

Citizens vs. Consumers (POL 472)
Davidson College

Fall 2016

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

Class Location: Chambers 1046

Professor Graham Bullock

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Department of Environmental Studies

Office Hours: Monday and Friday, 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., and by appointment

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

Course Overview

In recent years, “voting with your wallet” has emerged as a popular form of environmental activism. What are the implications of this new merging of consumer and citizen roles and responsibilities? Some have argued that it is a positive development, while others believe that it ultimately undermines efforts to protect the environment and democratic processes more generally. In this course, we will explore this debate by analyzing different understandings of what it means to be a “consumer” and a “citizen,” and then applying those perspectives to different environmental issues and arenas.

We will read an interdisciplinary range of theoretical, historical, and empirical texts from political science, philosophy, economics, and other relevant fields. The first half of the course will explore the meaning of citizenship and the many different ways it manifests itself in the environmental arena. The second half of the course will focus on the concept of political consumerism and investigate the claim that it creates an “inverted quarantine” that cuts citizens off from their political responsibilities.

Students will complete a research project to further explore these themes. The project will use either qualitative or quantitative methods to address an institutional or behavioral question about the relationship between citizenship and consumerism. Research topics can relate to any specific domain issue (water, pollution, etc.), any specific type of civic action (protesting, deliberating, voting, etc.), and any specific type of consumer action (boycotting, boycotting, etc.) that students are interested in. Students can also design their project to include a civic engagement component. The project will result in a final paper that will include a review of relevant literature and theoretical perspectives and a discussion of the methods used and results found in the study.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. **Theoretical Knowledge:** Summarize key theories and concepts relating to citizenship and consumerism from a range of fields and disciplines.
2. **Empirical Knowledge:** Describe the primary features of different forms of citizenship and consumerism.
3. **Theoretical Application:** Classify, compare, and contrast these different forms of citizenship and consumerism using relevant theories and concepts.
4. **Analysis:** Analyze claims about consumerism and citizenship made by different scholars and commentators.
5. **Evaluation:** Evaluate the quality of competing claims about the nature of citizenship and consumerism.
6. **Creation:** Develop and implement a research project that empirically examines the relationship between citizenship and consumerism and creatively utilizes relevant theory and empirical methods.
7. **Reflection:** Reflect on how the concepts of citizenship and consumerism are relevant to their own lives and personal aspirations and can help them make informed personal and political choices as both 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 these assignments 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 first part of the course explores the concept of citizenship. It begins with a discussion of the concept of citizenship and different norms of citizenship, and investigates how the idea of citizenship has been applied in the context of environmental issues. It also looks specifically at different forms of citizenship, including protesting, voting, deliberation, philanthropy, volunteering, and lifestyle choices. The second part of the course dives more deeply into one particular type of citizenship, political consumerism. We will explore the history of this phenomenon and discuss studies of it from a range of different perspectives. We will also discuss critiques of political consumerism and claims that it creates an inverted quarantine effect that distances citizens from their broader civic duties.

- **Part I: Understanding Citizenship**
 - The Nature and Norms of Citizenship
 - Forms of Citizenship: Protest, Voting, Deliberation, Philanthropy, Volunteering, Lifestyles
- **Part II: Understanding Political Consumerism**
 - History and Analysis of the Phenomenon
 - The Inverted Paradigm and Critiques of Political Consumerism
- **Part III: Citizens vs. Consumers?**

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 insights. I will also ask students to rotate as class note-takers each week.
- **Class Leadership (5%):** Each student will take responsibility for facilitating class discussion for at least one class during the semester. Students are expected to meet with the professor beforehand to discuss their plan for the class they sign up for at the beginning of the course. This assignment is designed to assess progress on Learning Outcomes 1-5.
- **Response Papers (30%; 10% each):** Students will write three three-page papers responding to the readings covered in the course. These response papers should analyze and interpret the themes and messages of the material rather than just summarize them. Specific questions to explore in the responses will be provided in class a week before they are due. These assignments are designed to assess progress on Learning Outcomes 1-5.
- **Research Project and Paper (50% Total):** Students will have a choice of several types of research projects that they will complete during the semester. These projects will investigate an institutional or behavioral question about the relationship between citizenship and consumerism. Research topics can relate to any specific domain issue (water, pollution, etc.), any specific type of civic action (protesting, deliberating, voting, etc.), and any specific type of consumer action (boycotting, boycotting, etc.) that students are interested in. Projects may be either quantitative or qualitative, and may have a civic engagement or participatory action orientation. Students can also design their project to include a civic engagement component. The project will result in a final paper that will include a review of relevant literature and theoretical perspectives and a discussion of the methods used and results found in the study. Final papers should employ relevant concepts and theories and address alternative theories and interpretations of evidence. Depending on student interests, research methods may involve document analyses, interviews, experimental designs, statistical analyses, or surveys. Students will have their own projects, but will have the opportunity to work in peer groups with other students who are using similar methods or exploring similar topics. This assignment is designed to assess progress on Learning Outcome 6. There will be several check-ins and deadlines throughout the semester:
 - **Research Question (2.5%):** A summary of the student's research topic and question.
 - **Annotated Bibliography (10%):** A summary, analysis and interpretation of the 10 most recent academic papers related to the student's topic.
 - **Research Design (7.5%):** A summary of the student's study design and methods for their research project.
 - **Research Report (5%):** A summary of the data collected from the research.
 - **Paper Outline (5%):** A detailed outline of the full research paper.
 - **Final Paper (30%):** A final version of the full research paper (20-25 pages).

