Experiencing New Hampshire: The Effects of an Experiential Learning Course on Civic Engagement

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In January of 2004, we took 35 college students to Manchester, New Hampshire, where they were immersed in the crucial final weeks of the Democratic Presidential Primary as part of a course on the presidential election. This course required students to work on the campaign of their choice in the weeks leading up to the state’s primary as well as take part in more traditional classroom academic activities. This article examines the impact of that political immersion experience on students’ civic attitudes and engagements. While some hypothesized effects were not supported by the data, we do find a substantial impact on engagement and a modest effect on some measures of political efficacy. In light of the importance to a democratic society of engaging young people in the political process, we believe our research justifies greater experimentation with political immersion experiences and careful evaluation of the effects thereof.

Keywords campaigns, experiential learning, New Hampshire, Presidential primary

Introduction

In January of 2004, we took 35 college students to Manchester, New Hampshire, where they were immersed in the crucial final weeks of the Democratic Presidential Primary. The race, of course, proved to be full of surprises and excitement, and our students were right in the middle of it—working on campaigns, attending campaign events, and consulting with experts. Through the use of survey data this article examines the impact of that political immersion experience on the students who participated. We argue that participation in this immersion experience had a substantial positive impact on students’ attitudes toward political engagement and their actual level of engagement with politics, along with producing a moderate increase in certain measures of political efficacy.

We begin with a brief discussion of the literature on youth attitudes toward politics and the effects of education on those attitudes. We then describe the New...
Hampshire immersion experience. Next we present several hypotheses about the impact of the New Hampshire immersion experience, along with the methods and data used to test those hypotheses. Finally, we draw conclusions about the impact of this experience in light of the data. While some hypothesized effects were not supported by the data, we do find a substantial impact on engagement. In light of the widely recognized importance to a democratic society of engaging young people in the political process, we believe our research justifies greater experimentation with—along with careful evaluation of—political immersion experiences.

**Research on Youth Civic Engagement**

Civic engagement is essential to the effectiveness, legitimacy, and survival of representative democracy. Democracy works best when citizens devote considerable time, attention, and action to the political process. In light of the importance of an engaged citizenry for democracy, many commentators, pundits, and political scientists lament the low levels of political interest and participation among young citizens (see, for example, Galston 2004; Putnam 2001). While age has always been correlated with political interest and participation, the political engagement rates of young people reached a historic low in the 2000 elections. Young Americans vote less than older citizens, and they are more likely to be cynical and disaffected about politics (Mattson 2003). Annual reports issued by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at UCLA, based on surveys of 250,000 first-year college students, have documented a steep decline in every indicator of civic engagement since HERI began surveying students in 1960 (Galston 2004). Harvard University’s Institute of Politics started surveying college students in 2000 and found widespread apathy about the political process. While there was an increase in youth participation in the 2004 election,1 that increase was an aspect of the overall turnout increase and did not change the standing of young people relative to other groups.

To address the decline in political participation and engagement among America’s young adults, many scholars and activists have turned to civic education. Hunter and Brisbin (2002) document the extent to which political scientists view civic education as an important part of their mission. One indicator of the renewed attention to this issue as a means of combating political apathy was the creation by the American Political Science Association in 1996 of the Task Force on Civic Education. Research in this area has pointed to a handful of promising ways to increase civic engagement including the “First Vote” ritual, integrating more public deliberation in high school curricula, and creating service learning courses (Eisner 2004; Mann and Patrick 2000). Increasingly, colleges and universities are creating service-learning programs and offering experience-based classes in an effort to enhance learning and to foster more thoughtful and committed democratic citizens (Kahne, Westheimer, and Rogers 2000). In service-learning courses, students are required to engage in “real-world” activities, typically community or volunteer service, and then write and reflect on their volunteer experiences. Studies assessing the impact of service-learning courses have shown that participation results in a wide range of positive student outcomes, including higher levels of academic performance, critical thinking ability, leadership, ability to work cooperatively, and social self-confidence (Astin and Sax 1998; Kendrik 1996). Participation in a service-learning class has also been found to enhance students’ sense of civic responsibility, sense of efficacy, and commitment to future activism; these effects persist beyond the college
years (Astin and Sax 1998; Astin, Sax, and Avalos 1999; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). Thus, there is reason to hypothesize that the creation of additional service-learning courses would be an effective means of combating political apathy among college students.

