

Political Science (POL 472)
Citizens, Consumers, and the Environment

Davidson College

Spring 2012

Class Times: Wednesday, 1:30 pm to 4:20 pm

Class Location: Chambers 1096

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This course has no pre-requisites, and may be counted as the Environmental Social Sciences course required for Environmental Studies majors and as one of the 10 Political Science courses required for Political Science majors.

Course Overview

In this course, we will be looking at different understandings of what it means to be a “consumer” and a “citizen,” in theoretical, historical and contemporary terms, and then applying those perspectives to different environmental issues and arenas. We will be reading an interdisciplinary range of texts from political science, philosophy, economics, and other fields that relate to these topics. Students will complete three main writing assignments – each student will choose an overarching topic that they are most interested in (e.g. water, food, etc.), and then will write their first short paper on the meaning of citizenship with respect to that issue. The second short paper will focus on the meaning of the “responsible consumer” with respect to that issue, and the third longer paper will provide an integrated analysis of both the consumer and citizen roles with respect to that same issue.

Course Objectives

The goals of this course relate to five general areas of learning:

- ***Social Science:*** To enable students to understand how one of the social sciences seeks to understand and explain human cognition and behavior and the structures of human societies and institutions.
- ***Political Science:*** To expose students to some of the theories and empirical research from the field of political science that can help explain political dynamics and outcomes.
- ***Citizenship and Consumption:*** To provide students with a sophisticated understanding of the institutions, actors, values, cultures, and policymaking processes that relate to

citizenship, consumption, and the environment.

- **Analytical Skills:** To improve students' skills in understanding and assessing a wide range of political concepts and theories, and applying them to specific policy contexts.
- **Personal Empowerment:** To empower students to think critically about their own political values and positions, take thoughtful political positions, make informed personal and political choices, and to positively, strategically, and successfully engage in the politics of the environment – as citizens, consumers, and leaders.

I have designed this syllabus to help us accomplish these goals. I aim for our classes to be engaging and well-organized, our lectures, discussions, and group activities to be focused and productive, and our texts to be informative and thought-provoking. Our assignments will also help us meet these objectives, and assess our progress towards them. I will therefore work to provide constructive feedback and fair grades on them in a timely manner (my goal is to have them back to you within two weeks of submission). I will be available for help outside of class in office hours every week for anyone with questions about the material covered in the course.

Course Structure and Format

The course is structured into three main units:

1. **Citizenship:** We will dive into the history and meaning of this complex, fascinating, and critically important idea. The first three weeks will focus on the nature of citizenship in a general sense, beginning with Derek Heter's history of the concept, which will start with ancient Greece and bring us up to modern debates and themes. We will then cover several seminal readings on important concepts related to citizenship that will broaden and deepen our thinking further. The second three weeks will connect citizenship with environmental concerns, and two great books will help us with this enterprise. Andrew Dobson and Derek Bell's classic edited volume, *Environmental Citizenship*, will provide us with a range of voices and perspectives on this topic, and Melissa Lane's recently published *Eco-Republic* will present a sustained and focused argument connecting classical ideas of citizenship to the modern challenges of the environmental movement.
2. **Consumption:** In the second unit of the course, we will turn to the equally interesting and relevant concept of consumption. We will spend the first two weeks with Neva Goodwin, Frank Ackerman, and David Kiron's compendium of knowledge about consumerism, *The Consumer Society*, which will expose us to a broad range of ideas and opinions on this topic. We will have a week to read additional texts to fill in perceived gaps we want to cover on the nature of consumption, and then we will turn to the complicated subject of ethical consumption and the environment. We have two recently published books to lead us on this project – the first is David Schwartz's *Consuming Choices: Ethics in a Global Consumer Age*, which applies relevant philosophical concepts to modern ethical dilemmas facing today's consumers. The second, *The Myth of the Ethical Consumer* by Timothy Devinney, Pat Auger, and Giana Eckhardt, presents a provocative set of data and conclusions relating to the attitudes and practices of those same consumers, and posits that a new paradigm of ethical consumption is necessary. We will then return to some perspectives on this issue from *The Consumer Society* and possibly some other sources to conclude this unit.
3. **Synthesis: Citizens, Consumers, and the Environment:** The final two weeks of the course will synthesize our understanding of citizens and consumers and their relationship to the

environment. There is a substantial literature on this subject, and so based on our interests and questions at this point in the course, I will identify several readings to cover in this unit that will provide an integrative conclusion to the course.