Course Texts

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

1. Dalton, Russell J. 2016. *The Good Citizen: How a Younger Generation Is Reshaping American Politics, Second Edition*. CQ Press.
2. Schwartz, David T. 2010. *Consuming Choices: Ethics in a Global Consumer Age*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
3. Estill, Lyle, ed. 2013. *Small Stories, Big Changes: Agents of Change on the Frontlines of Sustainability*. New Society Publishers.
4. Szasz, Andrew. 2009. *Shopping Our Way to Safety: How We Changed from Protecting the Environment to Protecting Ourselves*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Other readings for the course will be available on the Moodle website.

Detailed Course Outline, Readings and Deadlines

A detailed outline of the course's topics, readings and assignments is provided below. Please note that 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.

INTRODUCTION

Wed., August 24: Citizen or Consumer?

- Partridge, Ernest. 2002. Consumer or Citizen. *The Online Gadfly* (5).
Hayes, Charles: Citizen vs. Consumer: The Perils of Deflationary Democracy. *FrugalFun.com* (4).
Hilmes, Michele. 2004. Citizen versus Consumer: Rethinking Core Concepts. *FlowTV* (4).

PART IA: UNDERSTANDING CITIZENSHIP

Wed., August 31: The Nature of Citizenship (105)

- Heater, Derek. 2004. Introduction and Conclusion. In *A Brief History of Citizenship*. NYU Press, 1-5 and 140-145 (11).
Heater, Derek. 2004. Multiple Citizenship. In *Citizenship: The Civic Ideal in World, History, Politics, and Education..* Manchester University Press, 321-354 (34).
Sagoff, Mark. 2008. Selection from *The Economy of the Earth: Philosophy, Law, and the Environment*. Cambridge University Press, 7-14 (8).
Berglund, Christer, & Matti, Simon. 2006. Citizen and Consumer: The Dual Role of Individuals in Environmental Policy. *Environmental Politics*, 15(4), 550-567 (18).
Harrison, Brigid C. 2013. Social Sciences and the Scientific Method. In *Power and Society: An Introduction to the Social Sciences*, 13th edition, 20-39. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning, 20-39 (20).
Estill, Lyle. 2013. Introduction. In *Small Stories, Big Changes: Agents of Change on the Frontlines of Sustainability*. New Society Publishers, 1-4 (4).
Welch, Bryan. 2013. Mother Earth News. In *Small Stories, Big Changes: Agents of Change on the Frontlines of Sustainability*. New Society Publishers, 5-15 (10).

Wed., September 7: Norms of Citizenship (132)

- 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).
- Dalton, Russell J. 2008. *The Good Citizen: How a Younger Generation Is Reshaping American Politics, Revised Edition*. CQ Press, p. 1-89 (89).
- Taxewell, Anne E. 2013. Secret Agent to Change Agent. In *Small Stories, Big Changes: Agents of Change on the Frontlines of Sustainability*. New Society Publishers, 17-28 (12).

RESEARCH TOPIC AND QUESTION DUE IN CLASS

Wed., September 14: Environmental Citizenship (108)

- Connelly, James et al. 2012. Environmental Movements. In *Politics and the Environment: From Theory to Practice*. 3rd ed. Routledge. (40).
- Dobson, Andrew, and Derek Bell. 2006. "Introduction." In *Environmental Citizenship*. MIT Press, 1-7 (7).
- Barry, John. 2006. "Resistance is Fertile: From Environmental to Sustainability Citizenship." In *Environmental Citizenship*. MIT Press, 21-40 (20).
- Agyeman, Julian and Bob Evans. 2006. Justice: Governance, and Sustainability: Perspectives on Environmental Citizenship from North America and Europe. In *Environmental Citizenship*. MIT Press, 185-203 (19).
- Kumar, Ranjit. 2010. "The Research Process: A Quick Glance." In *Research Methodology: A Step-by-Step Guide for Beginners*, Fourth Edition. SAGE Publications Ltd., 34-43 (10).
- Estill, Glen. 2013. Sky Generation. In *Small Stories, Big Changes: Agents of Change on the Frontlines of Sustainability*. New Society Publishers, 29-42 (12).

