What does it mean to be a Global Citizen?
“From Civil Rights to Global Citizenship” & “The Election of 2016”

FALL SEMESTER

What makes us good citizens? Are we the citizens we want to be or can we do better?

If we can do better, what capacities do citizens need to cultivate to guarantee the vitality of a modern democracy, to deliberate together to decide about the public good? Many Americans are pulled in two different directions. On the one hand, many want to be “left alone” to pursue their own projects and plans; on the other, many, sometimes these very same citizens, yearn to participate in a more meaningful public life in pursuit of goals that reflect a common purpose.

Still, citizenship to most Americans is a matter of private rights rather than a set of public responsibilities, a defensive strategy against powerful governors. But have we become too self-- defensive? too focused on rights, too private to sustain a vital democracy in the new millennium?
I. Introduction
The course will focus on the role of the citizen in the world’s democracies in 2016. It will consist of five parts:

(1) An opening section in which the examples of Socrates, Antigone, Thoreau, Gandhi, and Martin Luther King will be discussed in light of their activities as citizens in their respective political communities as well as a number of contemporary pro-democracy activists and dissidents such as Nelson Mandela (South Africa), Andrei Sakharov (Russia), Lech Walsea (Poland), Vaclav Havel (Czech Republic, the Dalai Lama (Tibet), Russian dissident Boris Nemtsov, and Burmese pro-democracy activist Aung San Suu Kyi, and Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo, both recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize and Liu Xiaobo as part of a larger effort to develop a political philosophy of the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democracy as well as answer the question: “What Does It Mean To Be a Citizen in the World Today?”

(2) A second section devoted to a philosophical examination of the nature of political obligation in a democratic society as well as a stab at an answer to the question: “when and under what circumstances, if any, is civil disobedience and civil resistance in a democracy justified?”

(3) A third section devoted to an exploration of the grounds for giving one’s allegiance to any state at all and the meaning and value of conceiving of citizenship as an activity rather than merely as a legal status, as the cultivation of a certain kind of political character and the development of civic virtues, habits of heart and mind rather than merely the possession of set of rights.

(4) A fourth section devoted to an examination of ways to strengthen democracy by fostering greater participation in politics and other forms of civic renewal and engagement against the background of the November Election including 

Everything You Would Want To Know About Donald Trump, Hilary Clinton and Bernie Sanders: the Ads, Campaigns, the Parties, the Issues and the Voting in 2016.

(5) A fifth and final section devoted to an examination of the future of democracy in the world today, the value and significance of seeing oneself as a global citizen rather than merely a citizen of this or that country plus an examination of the opportunities and obstacles of democratic reform in such countries as Pakistan, North Korea, Russia, Syria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and China.

Topics will include extending the vote to 17 year-olds in municipal elections, voter ID laws, money in politics, the Supreme Court’s Citizens United decision, civic education, residency requirements, postal voting, online voting, a comparative examination of alternative voting methods, turnout, ways to increase citizen participation, the meaning and nature of representation in a democracy, health care, tax reform, affirmative action, race relations, government funding of the arts, social security, electoral reform, voter turnout and such questions as “Is the Internet Good for Democracy?” “How Much Inequality Can a Democracy Stand?” and “Are Globalization and Multiculturalism Good or Bad for Democracy?”

NOTE the first ten minutes of every class prior to Nov. 8th will be devoted to the U.S. Election.

II. Class Times
The course will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5:00 to 6:20 PM
III. Reading:

The following books are available in the University Book Store but also where and when a text is available on the Course Web Site, that is, in LATTE:

• Sophocles, ANTIGONE, Dover Thrift Edition (also online)
• Plato, THE TRIAL & DEATH OF SOCRATES, Dover Thrift Edition (also online)
• Thoreau, CIVIL RESISTANCE & OTHER ESSAYS, Dover Thrift Edition (also online)
• Gandhi, NON-VIOLENT RESISTANCE, Dover Thrift edition (also online)
• Ralph Bellamy, CITIZENSHIP: A Very Short Introduction, OUP
• Robert Dahl, ON DEMOCRACY, Yale Nota Bene
• Martha Nussbaum, FOR LOVE OF COUNTRY: THE LIMITS OF PATRIOTISM, Beacon Press.
• Charles Taylor, MULTICULTURALISM & THE POLITICS OF RECOGNITION, Princeton
• Bernard Crick, DEMOCRACY: A Very Short Introduction, OUP
• Manfred Steger, GLOBALIZATION: A Very Short Introduction, OUP
• Kwame Appiah, COSMOPOLITANISM, Norton

Additional readings available in LATTE to everyone enrolled in the class. The course will be divided into five sections of approximately three weeks each. Assignments will be handed out for each section. A number of readings will be available in PDF online and several as class handouts.

IV. Papers

Four short papers are required on topics growing out of the readings and class discussions. The papers should be about 5 to 6 pages in length. Paper topics will be available at least seven (7) days before a paper is due. You will have the opportunity to rewrite one perhaps two of papers as well as the opportunity at various points in the course to get “extra credit” and improve your final grade.

V. Examinations

There will be one quiz in class. There will be no other written examinations, final or otherwise.

VI. Attendance

Although class attendance will not be taken directly into account in considering an overall grade for the course, attendance is required. You are allowed two unexcused absences. Any further absences will have an impact on your final grade.

VII. Grading

Grading will be broken down as follows: 30% for your strongest essay, 25% for your next best effort, 20% for the next, and 15% for the essay which is least successful of the four. The quiz will count 5%; participation 5%.

VIII. Small Group Discussions

Small group discussions can be helpful. Occasional sessions will be scheduled especially after paper topics are handed out and before a paper is due. Although attendance at the small group discussions is not required, the sessions will provide you with an opportunity to brainstorm about the issues.

IX. Course Web Site

The Course has its own Web Site in LATTE.

X. Office Hours

I will hold office hours from 11:30 to 12:30 on Thursdays and by appointment in Rabb, Room 330. If you wish to leave messages for me, the best method is via E-Mail (teuber@brandeis.edu)
OPENING SECTIONS

I. FIVE MODEL CITIZENS (399 BC -1968):

ANTIGONE
Sophocles, Antigone

SOCRATES
Plato, Apology and Crito

HENRY DAVID THOREAU
Thoreau, “Resistance to Civil Government”
Thoreau, “Slavery in Massachusetts”
Thoreau, "A Plea for Captain John Brown"
Emerson, “Eulogy: May 19th, 1862”

MAHATMA GANDHI
Gandhi, Selections from his Writings
Judith Brown: "Gandhi and Civil Resistance in India, 1917-47: Key Issues

MARTIN LUTHER KING
King, “Letter from Birmingham City Jail”
Doug McAdam: "Civil Rights: Power from Below and Above, 1945-70
Eyes on The Prize (Episode I): “The Montgomery Bus Boycott”
Eyes on The Prize (Episode 6): “Voting Rights”

II. MODELS OF NON-VIOLENT CIVIL RESISTANCE (POST-1968)


LECH WALESA (5) Timothy Garton Ash, “The Twins’ New Poland” (Online in LATTE)


Note: If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and you would like to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in PHIL 126A, please see me as soon as possible