Course Requirements (Assignments and Grading)

The assignments for this course are designed to help students accomplish the course's learning objectives. They include the following activities:

- **Participation (15%):** This course is designed for active student involvement and participation. For each day's class, I expect students to complete the assigned reading and to come to class prepared to discuss that reading. Participation grades will also be based on your preparation for class, your careful attention to assigned readings, the quality of your contributions, your respect for the ideas and remarks of others in the class, the relevance of your remarks, and your overall level of participation (both active and passive) in the classroom. I will ask directed questions related to each week's readings, and may call on individual students to discuss their key points and insights in class.
- **First Paper (20%):** For the first paper, each student will choose an overarching topic that they are most interested in (e.g. water, food, energy, wildlife, biodiversity, climate, air pollution, etc.), and then will write their first short paper on the meaning of citizenship with respect to that issue. These papers should draw on ideas and concepts that have been discussed in the seminar so far that relate to the nature of citizenship, and apply them to the student's chosen topic. What is a responsible "water citizen," for example, or what is the meaning of "climate citizenship?" This paper should be between 6-8 pages.
- **Second Paper (20%):** The second short paper will focus on the meaning of the "responsible consumer" with respect to the same topic, and should also build on facts and concepts relating to the nature of consumption covered in the second unit of the course. How should responsible water consumption be understood, or what is the nature of a "green consumer" in the context of protecting biodiversity? This paper should also be between 6-8 pages.
- **Third Paper (25%):** The third longer paper will provide an integrated analysis of both the consumer and citizen roles with respect to that same issue. It can use material from the first two papers, but should clearly compare, contrast, and analyze the different roles of citizens and consumers with regard to the environment. Themes and concepts from the course related to both citizenship and consumption – and their various connections – should be applied effectively to the student's topic. The similarities and differences between a responsible water citizen and a responsible water consumer, for example, should be comprehensively analyzed, and a vision of responsible individual behavior and action regarding water issues should be clearly articulated. This paper should be between 20-25 pages.
- **Response Papers (20%):** Students will write short one-page response papers for any ten of the weekly readings we discuss in class. These response papers should analyze and interpret the themes and messages of the material rather than just summarize them.

Course Attendance and Assignment Extensions

We will be covering new topics and issues every day. Attendance is therefore required and will be monitored daily. You are also expected to respect your classmates and your professor by arriving for class on time and remaining until the end. Because this seminar meets only once a week, there are no unexcused absences. Please do not schedule interviews, non-emergency doctor's appointments, or other commitments during class time. Unexcused absence from all or part of a class will lower your final grade. Missing 25% of classes (4 seminars), per Davidson College regulations, will result in an automatic failure of the course. Excused absences are only granted for serious personal illness or injury, family emergency, or authorized college activity, and generally require documentation from college officials. Changes in deadlines will be approved only upon evidence of similarly extenuating circumstances. It is your responsibility to request an excused absence or an extension as soon as you possibly can, and preferably at the beginning of the semester.

Honor Code and Academic Integrity

As a student at Davidson College, you are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity and to follow the Honor Code throughout the course. Any violation of that code will be dealt with as stipulated. If you have any questions about documentation, what constitutes plagiarism, or any other Honor Code-related questions, please seek guidance right away. In general, academic dishonesty is defined as cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, falsifying academic records, and any other act designed to avoid participating honestly in the learning process. Academic dishonesty also includes, but is not limited to, providing false or misleading information to receive an assignment extension or test postponement, or the submission of essentially the same written assignment for two different courses without prior permission of faculty members.

Course Texts

Seven texts are required for the course, and are available at the campus bookstore:

1. Lotter, Donald. 2002. *EarthScore: Your Personal Environmental Audit & Guide*. Morning Sun Press.
2. Heater, Derek. 2004. *A Brief History of Citizenship*. NYU Press.
3. Dobson, Andrew, and Derek Bell, eds. 2006. *Environmental Citizenship*. MIT Press.
4. Lane, Melissa. 2011. *Eco-Republic: What the Ancients Can Teach Us about Ethics, Virtue, and Sustainable Living*. Princeton University Press.
5. Goodwin, Neva R., Frank Ackerman, and David Kiron, eds. 1997. *The Consumer Society*. Island Press.
6. Schwartz, David T. 2010. *Consuming Choices: Ethics in a Global Consumer Age*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
7. Devinney, Timothy M., Pat Auger, and Giana M. Eckhardt. 2010. *The Myth of the Ethical Consumer, Hardback with DVD*. Cambridge University Press.