FIRST RESPONSE PAPER DUE IN CLASS

PART IB: FORMS OF CITIZENSHIP

Wed., September 21: Protest and Voting (84)

- 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 (26).
- Olzak, Susan, & Soule, Sarah A. (2009). Cross-Cutting Influences of Environmental Protest and Legislation. *Social Forces*, 88(1), 201–219 (19).
- Anderson, Sarah E. (2011). Complex Constituencies: Intense Environmentalists and Representation. *Environmental Politics*, 20(4), 547–560 (14).
- Ross, Nicola. 2013. On Sabbatical. In *Small Stories, Big Changes: Agents of Change on the Frontlines of Sustainability*. New Society Publishers, 43-56 (13).
- Phillips, Gary. 2013. All Round Activist. In *Small Stories, Big Changes: Agents of Change on the Frontlines of Sustainability*. New Society Publishers, 57-70 (12).

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE SEPTEMBER 23 @ 5 PM

Wed., September 28: Philanthropy and Volunteering (105)

- 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).

- Bekkers, René, and Pamala Wiepking. 2011. A Literature Review of Empirical Studies of Philanthropy. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 40 (5): 924–945 (22).
- Greenspan, Itay, Handy, Femida, & Katz-Gerro, Tally. (2012). Environmental Philanthropy Is It Similar to Other Types of Environmental Behavior? *Organization & Environment*, 25(2), 111–130 (19).
- McDougle, L. M., Greenspan, I., & Handy, F. (2011). Generation Green: Understanding the Motivations and Mechanisms Influencing Young Adults' Environmental Volunteering. *International Journal of Nonprofit & Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 16(4), 325–341 (14).
- Smith, F. M., Timbrell, H., Woolvin, M., Muirhead, S., & Fyfe, N. (2010). Enlivened Geographies of Volunteering: Situated, Embodied and Emotional Practices of Voluntary Action. *Scottish Geographical Journal*, 126(4), 258–274 (14).
- Garcia-Valinas, M. A., Macintyre, A., & Torgler, B. (2012). Volunteering, Pro-environmental Attitudes and Norms. *Journal of Socio-Economics*, 41(4), 455–467 (10).
- Estill, Jessica. 2013. Good for Sale. In *Small Stories, Big Changes: Agents of Change on the Frontlines of Sustainability*. New Society Publishers, 71-86 (13).

RESEARCH DESIGN DUE SEPTEMBER 30 @ 5 PM

Wed. October 5: Deliberation (115)

- Gutmann, Amy, and Dennis Thompson. 2004. What Deliberative Democracy Means. In *Why Deliberative Democracy?* Princeton University Press, p. 1-63 (63).
- Wiklund, H. (2005). In Search of Arenas for Democratic Deliberation: a Habermasian Review of Environmental Assessment. *Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal*, 23(4), 281–292 (11).
- Hobson, K., & Niemeyer, S. (2011). Public Responses to Climate Change: The Role of Deliberation in Building Capacity for Adaptive Action. *Global Environmental Change Part A: Human & Policy Dimensions*, 21(3), 957–971 (14).
- Cameron, F., & Deslandes, A. (2011). Museums and Science Centres as Sites for Deliberative Democracy on Climate Change. *Museum & Society*, 9(2), 136–153 (17).
- Henry, Eric. 2013. The Journey. In *Small Stories, Big Changes: Agents of Change on the Frontlines of Sustainability*. New Society Publishers, 87-96 (10).

Wed., October 12: Lifestyles (99)

- Sandler, Ronald L. 2005. Environmental Virtue Ethics. In *The International Encyclopedia of Ethics*, 1–10 (10).
- Horton, David. 2006. Demonstrating Environmental Citizenship? A Study of Everyday Life among Green Activists. In *Environmental Citizenship*. MIT Press, 21-40 (21).
- Evans, D., & Abrahamse, W. 2009. Beyond Rhetoric: The Possibilities of and for “Sustainable Lifestyles.” *Environmental Politics*, 18(4), 486–502 (16).
- Middlemiss, L. (2011). The effects of community-based action for sustainability on participants' lifestyles. *Local Environment*, 16(3), 265–280 (15).
- Connelly, James et al. 2012. Rationality and Power in Environmental Decision-Making. In *Politics and the Environment: From Theory to Practice*. 3rd ed. Routledge, 142-166 (25).
- Toben, Megan. 2013. Pickards Mountain Eco Institute. In *Small Stories, Big Changes: Agents of Change on the Frontlines of Sustainability*. New Society Publishers, 97-114 (16).

