

Lia C. Howard, Ph.D.
liaf@upenn.edu
Office: College Hall G05
Office Hours: Friday 10-12pm & by appointment

Spring 2022
MW 10:15-11:30am
PCPSE 203
Office Phone: 215 898 2561

PSCI 398-301: Political Empathy and Deliberative Democracy

This course is part of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF) Paideia Program, which serves as a hub for civic dialogue in undergraduate education at Penn. SNF Paideia courses offer a robust, interdisciplinary civic education that is accessible to all Penn undergraduates and highlights the role that civil discourse, dialogue across difference, and wellness play in cultivating integrated citizenship within the Penn Community. See more at <https://snfpaideia.upenn.edu> [Links to an external site.](#)

“Empathy, at a deep level, is the understanding that someone else’s world is just as real as yours.”
Jamil Zaki “You 2.0: Empathy Gym” *Hidden Brain*, NPR, August 31, 2020

“I think we should talk more about our empathy deficit. We live in a culture that discourages empathy. A culture that too often tells us our principal goal in life is to be rich, thin, young famous, safe and entertained. A culture where those in power too often encourage these selfish impulses.”

President (then Senator) Barack Obama, Commencement Address Northwestern University 2006

“Moreover, I am cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states. I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. Never again can we afford to live with the narrow, provincial "outside agitator" idea. Anyone who lives inside the United States can never be considered an outsider...Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection.” Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, *Letter from Birmingham Jail*, 1963

“Listening... enables us to give democratic shape to our being together in the world.”
Susan Bickford, *The Dissonance of Democracy: Listening, Conflict and Citizenship* (1996)

This course seeks to understand contemporary political divisions in the United States using the frames of “political empathy” (a term we will define and unpack together) and “deliberative democracy” (a term well defined in the literature). Guiding our analysis will be scholarship from the discipline of political science, with particular attention given to political culture, polarization, and federalism while incorporating scholarship from several other disciplines. As we study political culture at the national level, we will unpack our own individual attitudes towards politics. There will be an emphasis throughout the course on personal wellness during dialogue with assignments ranging from written reflections on experiences to textual analysis to their combination.

We will start the course examining national ideas around political difference looking at political culture, pluralism, polarization and federalism. The next section of the course explores political difference by considering specific subcultures within the US. The final section offers an applied approach on how to engage political differences through deliberative democracy, empathy, attunement and intellectual humility.

The course asks the following questions: How does deliberative democracy work in practice and why is listening such a critical piece of it? How do we understand U.S. pluralism? Are there limits to political empathy and if so what are those limits? How does the interplay of belief, belonging and behavior work? Where are there shared beliefs, communities and practices and where are there divergent beliefs, communities and practices? How does the interplay between divergent communities work especially in light of affective polarization (and negative partisanship)? Finally, how do we understand all of these big ideas on an individual level as we encounter political difference in the information we consume and in the people we meet? What practices can we learn to help us better understand and embody what the

Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King calls “the inescapable network of mutuality” and why might that be critical to our personal as well as our national health?

Course Goals

Congratulations on being the first cohort of students to take this class. By the end of the course you should be able to

- Articulate and define key concepts such as political culture, political empathy, deliberative democracy, federalism, pluralism, affective polarization as they manifest themselves in U.S. Politics and Culture
- Be able to give examples of different types of different U.S. political cultures and subcultures
- Make connections between theoretical research in U.S. politics and applied research in politics and psychology.
- Demonstrate an general understanding of U.S. political belief, behavior and belonging and apply it to a distinct socio political issue of interest
- Be able to discuss how individual and community wellness in the U.S. are connected
- Share from direct experience how to practice attunement, intellectual humility, active listening, and a variety of other interactive wellness exercises

Course Policies

Participation and Attendance: Attendance is required. Students who miss a class must make a reasonable effort to contact me in advance. The following are regarded as excused absences:

1. Absences resulting from religious holidays.
2. Absences resulting from legal obligations, e.g., jury duty
3. Documented family or medical emergencies

Regardless of the reason for absence, students are responsible for learning what happened in class. Students who anticipate missing one or more classes should contact the instructor ahead of time and they should visit my office hours immediately upon returning from an absence.

Attendance includes being present in the class, including refraining from using tech devices for non-class-related purposes. On-time arrival to class is expected.

*If you need to come to class via Zoom due to a red pass (or other covid related reason please let me know **no later than 9AM on a class day**)*

Late assignments will lose ½ point each day they are late.