The 2004 Presidential Election Experiential Learning Course

In light of the positive impact of service-learning courses on civic engagement and volunteerism, we sought to expand this model more directly into the political realm. The literature on service-learning has not extensively considered campaign activity as a form of service-learning. Most of the service-learning focused on nonpartisan socially beneficial activities. At St. Olaf College and Hartwick College, we created January term courses on the presidential election that required students to work on campaigns in Manchester, New Hampshire, in the weeks leading up to that state’s primary on January 27, 2004. Students in the courses also engaged in more traditional academic activities. Although campaign work has not traditionally been identified as service-learning, we hypothesized that the effects of such an experience-based course on students’ levels of civic engagement would be similar to, if not stronger than, those documented in other service-learning courses. Although taking traditional courses in political science is one means of combating political apathy, we hypothesized that a course with a significant hands-on, experiential component would be even more effective in this regard. We hypothesized that the alienation and disinterest young people normally experience in regards to politics is specific to their experience as passive observers and that active engagement would lead to diametrically opposite results. A deeper and more active political experience—working on a high-profile campaign during the most critical period of the presidential primary season—would not only enhance the learning of our students but would produce a marked and lasting increase in political interest and involvement.

In January of 2004, we led two related experiential education courses based in Manchester, New Hampshire, involving a total of 35 students. In additional to traditional classroom activities (academic and current events readings, papers, and presentations) both courses enacted a political immersion model of experiential education. Students arrived in Manchester in the early part of January and spent the three weeks leading up to the New Hampshire Primary working for the candidate of their choice. Students worked on the campaigns of Wesley Clark, Howard Dean, John Edwards, Richard Gephardt, John Kerry, and George Bush. Students were required to be with their campaigns every weekday for a minimum of five hours. Many students chose to work significantly longer, including several who spent nearly every waking hour working for their campaigns. Student responsibilities varied between and within campaigns. Most students engaged in direct voter contact, including door-to-door canvassing and telephoning. Many participated in visibility efforts, which typically involved standing outside for long stretches in the midst of one of the coldest New Hampshire winters on record. Several helped set up and execute candidate events. Some were given responsibility for organizing get-out-the-vote efforts at the precinct level.

In addition, as often as was feasible, students attended a wide variety of campaign events, including town hall meetings, rallies, pancake breakfasts, and celebrity concerts. At these events, students were put in the position of New Hampshire voters, listening to the candidates and, in several cases, asking them questions. At many
events, students lingered afterward and had the opportunity for brief conversations and photo-ops with the candidates. In addition to standard campaign events, there were many opportunities to attend events with Republican politicians in town to counter Democratic attacks on President Bush. Students had the opportunity to hear speeches by Bill Frist, John McCain, and Rudolph Giuliani. At campaign events, many students were interviewed by local and national media outlets. Students also frequently watched television news coverage of events they had attended, creating the opportunity for students to experience the difference between what they experienced as participants and what television viewers saw.

In addition to working on campaigns and attending campaign events, students were immersed in the atmosphere of the New Hampshire primary. Students ran into candidates in cafes and diners; they saw well-known political figures and journalists on street corners and in hotel lobbies; and they had countless opportunities for informal discussions with New Hampshire citizens and with others who had come to New Hampshire for the primary. We dedicated some of our class sessions, held at Saint Anselm College in Manchester, to meetings with party leaders, pollsters, and others with direct experience of the New Hampshire primary. In addition, we were able to arrange more informal meetings with journalists, New Hampshire media personalities, and seasoned political operatives.

Students in the courses also engaged in more conventional academic activities. Before traveling to New Hampshire, they read scholarly works on the nomination process in general and the New Hampshire Primary in particular. While in New Hampshire, students were required to write reflective journals on their experiences as campaign volunteers and participants in campaign events. Class meetings also provided further opportunities for systematic reflection on the experiential dimension of the course. After returning to their home institutions, students were required to write analytic papers testing the conclusions of the scholarly literature against the realities of the 2004 New Hampshire Primary.

**Hypotheses about the Effects of Experiencing the New Hampshire Primary**

We turn now to our expectations about the effects of this course on the student participants. Once again, the goal of our study was to assess the impact of course participation on civic engagement, which we operationalize as (1) attitudes about government responsiveness, (2) attitudes about the impact and importance of political participation, and (3) actual involvement in political activities. We chose to focus on civic engagement because we, like other scholars and commentators mentioned previously, are concerned about the low level of political interest, efficacy, and participation among young adults, and what this means for the future of American democracy. Additionally, as teachers we share the commitment expressed in the American Political Science Association’s 1996 Report on Civic Education that a vital aspect of our job is to help students to take on and to take seriously the responsibilities of citizenship.

