



Supporting the *Engaging Citizenship* Book Project

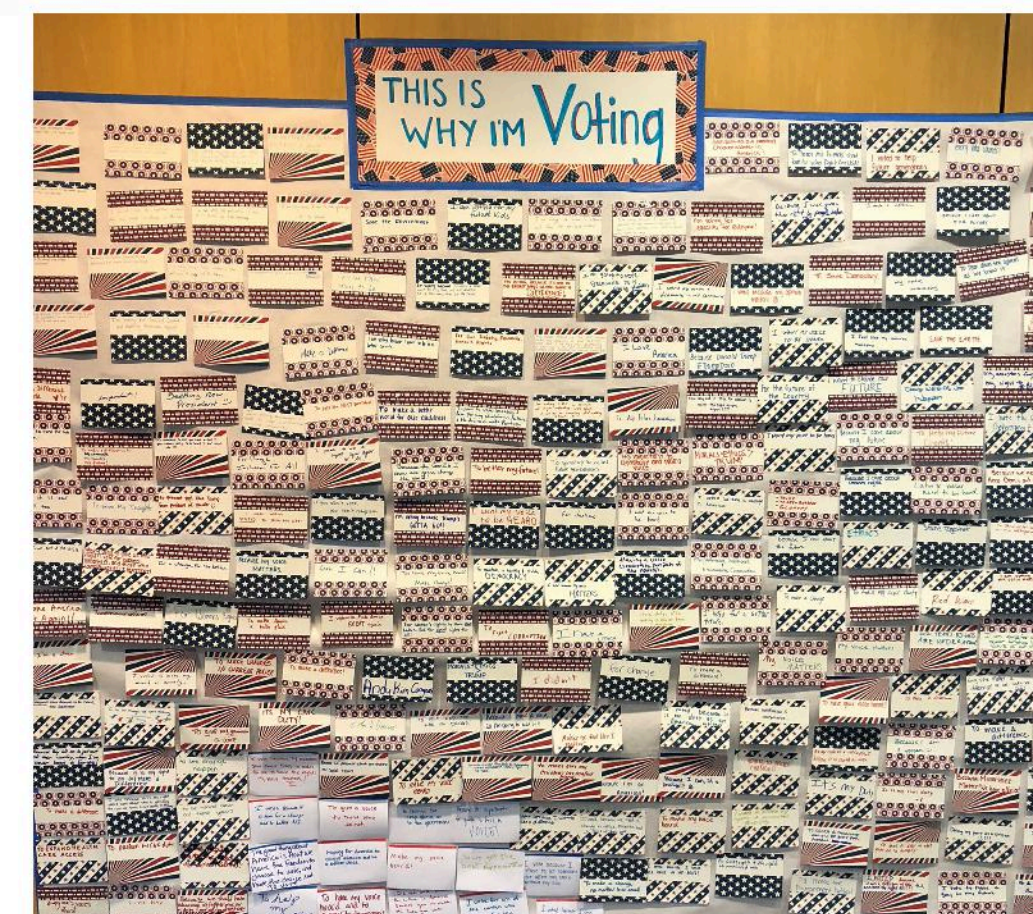
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Engaging Citizenship Synopsis

Engaging Citizenship is a textbook for Introduction to Politics or Introduction to Political Science courses, designed to provide an overview of key questions in Political Science and how each of the discipline's four subfields examines them. Each chapter explores how scholars in Political Theory, Comparative Politics, American Politics, and International Relations study democratic citizenship in distinct but complementary ways. *Engaging Citizenship* aims to meet students where they are and demonstrate the impact of politics in their lives by emphasizing the practices of citizenship throughout each chapter. As a result, this text supports the development of all students as democratic citizens who can exercise their rights, responsibilities, and obligations in their own communities.



Photo credit: Claire Abernathy



Engaging Citizenship Learning Objectives

Students reading *Engaging Citizenship* will:

- Gain basic understanding of Political Science and its four subfields—Political Theory, Comparative Politics, American Politics and International Relations
- Learn about how these different subfields approach core questions in the discipline:
 - *Why do states exist? How do people organize political life? What factors shape political participation? How do citizens respond to state failures?*
- Define key concepts in Political Science and discuss how they relate to national and global politics today
- Understand their own citizenship and the importance of active participation as part of their communities
- Grapple with injustices, both close to home and around the world, what we can learn from them, and what can be done to resolve them

Research Responsibilities

In my role as a Research Assistant, I served as a support system for Dr. Balasco and Dr. Abernathy. Completing and revising a textbook manuscript takes a great deal of time and effort. While they had to get important tasks of their own done on a certain deadline, I took on different tasks each semester.

- In Fall 2022, I focused on work that supported final revisions on the textbook, including cross-checking the glossary with each chapter's definitions of key terms and placing references in the bibliography. I would try to be available for tasks that needed to be completed so that the professors were able to send everything to the publishers and make their January 2023 deadline.
- In spring 2023, I worked on developing the ancillary materials that will accompany this textbook. Ancillary materials are secondary resources that further allow the content of the textbook to resonate with students. The ancillary materials that were chosen are primarily examples of concepts that can be showcased by real life. It allows for more context on current and past events and how these examples add to the textbook's learning objectives.

Research and Engagement

In Fall 2022, as the manuscript was being completed, I read each chapter in *Engaging Citizenship* and shared my thoughts on reading it as a student. I went through each chapter to review key terms and check for consistency with the glossary. I also would help with the bibliography when necessary. Throughout this research, I regularly stayed connected with the professors via email and zoom meetings.

In spring 2023, as I focused on compiling ancillary materials for each chapter, I watched documentaries, listened to podcasts, and read articles, reviewing what resources could complement the chapter contents. I tried to ensure that the sources I used were interesting and would add to students' learning experience. These ancillary materials required a variety of source types, since students might have different learning styles or faculty might want to add different materials to their lecture or readings for the course.

This work allowed for me personally to gain more knowledge on the contents within the chapter. Then, I was in a better position to give my opinion on different topics within the book. I think my perspective as a college student who has taken all of the introductory Political Science courses added value in the selection of these secondary sources. Because this is an undergraduate-level textbook, I could rely on my personal experiences as a student and apply it to my work as a research assistant. I think students will learn more about key Political Science concepts and theories and they will be more engaged in the democratic process and academic content because of the sources that were selected.

Reflection

I learned a great deal from this experience. Not only did I have two amazing professors guide me every step of the way, but I feel honored to be a part of their textbook in the way that I was. Providing a research report in this textbook made me feel like I am helping future political science students. It was very meaningful to be a part of the behind the scenes on this project having taken this introductory class as a freshman. Taking on this Research Assistant role during my senior year allowed me to bring all my knowledge as a former student learning these topics. I feel extremely lucky to have been offered this experience of a lifetime. I cannot wait for the textbook to be out there eventually and have students being able to learn from it. My professors put so much work and knowledge into the content that it will allow for students to learn in a new and refreshing way.

Specific Skills

This research has helped me develop several different skills. I am now confident in my ability to find and evaluate different sources of academic content. I can now use Zotero to properly cite sources in a bibliography and in footnotes. I also feel that reading the textbook and providing feedback on it made me more confident in my knowledge as a Political Science major. The ability to give input on a textbook, ancillary materials, and future lesson plans as a student was very beneficial because I could bring a student's perspective about what would best engage other students in learning the material. I also learned to trust my instincts more—a lot of this job required critical thinking, and I would have to figure out what I think about a source for ancillary material or wording within the textbook. Overall, I feel stronger as both a student and a researcher due to this experience.



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