

Democracy Lab

A Schar School of Policy and Government Learning Community

Fall 2022

Director:	Jennifer N. Victor, PhD	jvictor3@gmu.edu
Coordinator:	Gretchen Curry	gcurry@gmu.edu
Resident Assistants:	Olivia Hollenbach (1st floor)	ohollenb@gmu.edu
	Ethan Thomas (2nd floor)	ethoma9@gmu.edu
	Dylan Morse (3rd floor)	dmorse2@gmu.edu

Mission Statement

The Schar School Living-Learning Community is a “Democracy Lab” that provides first-year students at Mason with an integrated residential, academic, and experiential learning opportunity. Democracy Lab students build relationships with Schar School faculty and peers, engage with policy practitioners, and develop essential skills of citizenship.

Learning Outcomes

- Build **community** among faculty, staff, peers, and alumni
- Supplement the classroom learning with opportunities for **experiential learning** in which students apply key concepts to relevant contemporary problems.
- Introduce students to government and policy practitioners and help them to build familiarity and **relationships** relevant to future careers.

Recurring Events

(Details below calendar)

Frequency	Time	Event	Location
T/Th weekly	3 - 4:15pm	GOV 101 , Prof. Scherer	D. King Hall 100
Biweekly Fridays 8/26 9/9 9/23 10/7 10/21 11/4 11/18 12/1	2:30pm	Voter Turnout Experiment Mtg	Eisenhower Hall MPR
Thursdays 9/8 9/22 10/6 10/13 10/27 11/10 12/1	7:30 - 9pm	Hidden Curriculum Series	Adams 3rd Floor Lounge
Thursdays 9/1 9/15 9/29 10/20 11/3 11/17 12/8	7:30 - 10pm	Film Series (films assigned in GOV 101)	Eisenhower MPR Theatre

Voter Turnout Experiment(VTE)

What is the best way to increase voter turnout among residential college students? DL students who choose to participate in this year-long project, open exclusively to Democracy Lab participants, will act as "study assistants" in a campus-wide field experiment aimed at answering this question. You will:

- Receive training and certification in ethical conduct of research with human subjects
- Recruit Mason students to participate in the study
- Randomize participants into treatment groups and administer "treatments" intended to affect students' likelihood of voting
- Administer pre- and post-surveys to participants
- Help with data organization and analysis

This project is a lesson in social science research design, causal reasoning, data management, experimental design, political participation, and collaborative research. If you log sufficient hours in the project, you'll be invited to help us publish the findings. **Professor Victor** leads this project and it's supported by **Professor Ashley Jardina** and **PhD student Tim Bynion**. ***You must attend the interest meeting on 8/26 if you want to participate in the VTE.***

Hidden Curriculum Series

This series is exclusively for, and tailored to, Democracy Lab Students. This series of workshops acknowledges that many aspects of college success are assumed or unexplained. We address topics that will help students unlock the seemingly secret codes that help students maximize their college life years. Session titles: College Hacks, Money 101, Building your Network, Bias and Exclusion, Stress Relief, Style is Everything, AMA.

Film Series

As a part of your GOV 101 curriculum, you are required to watch the following films. Democracy Lab will screen these films in the Eisenhower MPR Theatre for DL students to watch as a group. "District 9," "Milk," "Sorry to bother you," "I Am Not Your Negro," "This Changes Everything," "2040."

Special Events

(Details below calendar)

Date	Time	Event	Location
Th, 8/25	6:15 - 8pm	MANDATORY Democracy Lab Organizing Mtg	Ike's Dining Hall (swipe in by 6:15; meet in reserved section; mtg begins 6:30)
Sat, 8/27	9am - 4pm	The Edge!	Meet at Sandy Creek Transportation Center
Tues. 9/27	7:00 - 8:30pm	How Ballots are Actually Counted: An evening with Fairfax City Election Administrator, Ike Beretz	TBA

Tues. 10/25	6:30 - 7:30pm	Meet your congressman: Rep. Gerry Connolly (D, VA-11)	TB
Tues. 12/6	TBA	Study Break (details TBA)	TBA
May 2023	18-days	Study abroad trip to Jordan (details forthcoming)	Jordan

DL Organizing Meeting

Each semester DL has one **mandatory** meeting for all DL members. We'll talk about our community rules and expectations, highlight the key events for the term, lament our challenges, and celebrate our victories. Your DL leaders, including Dr. Victor, Gretchen, and the RAs, will answer all your questions about activities for the semester.

The Edge!

This is a team-building exercise for all DL participants. We'll tackle a high-ropes course, get to know one another, and challenge ourselves with physical obstacles.

How Ballots are Actually Counted

We will meet with a local election administrator. Fairfax City Deputy Registrar of Elections is a Schar School grad (2X!) and is passionate about election integrity. She'll describe how her office works, and the many challenges they face in the modern of election skepticism, increased participation, and democratic degradation.

Rep. Gerry Connolly

Rep. Connolly is the member of the U.S. Congress for Virginia's 11th district, where Mason sits. He's also the chair of the European Parliament's legislative assembly and has an unusually active foreign policy portfolio for a House member. He'll talk with us, answer your questions, and give advice about getting involved in politics.

Study Break

We'll have some kind of end-of-classes-start-of-finals study break activity. Details To Be Announced.

Study Abroad trip to Jordan

Stay tuned for details about this amazing opportunity open exclusively to current and alumni members of Democracy Lab. This special trip will occur after final exams in May and be led by Prof. Heba El Shazli, who is an expert in Middle East politics and government. The itinerary will include visits to key historic and cultural sites and access to high-level government actors and institutions. Scholarships will be available.

Democracy Lab Fall 2022 Calendar

AUGUST							SEPTEMBER							OCTOBER						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6					1	2	3							1
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
28	29	30	31				25	26	27	28	29	30		23	24	25	26	27	28	29
														30	31					

NOVEMBER							DECEMBER						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5					1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30				25	26	27	28	29	30	31

DL Event	First Day of classes	Last Day of Classes	Movie Series	The Edge!
Election Day	Hidden Curriculum Series	Mandatory DL Meeting	No Classes	Voting Experiment Mtg