Writing Support: I recommend making an appointment with a writing tutor at [The Marks Family Writing Center](#)

Students with Disabilities: Please let me know if you anticipate any issues that might affect your performance in the class. If you require disability-related accommodations, such as a note-taker, extended time on timed writings, or captioning, please register with the Office of Disability Services (ODS). Disabilities may include learning, psychiatric, or physical disabilities. ODS can assist you with finding out if you qualify for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodations.

Office of Disability Services
Stouffer Commons, Suite 300
3702 Spruce Street

Phone: (215) 573-9235

Email: sdsmailto@zimbra.upenn.edu

Monday-Friday, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM

For other UPenn resources for students with disabilities, visit <https://wlrc.vpul.upenn.edu/>

Academic Integrity: All students are responsible for adhering to the University of Pennsylvania Code of Academic Integrity, which can be found here: [Penn's Code of Academic Integrity](#) . Please take time to read the academic integrity policies, as I take them seriously. If you have questions about what constitutes dishonest activity for this course, please ask.

Other Important Notes:

- In a class discussing empathy, civility towards colleagues and instructor during class and in all class-related activities is expected (including emailed communications).
- In order to best show respect to each other punctual arrival and adequate preparation is expected.
- Please do not use electronic devices unless allowed by the instructor.
- Your conduct in the class will be factored into your participation grade.

Required Books

All readings are on Course reserve with the Penn library which can be found on our Canvas site

- Matthew S. Levendusky and Dominik A Stecula *We Need to Talk* Cambridge Elements Experimental Political Science (New York, Cambridge University Press: 2021)
- Dante Chinni and James Gimpel *Our Patchwork Nation: The Surprising Truth about the "Real" America* (New York: Gotham Books, 2010)
- Jamil Zaki *The War for Kindness: Building Empathy in a Fractured World* (New York: Broadway Books, 2019)
- Edward Brodtkin and Ashley Pallantra *Missing Each other: How to Cultivate Meaningful Connections* (New York: Public Affairs, 2021)

Full Electronic book available through links below

- Donald Kettl *The Divided States of America: Why Federalism Doesn't Work* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020). Full ebook Accessible through Penn Library <https://www-degruyter-com.proxy.library.upenn.edu/document/doi/10.1515/9780691201054/html>
- Mary F. Scudder *Beyond Empathy and Inclusion: The Challenge of Listening in Democratic Deliberation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020). Full ebook accessible through Penn Library <https://oxford-universitypressscholarship-com.proxy.library.upenn.edu/view/10.1093/oso/9780197535455.001.0001/oso-9780197535455>

Optional/Recommended Books

- Vivek H. Murthy *Together: The Healing Power of Human Connection in A Sometimes Lonely World* (New York: Harper Wave Press 2020).
- Evan Osnos, *Wildland : The Making of America's Fury* (New York: FSG, 2021).
- Robert Putnam and Shaylyn Romney Grant. *Upswing: How America Came Together a Century Ago and How We Can Do it Again* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2020).

Course Work

- I. **Participation (10%)**
- II. **Journal & Conversation Partners/Group exercises (15%)** : Your journal will be a place to respond to prompts throughout the semester. Your first journal entry will be submitted electronically. The rest will be written by hand in a journal given to you by the instructor. You will be grouped with a conversation partner to discuss a variety of short, experiential assignments. After some of those experiences, you will be asked to reflect on them in your journal (you will switch conversation partners in each new section of the course). Journal entries should be dated, titled and a length of at least 200 words (you can always write more).
- III. **Political Autobiography Essay due January 21th (10%)**
See assignment information on Canvas
- IV. **Polarization and Federalism Essay due Tuesday, February 22 (15%)**
Assignment information will be loaded to Canvas in early February.
- V. **Political Culture Summit Paper due Tuesday, March 22 (20%)**
Assignment information will be loaded to Canvas in early March.
 - a. Paper (15%)
 - b. Participation in Summit on 3/21 (5%)
- VI. **Applied Research Project Final Essay: (30%)** the purpose of this paper is to connect the more theoretical parts of the course with the more applied aspects of the course. Students will be asked to select a sociopolitical issue that is important to them and using scholarship from the first two sections of the course as contextual background, look to apply the final section of the course into an actionable way to approach the sociopolitical issue. More information is available on Canvas.
 - a. Proposal due **in your meeting with Dr. Howard (5%)**
Students will meet with instructor during the Week of February 7
 - b. Presentation last 2 days of class **April 25, April 27 (5%)**
 - c. Paper due **May 2 (20%)**

Course Schedule

Subject to revision as necessary

- Note: readings are to be done in advance of the class session under which they are listed

Week 1: Welcome to the course

January 12: Welcome to the Course, Syllabus

I. **American Identity and Understanding at the National Level**

Week 2: What is Empathy? What is Political Culture? What is Deliberative Democracy?

