

EXL 3030: Civic Engagement Practicum Syllabus—Fall 2008

Instructor: Professor Jim Williams, Todd Hall 128 (Albert Gore Research Center), 898-2633; jhwillia AT mtsu DOT edu; www.mtsu.edu/~jhwillia. This course is offered as part of the **American Democracy Project at MTSU** (www.mtsu.edu/~amerdem).

Purpose: This short course is designed for students who wish to take what they are learning in a full course this semester, do some additional research and preparation about an issue in the presidential elections that relates to that course, and present their findings to an MTSU and community audience at a series of town hall meetings in October.

What is civic engagement? Civic engagement means working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes. A morally and civically responsible individual recognizes himself or herself as a member of a larger social fabric and therefore considers social problems to be at least partly his or her own; such an individual is willing to see the moral and civic dimensions of issues, to make and justify informed moral and civic judgments, and to take action when appropriate.

Eligibility to enroll: Interested students must have completed twenty-four hours of academic coursework prior to enrolling. Students meet this requirement must then have the permission of the instructor. As enrollment is limited, interested students are encouraged to contact Professor Williams as soon as possible to gain permission to enroll. Deadline to enroll is Tuesday, September 2, if space is available.

Course requirements: First, the student must complete the EXL 3030 project plan at through the course web site (www.mtsu.edu/~jhwillia/3030plan.pdf). The plan must be completed in consultation with the primary course instructor who has agreed to participate with this practicum. Once that instructor has signed the plan, the student should bring the plan to Professor Williams for approval.

Second, depending on the number of students who enroll in the practicum and the variety of issues their plans will address, Professor Williams will group the students by theme and work with them to develop their projects.

Third, each student will write a presentation plan and essay that will serve as the basis of the public presentation. This essay must be well written, researched, and documented. Finally, each student will present their issue and findings to an evening public town hall meeting during the weeks of October 6-10 or 12-16. **Please note: Those students who know that they will not be able to follow this timeline should not enroll in the practicum!**

Final grade: This is a pass/fail course for one credit hour. Those students who complete the presentation plan and essay (50% of total grade) and the public presentation (50% of total grade) with an average grade of C or higher (75%) will receive credit.