Course Website and Emails

Additional readings that are not from these two books will be posted on Moodle. Please visit the course website on Moodle regularly for information about the course, including the syllabus, links to readings not in the textbook, paper assignments, and contact information. The web site can be accessed at moodle.davidson.edu. Emails about course updates and assignments will be sent either through Moodle or the course email list, so it is imperative that you check your Davidson email regularly. E-mail queries are welcome for issues that do not merit an office visit, but please allow 12-24 hours for a response.

Technology in the Classroom

When in lecture or in section please turn off your cell phones, MP3 players, and other mobile devices. Since it is our mutual responsibility to create a productive learning environment while we are in the classroom, notebook computers may not be used during class. There have been numerous studies showing that computers distract both the students using them and students around them (similar to second-hand smoke). These studies also indicate that they can result in a lack of learning and lower grades for those that they distract.

More importantly, they also create a physical barrier between students, the professor, and the rest of the class. This hinders the productive discussions and engagement that enables deeper learning and skill formation and is the hallmark of a liberal arts education. While I recognize many students may prefer to take notes using their computers because “they type faster than they write,” the object of note-taking is not quantity but quality. Especially in the social sciences where the skills of analysis are essential, the key to constructive note-taking is critically processing and prioritizing the information being received, not just copying it down verbatim.

Therefore students are encouraged to take notes in paper notebooks and to practice critical note-taking skills in the process. Tablets that lie flat on the desk are allowed, but should only be used for note-taking, not surfing the web or checking your email (turn off your wireless connection during class). After class, you are also encouraged to take a few minutes to review, revise, and even re-write your notes, and you can use a computer to do so. Your learning and analytical skills will be greatly improved as a result.

That is not say that technology cannot be effectively used in the classroom to facilitate our learning objectives – it can and we will do so throughout the semester. I will often use Powerpoints to summarize important points, and will distribute them via Moodle after class. I will make use of audio and video materials where relevant and appropriate. But it will be intentional and directed use of technology, not ad hoc and distracting.

Often there will be questions of fact or contention that come up in class that we will be tempted to look up on the spot to resolve or to make a point. As rewarding as this can be in everyday life, it is usually a distraction in the classroom setting. We still want to know, however, the answers to the questions that come up, so we will also have designated “Fact Checkers” who will be “on call” for each class and asked to post the answers (or links relevant to them) on Moodle, where the discussion can continue in the Forum section. This will be a part of your participation grade.

Brief Course Outline

Both a brief and detailed outline are included below. They include the day of the week, date of each class, the general topic covered, the author and title of the readings that should be read for each class, the number of pages of each reading, and where the readings can be found.

Note: I reserve the right to make modifications to this outline if in my judgment the flow of the course will be best served by such adjustments.

W	D	Date	Unit Theme	Week Topic
1	W	18-Jan		Introduction
2	W	25-Jan	Citizenship	Citizenship I: History of Citizenship
3	W	01-Feb		Citizenship II: Republicanism, Deliberative Democracy, and Communitarianism
4	S	12-Feb		Citizenship III: Duties, Obligations, Justice, Social Capital, and Comparisons
5	W	15-Feb	Citizenship and the Environment	Citizenship and the Environment I: Theory and Practice
6	W	22-Feb		Citizenship and the Environment II: Obstacles and Opportunities
7	W	29-Feb		Citizenship and the Environment III: The Eco-Republic
8	W	14-Mar	Consumption	Consumption I: The Scope, Dynamics, and History of Consumption FIRST PAPER DUE
9	W	21-Mar		Consumption II: The Economics, Psychology, and Globalization of Consumption
10	W	28-Mar		Consumption III: Other Views and Concepts
11	W	04-Apr	Consumption and the Environment	Consumption and the Environment I: Philosophy and Ethics
12	W	11-Apr		Consumption and the Environment II: Science and Evidence
13	W	18-Apr		Consumption and the Environment III: Other Views SECOND PAPER DUE
14	W	25-Apr	Citizens, Consumers, and the Environment	Synthesis I: Citizens, Consumers, and the Environment
15	W	02-May		Synthesis II: Citizens, Consumers, and the Environment
	W	09-May		Synthesis III: Conclusions and Evaluations
	W	11-May		THIRD PAPER DUE

Detailed Course Outline, Readings and Deadlines

Wed., January 25: Citizenship I: The History of Citizenship (145)

Heater, Derek. 2004. *A Brief History of Citizenship*. NYU Press (145).

