

# AS.196 (AGORA INSTITUTE)

## AS.196.300. Getting to Truth: How to Navigate Today's Media Jungle. 3 Credits.

Our democratic system depends on an informed public, but media today are polarized along ideological lines, undercut by economic and technological change and sometimes polluted with bogus stories written for profit or spin. In this course, taught by a veteran journalist, we will discuss the evolution of news, examine the current challenges and assess what citizens can do to get a fair understanding of what's going on. We'll use many concrete examples and students will have multiple writing assignments.

Area: Humanities  
Writing Intensive

## AS.196.301. Social Entrepreneurship, Policy, and Systems Change: The Future of Democracy. 3 Credits.

This course will explore the dynamics and interplay between social entrepreneurship, social change, and policy. Students will explore frameworks for social transformation and systems change, and explore whether stable governance and effective policies are necessary for sustainable change. The course will examine the intersection between social change and policy change, examining how the two concepts intersect while focusing on the end goal of systems change. Students will examine different case studies of social transformation (or proposed social transformation) from across the United States and world. Guest speakers will include diverse practitioners of social entrepreneurship who think about long-term pathways to transformative social change, and dynamic policymakers. While the course will include case studies on broader domestic and international challenges and models of social transformation, a larger focus will be on specific local social problems and solutions. This will manifest through class discussions and a final project based on the surrounding community.

Area: Humanities  
Writing Intensive

## AS.196.302. Science and Democracy. 3 Credits.

What role does scientific expertise play (or not play) in American democracy? What role should scientific expertise play (or not play) in American democracy? These are the key questions we'll address in this class, focusing on a wide range of examples such as government responses to public health crises, environmental crises, and war. We'll tackle these questions from multiple angles, drawing on ideas from across the social sciences, including political science, psychology, sociology, economics, history, and communication. We'll focus largely on the United States, though in some cases compare the US experience with other democracies to understand how unique aspects of our democratic institutions influence the link between science and democracy.

Area: Humanities

## AS.196.303. Philanthropy, Politics, and Democracy. 3 Credits.

"Charitable giving" is often seen as an unmitigated good—but a lot of foundation giving can also be a subsidized way for wealthy individuals to influence politics. Are foundations good for democracy? What are some of the greatest successes of philanthropy, and why? How does philanthropic giving differ between conservatives and progressives, and how has that shaped American politics? How does the system of philanthropy in America compare to the way philanthropy has developed in other countries? How is American political giving changing with the increasing role of small donations? This seminar will discuss these questions and others, and will also feature some practitioners as guest speakers.

## AS.196.306. Democracy by the Numbers. 3 Credits.

How is democracy doing around the world? This course will help students to answer this question and ask their own questions about political systems by examining a variety of quantitative measures of facets of democracy in the U.S. and internationally. We consider general indices as well as those that focus on specific normatively-appealing aspects—the absence of fraud in and broader integrity of the electoral process itself, the guarantees of fundamental human rights to all, governments' effectiveness and accountability to the public, the equity of both representation and policy outcomes for minority groups and those historically disadvantaged or excluded, and the possibility and extent of civic engagement in non-government institutions. Wherever possible, the course will present evidence about the kinds of institutions and policies that seem to bolster democracy. Students can expect to gain hands-on experience with publicly-available subnational and national indicators of electoral and democratic quality.

Area: Humanities

## AS.196.311. Democracy. 3 Credits.

Democracies around the world are under threat. This course introduces students to the philosophical foundations of democracy as well as the history of democratic revolutions, institutions, and principles. How can we defeat the most important contemporary challenges to democracy, including populism, authoritarianism and disinformation? And how can we revive the "democratic spirit" - in America and around the world?

Area: Humanities

## AS.196.364. This is Not Propaganda. 3 Credits.

We live in an era of disinformation' mass persuasion and media manipulation run amok. More information was meant to improve democracy and undermine authoritarian regimes- instead the opposite seems to be happening. This course will take you from Russia to South Asia, Europe to the US, to analyze how our information environment has been transformed, why our old formulae for resisting manipulation are failing, and what needs to be done to create a model where deliberative democracy can flourish.

Area: Social and Behavioral Sciences

Writing Intensive

## AS.196.500. Independent Study. 1 - 3 Credits.

**Prerequisite(s):** You must request Independent Academic Work using the Independent Academic Work form found in Student Self-Service: Registration &gt; Online Forms.

## AS.196.505. Internship - Disinformation. 1 Credit.

This course requires instructor approval. There will be administrative work to complete with some hands-on field research.

**Prerequisite(s):** You must request Independent Academic Work using the Independent Academic Work form found in Student Self-Service: Registration &gt; Online Forms.

## AS.196.600. Intermediate data-analysis for Social Science & Public Policy I.

We will gain experience with data-analysis at the intermediate level, handling data with multi-level and longitudinal structure. How can we draw valid statistical inferences with such data? What designs and methods enable us to infer the causal effects of interventions? The course will consist of alternating discussions and small-group and instructor-led demonstrations with a heavy emphasis on computation, using both Stata or R whenever possible.

Area: Humanities

**AS.196.601. Intermediate data-analysis for social science & public policy 2.**

We will gain experience with data-analysis at the intermediate level, handling data with multi-level and longitudinal structure. How can we draw valid statistical inferences with such data? What designs and methods enable us to infer the causal effects of interventions? The course will consist of alternating discussions and small-group and instructor-led demonstrations with a heavy emphasis on computation, using both Stata or R whenever possible.

**AS.196.802. Field Research on Civic Engagement.**

This is a graduate-level course that will focus on the field research of civic engagement.

**AS.196.805. Graduate Internship - Disinformation.**

This course requires instructor approval. There will be administrative work to complete with some hands-on field research.