January 17: No class to observe the holiday honoring Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King

January 18 Journal Entry #1 due to Canvas by 5pm

January 19: What is Empathy? What is Political Culture? What is Deliberative Democracy?

- Selections from “Chapter 4: Political Culture” in James Q Wilson, John J. DiIulio, Meena Bose *American Government: Institutions and Policies 14th Edition* (on Canvas)
- Selections from Jamil Zaki *The War For Kindness: Building Empathy in a Fractured World* (on Canvas) Appendix defining empathy
- Mary F. Scudder *Beyond Empathy and Inclusion: The Challenge of Listening in Democratic Education* pgs 1-17(available as an e resource from the library)

Political Autobiography Essay Due to Canvas January 21 by 5pm

Week 3: Understanding Difference at the National Level

January 24: Pluralism

- James Madison, Federalist #10 https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/fed10.asp
- Governor George Clinton, Cato #3 https://archive.csac.history.wisc.edu/26_Cato_III.pdf
- William Penn, Pennsylvania Charter https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/pa07.asp

For reference in class (do not have to read in advance of class):

- John Locke “A Letter Concerning Toleration”1689
<https://socialsciences.mcmaster.ca/econ/ugcm/3ll3/locke/toleration.pdf>

January 25 Journal #2 in journal by 5pm

January 26: U.S. Racial & Economic Explanations for Identities

- Isabel Wilkerson *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents* (New York: Random House Books, 2020) (chapters 1 &2) on Canvas
- Rogers Smith, “Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal and Harz: The Multiple Traditions in America” in David Canon, John Coleman and Kenneth Mayer, *The Enduring Debate 8th edition* (New York: WW Norton & Co, 2018) (on Canvas)
- Robert Putnam and Shaylyn Romney Grant. *Upswing: How America Came Together a Century Ago and How We Can Do it Again* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2020). Chapter 1 (on Canvas)

For Additional Reading (optional)

- Ibram X. Kendi *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* (New York: Nation Books, 2016).

Week 4: Explanations for U.S. Identity: using Open Mind and “Dialogue Lab: America”

January 31: Understanding Political Difference (class will only meet 10:15-11am adjusted for Wednesday’s longer class)

- Sign up for Open Mind (information in Folder) Complete Modules 1 & 2
- You will do the first Peer to Peer conversation with your conversation partner **in class**

For Additional Reading (optional)

- Open Mind lesson 5 (on Canvas in Open Mind folder)
- Jurgen Habermas, *The Inclusion of the Other* (Polity, 1999), Chapter 4 (on Canvas)
- “Samuel Huntington *American Politics The Promise of Disharmony* Chapter 1 (on Canvas)

February 1 Journal #3 after completing Open Mind Modules 1 & 2 and Peer to Peer Conversation by 5pm

Feb 2: “Dialogue Lab: America” Documentary Screening (10am -12pm)

** Special conversation with producer and Cast members ** note adjusted class time

Week 5: Federalism

Meetings this week with Dr. Howard: be sure to sign up! Bring your Final Applied Research Paper Proposal to the meeting

Feb 7: Federalism

- Donald Kettl *The Divided States of America: Why Federalism Doesn't Work* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020). preface, 1 &2

Feb 9: Federalism

- Donald Kettl *The Divided States of America: Why Federalism Doesn't Work* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020). 3, 4, 7 (11 optional)

Week 6: Polarization

Feb 14: Polarization

- Levendusky *We Need to Talk* all

February 15 Journal #4 in journal by 5pm

Feb 16: Polarization

- Iyengar, Shanto and Lelkes, Yphtach and Levendusky, Matthew and Malhotra, Neil and Westwood, Sean, *The Origins and Consequences of Affective Polarization in the United States* (May 2019). *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 22, pp. 129-146, 2019, Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3394075> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-051117-073034>
- Fishkin, et al. *Is Deliberation an Antidote to Extreme Partisan Polarization? Reflections on “America in One Room”* *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol 4 pp 1464 (2021)