Greece, Rome, Medieval and Early Modern Periods, Age of Revolutions, Modern and Contemporary Themes I (nationality and multiculturalism, federalism, world citizenship), Modern and Contemporary Themes II (civil, political and social rights, women, civic socialization and education), Conclusion.

Lotter, Donald. 2002. *EarthScore: Your Personal Environmental Audit & Guide*. Morning Sun Press, Section 1-3 (4-9).

Wed., February 1: Citizenship II: Republicanism, Deliberative Democracy, and Communitarianism (127)

Pettit, Philip. 1989. The freedom of the city: a republican ideal. In *The Good Polity: Normative Analysis of the State*, Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, p. 141-165 (24).

Gutmann, Amy, and Dennis Thompson. 2004. What Deliberative Democracy Means. In *Why Deliberative Democracy?* Princeton University Press, p. 1-63 (63).

Etzioni, Amitai. 1996. The Elements of a Good Society. In *The New Golden Rule: Community and Morality in a Democratic Society*. Basic Books. i-x, 3-31 (40).

Lotter, Donald. 2002. *EarthScore: Your Personal Environmental Audit & Guide*. Morning Sun Press, Section 5-6 (10-14).

Sun., Feb. 12: Citizenship III: Duties, Obligations, Justice, Social Capital, and Comparisons (159)

Taft, William Howard. 1907. The Duties of Citizenship Viewed from the Perspective of a Recent College Graduate. In *Four Aspects of Civic Duty*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, p. 3-34 (31).

Vincent, William Shafer. 1959. The Nature of Citizenship in a Free Society. In *Roles of the Citizen: Principles and Practices*. Row, Peterson and Company, p. 1-29 (29).

Walzer, Michael. 1970. The Problem of Citizenship and Three Kinds of Citizenship, in *Obligations: Essays on Disobedience, War, and Citizenship*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p. 203-228 (25).

Rawls, John. 1999. Justice as Fairness, in *A Theory of Justice: Revised Edition*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p. 3-19 (16).

Putnam, Robert D. 2000. Thinking about Social Change in America, in *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster, p. 15-28 (13).

Dalton, Russell J. 2008. Bowling Alone or Protesting with a Group, and In Tocqueville's Footsteps, in *The Good Citizen: How a Younger Generation Is Reshaping American Politics, Revised Edition*. CQ Press, p. 53-79 (26) and p. 118-137 (19).

Lotter, Donald. 2002. *EarthScore: Your Personal Environmental Audit & Guide*. Morning Sun Press, Section 6-8 (15-22).

Wed., Feb 15: Citizenship and the Environment I: Theory and Practice (150)

Dobson, Andrew, and Derek Bell, eds. 2006. *Environmental Citizenship*. MIT Press. Part I (150).

Introduction, Theory and Practice, Resistance is Fertile, The Virtues of Environmental Citizenship, Local Landscapes and Global Belonging, No Sustainability without Justice, Demonstrating Environmental Citizenship.

Lotter, Donald. 2002. *EarthScore: Your Personal Environmental Audit & Guide*. Morning Sun Press, Section 9-11 (23-30).

Wed., Feb. 22: Citizenship and the Environment II: Obstacles and Opportunities (137)

Dobson, Andrew, and Derek Bell, eds. 2006. *Environmental Citizenship*. MIT Press. Part II (137).

Overcoming Obstacles to Ecological Citizenship, Justice, Governance, and Sustainability, Virtual Environmental Citizenship, The Roles and Challenges of Schools, Toward a Theory of Change.

Lotter, Donald. 2002. *EarthScore: Your Personal Environmental Audit & Guide*. Morning Sun Press, Section 12-14 (31-38).

Wed., Feb. 29: Citizenship and the Environment III: The Eco-Republic (186)

Lane, Melissa. 2011. *Eco-Republic: What the Ancients Can Teach Us about Ethics, Virtue, and Sustainable Living*. Princeton University Press (186).

Inertia, Imagination, and Initiative: Plato's Cave, Failures of the Political Imagination, From Greed to Glory, the Idea of Negligibility, Virtue, the City and the Soul, The Idea of the Good, Initiative and Individuals

SPRING BREAK

Wed., March 14: Consumption I: The Scope, Dynamics, and History of Consumption (114)

Goodwin, Neva R., Frank Ackerman, and David Kiron. 1997. *The Consumer Society*. Island Press.