SECOND RESPONSE PAPER DUE OCTOBER 14 @ 5 PM

PART IIA: UNDERSTANDING POLITICAL CONSUMERISM

Wed., October 19: A Brief History of Political Consumerism (140)

- Webb, Sidney, and Beatrice Webb. 1930. *The Consumer's Cooperative Movement*. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1-10 (10).
- Coles, Jessie Vee. 1949. Consumers and Their Role in Our Economy and A New Consumer Consciousness Arises. In *Standards and Labels for Consumers' Goods*. Ronald Press Co., 3-15 and 35-51 (30).
- Wolf, Alvin. 1977. Introduction, Consumerism: A Century of Development, and Consumerism in Action. In *American Consumers: Is Their Anger Justified?* Prentice-Hall.1-29, 80-82 (32).
- Silber, Norman Isaac. 1983. Consumer Reform as a Science and Fallout in Food: Exposing Environmental Contamination. In *Test and Protest: The Influence of Consumers Union*. Holmes & Meier. 17-38, 103-120 (29)
- Goleman, Daniel. 2009. *Ecological Intelligence: How Knowing the Hidden Impacts of What We Buy Can Change Everything*. 1st edition. New York: Broadway Books.1-11, 83-85 (14).

Wed., October 26: Analyses of Political Consumerism (130)

- Micheletti, Michele. 2010. Why Political Consumerism. In *Political Virtue and Shopping: Individuals, Consumerism, and Collective Action*. Palgrave Macmillan. 1-36 (36).
- Boström, Magnus, and Mikael Klintman. 2008. "The Consumers' Role: Trusting, Reflecting, Influencing? In *Eco-Standards, Product Labelling and Green Consumerism*, Palgrave Macmillan, 33–45 (13).
- Newman, B. J., & Bartels, B. L. (2011). Politics at the Checkout Line. *Political Research Quarterly*, 64(4), 803 –817 (14).
- Neilson, L. A. (2010). Boycott or Buycott? Understanding political consumerism. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 9(3), 214–227 (14).
- Willis, Margaret M., and Juliet B. Schor. 2012. "Does Changing a Light Bulb Lead to Changing the World? Political Action and the Conscious Consumer." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 644 (1): 160–180 (21).

Wed., November 2: The Ethics of Political Consumerism (113)

- Schwartz, David T. 2010. *Consuming Choices: Ethics in a Global Consumer Age*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1-113 (113).

THIRD RESPONSE PAPER DUE IN CLASS

PART IIB: CONSUMERS AND THE INVERTED QUARANTINE

Wed., November 9: The Inverted Quarantine: Historical Case Studies (105)

Szasz, Andrew. 2009. *Shopping Our Way to Safety: How We Changed from Protecting the Environment to Protecting Ourselves*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1-95 (95).

Hren, Rebekah. 2013. More Questions than Answers. In *Small Stories, Big Changes: Agents of Change on the Frontlines of Sustainability*. New Society Publishers, 137-146 (10).

RESEARCH REPORT DUE FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11 @ 5 PM

Wed., November 16: The Inverted Quarantine: Assembling Your Personal Commodity Bubble (95)

Szasz, Andrew. 2009. *Shopping Our Way to Safety: How We Changed from Protecting the Environment to Protecting Ourselves*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 99-167 (69).

Pollock, Blair. 2013. Doing New Things. In *Small Stories, Big Changes: Agents of Change on the Frontlines of Sustainability*. New Society Publishers, 147-162 (16).

Chiosso, Elaine. 2013. She Speaks for the River. In *Small Stories, Big Changes: Agents of Change on the Frontlines of Sustainability*. New Society Publishers, 163-172(10).

PAPER OUTLINE DUE MONDAY, NOVEMBER 21 @ 5 PM

Wed., November 23: THANKSGIVING (NO CLASS)

Wed., November 30: Critiques of Political Consumerism (95)

Szasz, Andrew. 2009. *Shopping Our Way to Safety: How We Changed from Protecting the Environment to Protecting Ourselves*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 171-238 (68).

Vogel, David. 2004. Tracing the American Roots of the Political Consumerism Movement. In *Politics, Products, and Markets: Exploring Political Consumerism Past and Present*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 83–100 (16).

Toben, Tim. 2013. Greenbridge. In *Small Stories, Big Changes: Agents of Change on the Frontlines of Sustainability*. New Society Publishers, 115-136 (21).

PART III: CITIZENS VS. CONSUMERS?

Wed., December 7: Synthesis and Student Evaluations (27)

Bates, Albert. 2013. Finding the Others. In *Small Stories, Big Changes: Agents of Change on the Frontlines of Sustainability*. New Society Publishers, 173-188 (15).

Radtke, Jennifer. 2013. Riding the Demon. In *Small Stories, Big Changes: Agents of Change on the Frontlines of Sustainability*. New Society Publishers, 189-200 (12).

FINAL PAPER DUE DECEMBER 7 @ 5 PM

Note: For more information about course expectations and policies, see the accompanying document, "General Course Policies."