II. American Political Subcultures: How many Americas are we?

Week 7: Political Subcultures

New Conversation Partners

Feb 21: Three Americas

- Daniel Elazar “Three Political Cultures” in David Canon, John Coleman and Kenneth Mayer, *The Enduring Debate 8th edition* (New York: WW Norton & Co, 2018) (on Canvas)
- Excerpts from Evan Osnos, *Wildland : The Making of America’s Fury* (New York: FSG, 2021) SELECT

Feb 22: Polarization or Federalism Essay due

Feb 23: Four Americas

- George Packer “How America Fractured into Four Parts” The Atlantic, July/August 2021
<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2021/07/george-packer-four-americas/619012/>

Week 8: Political Subcultures: using demographic data at the county level

Feb 28: ****Guest Speakers**** Ms. Stephanie Perry Executive Director and Mr. Andrew Arengé, Director of Operations PORES, Fox Leadership, University of Pennsylvania.

- Dante Chinni and James Gimpel *Our Patchwork Nation*: Introduction, Boom Towns, Campus and Careers, Industrial Metropolis (note this one is out of order –it’s Philly!)

March 1 or March 15 Journal #5 due in Journal

March 2: Twelve Americas

- Dante Chinni and James Gimpel *Our Patchwork Nation*: Emptying Nests, Evangelical Epicenters, Immigration Nation, Military Bastions

Spring Break! No Class March 7 or 9

Week 9: Twelve Americas

March 14: Twelve Americas

- Dante Chinni and James Gimpel *Our Patchwork Nation*: Minority Central, Monied Burbs, Mormon Outposts

March 1 or March 15 Journal #5 due in Journal

March 16: Twelve Americas

- Dante Chinni and James Gimpel *Our Patchwork Nation*: Service Worker Centers, Tractor Country, Culture (Politics & Economy optional)

III. Empathy and Deliberative Democracy

New Conversation Partners

Week 10: Political Culture Simulation/ Putting Deliberative Democracy into practice

March 21: In class Political Culture Summit

March 22 Political Subculture Essay Due

March 23: Deliberative Democracy

- Mary F. Scudder *Beyond Empathy and Inclusion*: Chapter 2,3

Week 11: Deliberative Democracy

March 28 : Deliberative Democracy and Polarization

- Mary F. Scudder *Beyond Empathy and Inclusion* Chapters 4, 5

March 29 Journal #6 due in journal

March 30: Empathy

- Mary F. Scudder *Beyond Empathy and Inclusion* Chapters 6,7

Week 12: Empathy

April 4:

- Jamil Zaki *The War for Kindness: Building Empathy in a Fractured World* Chapters 1, 2

April 5 Journal #7 due in journal

April 6:

- Jamil Zaki *The War for Kindness: Building Empathy in a Fractured World* 3, 4

Week 13: Attunement

April 11: Attunement and Relaxed Awareness

- Edward Brodtkin and Ashley Pallantra *Missing Each other: How to Cultivate Meaningful Connections* Introduction, Chapters 1, 2

April 12: Journal #8 due in journal

April 13: ****Guest Speakers: Dr. Edward (Ted) Brodtkin and Ms. Ashley Pallantra*****

Listening, Understanding and Mutual Responsiveness

- Edward Brodtkin and Ashley Pallantra *Missing Each other: How to Cultivate Meaningful Connections* Chapters 3, 4, 5

Week 14: Political Empathy and Deliberative Democracy

April 18: As a Society?

- Selections from Vivek H. Murthy *Together: The Healing Power of Human Connection in A Sometimes Lonely World* (New York: Harper Wave Press 2020).
- “Protecting Your Mental Health” *The U.S. Surgeon General’s Advisory 2021*
<https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-youth-mental-health-advisory.pdf>

April 20: As individuals?

- Mark R. Leary et al “Cognitive and Interpersonal Features of Intellectual Humility” *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* (2017)
- Selections from Vivek H. Murthy *Together: The Healing Power of Human Connection in A Sometimes Lonely World* (New York: Harper Wave Press 2020).

Week 15: Tying it all together with Student Presentations

April 25: Presentations I

April 27: Presentations and Conclusion; Last Day of Class

Final Paper due on the first day of Final Exams: May 2.

Reading Days: 4-28- May 1; Final Exams May 2-10