- Part I: Scope and Definition p. 1-36 (36)
- Part II: Consumption in the Affluent Society p. 37-76 (39)
- Part IV: The History of Consumer Society p. 109-148 (39)

FIRST PAPER DUE

Wed., March 21: Consumption II: The Economics, Psychology, and Globalization of Consumption (148)

Goodwin, Neva R., Frank Ackerman, and David Kiron. 1997. *The Consumer Society*. Island Press.

- Part V: Foundations of Economic Theories of Consumption, p. 149-188 (39)
- Part VI: Critiques and Alternatives in Economic Theory p. 189-228 (39)
- Part VII: Perpetuating Consumer Culture: Media, Advertising, & Wants Creation, p. 229-268 (39)
- Part IX: Globalization and Consumer Culture p. 301-332 (31)

Wed., March 28: Consumption III: Other Views and Concepts

To be determined, based on perceived gaps and needs.

Wed., April 4: Consumption and the Environment I: Philosophy and Ethics (114)

Schwartz, David T. 2010. *Consuming Choices: Ethics in a Global Consumer Age*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers (114).

Wed., April 11: Consumption and the Environment II: Science and Evidence (187)

Devinney, Timothy M., Pat Auger, and Giana M. Eckhardt. 2010. *The Myth of the Ethical Consumer Hardback with DVD*. Cambridge University Press (187).

Wed., April 18: Consumption and the Environment III: Other Views (TBD)

Goodwin, Neva R., Frank Ackerman, and David Kiron. 1997. *The Consumer Society*. Island Press.

- Part VIII: Consumption and the Environment p. 269-300 (31)
- Part X: Visions of an Alternative p. 333-366 (33)

Other readings to be determined, based on perceived gaps and needs.

SECOND PAPER DUE

Wed., April 25: Synthesis I: Consumers, Citizens, and the Environment (TBD)

To be determined, based on perceived gaps and needs.

Wed., May 2: Synthesis II: Consumers, Citizens, and the Environment (TBD)

To be determined, based on perceived gaps and needs.

Wed., May 9: Synthesis III: Conclusions and Evaluations

Final discussion and evaluations (no readings assigned).

Friday, May 11: THIRD PAPER DUE

Additional Course Resources

The Davidson Library

The Davidson Library has a great range of resources that are designed to enhance your learning, from its extremely dedicated staff to its extensive online databases. It will be invaluable to your diving deeper into the issues and topics we discuss throughout the semester and your time at Davidson.

The Writing Center

For students who want to improve the quality of their writing, the Writing Center provides a wide range of support to improve the writing skills of Davidson College students. Through collaboration with a tutor, students can assess their own writing process and learn to write more effectively. Ultimately, the Writing Center strives to create better writers, not just better papers. In the Writing Center, trained peer tutors will work with students at any stage in the writing process – from pre-writing to fine-tuning a finished draft – and for assignments in classes across the curriculum or for personal projects such as cover letters. The Writing Center is open Sunday through Thursday, 2-4 p.m. and 8-11 pm and is located, along with the Speaking Center, in the north basement of Chambers, room B039. More information about the Writing Center and its services is available at their website, <http://www3.davidson.edu/cms/x11014.xml>.

The Speaking Center

For those students who would like to improve their public speaking skills, the Speaking Center at Davidson College offers the services of trained student tutors to support speaking across the curriculum. At any point of the process, from selecting a set of arguments to delivering a speech, the Center can assist students in learning to speak, and speaking to learn. No appointment is necessary; tutors see students on a first-come, first-served basis. Located in Chambers B39 in the north basement, the Speaking Center includes private rooms, a camera and playback equipment, and resource materials to help students collaborate with tutors. Students wishing to keep copies of their presentations can bring recordable DVDs (available in the Bookstore). The Speaking Center is open Sunday through Thursday from 9-11 pm. You are encouraged to come early; help is more readily available at 9 pm than at 10:45 pm. More information about the Speaking Center is available at <http://www3.davidson.edu/cms/x15986.xml>.

Study Skills and Time Management Support

For those of you interested in improving your study skills and time management skills, the Center for Teaching and Learning has produced several useful videos that are hosted on its website. These videos discuss how to reduce your anxiety around coursework, “strategic studying,” and Time Management using Outlook. I encourage everyone to check these resources out if they have not already. The website address for these videos is:

<http://coursemedia.davidson.edu/department/ctl.php#>.