” parts to help students develop their own civic engagement projects. As a final project, students can present a project of their own design, report on their regular involvement in an ongoing project or organization, or produce an associational map of local civic organizations.

## Requirements

Success in this course will require commitment to both its theoretical and practical components. Students must come to class prepared to participate in discussing the readings (which includes active listening as well as sharing one’s own thoughts). They must also show effort in the practical components and participate in the online network activities in a timely fashion. Students will also be expected to put in significant time and effort outside of class researching local civic organizations and thinking creatively about solutions to current problems. The out-of-class components will require considerable self-motivation and time management to be successful.

### Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin maintains the staunchest regard for academic integrity and expects good academic practice from students in their studies. Syllabi should note that, instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section III Academic Misconduct.

### Attendance

Regular and punctual attendance is expected; repeated absences and/or lateness will negatively impact a student’s grade. Students are advised to consult the Student Handbook for regulations governing periods of illness or leaves of absence.

### Grade Breakdown

Preparation for and participation in “theory” discussions	40%
Preparation for and participation in “practice” sessions	20%
Timely and effortful engagement in network activities	10%
Case study of a local civic organization	10%
Final Project	20%

**Week One (9/3)**

**Theory: What is civic engagement?**

- Sherry Arnstein, “A Ladder of Citizen Participation”
- Anja Eder, “Cross-Country Variation in People’s Attitudes toward Citizens’ Rights and Obligations”

**Practice: Community I: Defining your community (with Xenia Muth)**

**Week Two (9/10)**

**Theory: *Vita Activa***

- Cicero, from *De Republica*
- Hannah Arendt, from *The Human Condition*
- Abraham Heschel, “What Manner of Man Is the Prophet?”
- Cornel West, “On the Academy, Activism, and the Purpose of Philosophy”

**Practice: Starting a Project I (with Xenia Muth & CEN student project leaders)**

- “UN Sustainable Development Goals, 2015-2030” (browse website)
- Explore focus areas: youth engagement, gender rights, environment, migration

**Week Three (9/13-22): Participate in Berliner Freiwilligentage (details TBD)**

- Smith, Holmes, et al., “Motivations and Benefits of Student Volunteering”
- From “Study on Volunteering in the European Union: Germany”
- Simonson, Vogel, et al., from “Volunteering in Germany: Key Findings”

**Week Four (9/24)**

**Practice: Starting a Project II (with Xenia Muth & visitors from a Berlin NGO)**

- *CCE Handbook: How to Start a Project*
- From *UN World Youth Report*
- ASSIGNMENT DUE: Case study of a local civic organization

**Week Five (10/1)**

**Theory: Civic Life in Modern Society**

- Benjamin Constant, “Liberty of Ancients compared with that of Moderns”
- Alexis de Tocqueville, from *Democracy in America*
- Robert Putnam, “Bowling Alone”

**Practice: Community II: Identifying community needs (with Xenia Muth)**

**Week Six (10/8) No Class**

**Week Seven (10/15)**

**Theory: Community Service**

- Jane Addams, from *Twenty Years at Hull House*
- Jane Addams, “The Subjective Necessity of Social Settlements”

**Practice: Starting a Project III: Publicity and social media (with Irina Stelea)**

**Week Eight (10/22)**

**Theory: Direct Action**

- Martin Luther King, Jr., from *Why We Can’t Wait*
- Saul Alinsky, from *Rules for Radicals*

SCREENING: scenes from *Freedom Summer*, dir. Stanley Nelson (2014)

**Practice: Starting a Project IV: Budgets and fundraising (with Bendetta Roux)**

## **SEMESTER BREAK**

### **Week Nine (11/5): Documentary Film (with Tuki Jencquel)**

- Robert Sklar, “Documentary: Artifice in the Service of Truth”
- *The Impact Field Guide & Toolkit* (browse website: [www.impactguide.org](http://www.impactguide.org))

SCREENING: *Está todo bien (It's All Good)*, dir. Tuki Jencquel (2018)

### **Week Ten (11/12): NGOs (with Nealin Parker)**

- Nealin Parker, *Take a Right at the Tank*
- Gina Reinhardt, “Five Ways NGOs Make Things Worse”
- “Do No Harm: A Brief Introduction from CDA”
- Inger Ulleberg, “The Role and Impact of NGOs in Capacity Development”

➤ PROPOSALS FOR FINAL PROJECTS DUE

### **Week Eleven (11/19): Project Workshop (with CEN student project leaders)**

### **Week Twelve (11/26): Theater (with guest TBD)**

- Bertolt Brecht, “A Short Organum for the Theater”
- Sa’dallah Wannous, “It All Begins with the Audience”
- Mohammad Al Attar, *Could You Please Look into the Camera?*

### **Week Thirteen (12/3): Education (with Megan Callaghan)**

- Paulo Freire, from *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*
- bell hooks, “Keepers of Hope: Teaching in Communities”

SCREENING: scenes from *College Behind Bars*, dir. Lynn Novick (2019)

### **Week Fourteen (12/10): Student Presentations**

All readings are available in the course reader unless otherwise noted. Students must bring the course reader to all class sessions. Failure to come to class with the readings will negatively affect the participation grade.