Few scholars have studied systematically the impact of campaign experience on civic engagement. Some democratic theorists have argued that greater participation begets greater participation because having developed the skills to participate—and having discovered the pleasures that participation provides—citizens will return for more opportunities. Thus, thinkers from John Dewey (1966) to Amy Gutmann (1987) to Benjamin Barber (1992) have emphasized the importance of bringing the experience of democracy to young people in order to get this self-reinforcing process
started. While all of these thinkers would criticize aspects of American presidential campaign politics as undemocratic, their arguments nonetheless suggest that direct engagement with the process will lead young people to seek more engagement—even if one goal of that engagement might be to improve the very process that grabbed their attention.

While this view is plausible and provocative, few scholars have tested its empirical assumptions. Roker, Player, and Coleman (1999) look at the impact of campaigning on political efficacy and knowledge. Although their article is based on a broad-based survey of British youth, they present only a handful of quotes regarding the impact of campaigning on political efficacy and involvement. In one of the only systematic studies on this topic, Freie (1997) looks at New York college students and finds that campaign participation leads to paradoxical outcomes. Freie concludes that campaign participation leads to both less and more alienation. While students who participated in a range of federal, state, and local campaigns became less cynical about elections as legitimating institutions, students continued to feel that campaigns did not involve a substantive consideration of the issues.

With the findings of this literature and previous studies on service-learning in mind, we formulated the following hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 1:** Participation in the New Hampshire presidential primary course would lead students to higher levels of political engagement, including a greater propensity to vote and to follow, to care about, and to discuss political and campaign news.

**Hypothesis 2:** Participation in the New Hampshire course would lead to higher levels of political efficacy. Participating in the political process in a tangible way—working on a campaign with a concrete goal and seeing the end product of these volunteer efforts (the results of the primary process)—should enhance students’ feelings that they can make a difference.

**Hypothesis 3:** Participation in the course would lead to less cynicism and more trust in government. Since the media often uses a game or strategic frame when covering elections and focuses on the negative (blunders, missteps, and controversial statements), both of which foster cynicism about politicians and the political process (Patterson 1993), we hypothesized that unfiltered access to candidates and their speeches would contribute to more positive evaluations of politicians and elected officials.

**Hypothesis 4:** Participation in the New Hampshire course would foster higher levels of interest in pursuing a career in politics. Although few studies have looked at students’ consideration of politics as a vocation, we hypothesized that working with and observing firsthand campaign and elected officials would act to foster interest in a career in some aspect of politics.

**Data and Methods**

To test our hypotheses and assess the impact of the New Hampshire course on civic engagement, we used a quasi-experimental design to measure changes in political engagement, efficacy, cynicism, and interest in political careers. We created a survey (see Appendix for a copy of the survey) and distributed it to the 35 New Hampshire
participants at both institutions in November 2003 (before the course began) and then again in December 2004 (about 10 months after the course). This model allowed us to track changes in the attitudes of New Hampshire participants over time.

Additionally, we gave the postsurvey to a quasi-control group that resembled the New Hampshire group, students enrolled in Political Science courses at St. Olaf and Hartwick in the fall of 2004, which allowed us to compare New Hampshire participants with similar students. Members of our control group shared with the New Hampshire students a strong interest in politics and political science, and they were all exposed to traditional classroom discussions about politics and elections during the height of the presidential campaign. However, the two groups were not randomly selected. The experimental group chose to join an off-campus program to study the presidential primary process, while the other students did not. While selection bias necessitates some caution in drawing conclusions from this comparative data, this limitation is inherent in seeking to measure the impact on participants of voluntary activities. Overall, our research design allows us to make reasonable comparisons across time and similar groups and to subject our hypotheses to valid empirical tests.

Civic engagement is a very broad concept. To keep our study focused and our survey of reasonable length we concentrated on just four dimensions of civic engagement: political engagement, efficacy, cynicism, and interest in politics as a vocation. We measured political engagement with two different types of questions. First we asked questions about the respondents’ reported level of involvement in political activities important for citizens in a democracy, such as paying attention to the news, talking about politics, and voting. We also tapped political engagement by measuring the extent to which the respondent perceived political involvement as important. We measured efficacy with a series of questions asking the respondent to assess the extent to which the government cares about and responds to the concerns of citizens. Political cynicism was measured with questions about trust in government and impressions of government officials and their motivations. Finally, we measured interest in politics as a vocation with questions about the respondents’ future interest in running for political office, pursuing a career in politics, or getting involved in future campaigns. While not exhaustive, our measures of civic engagement tap the key dimensions we expected our experiential course to affect. Additionally, our measure of civic engagement captures attitudes and behaviors that are critical for citizens in a democracy.

Whenever possible we used the same question wording on our surveys as that employed on National Election Study surveys to allow national comparisons. The postsurvey included quite a few questions not on the presurvey that were drawn from the Harvard Institute of Politics survey of college student attitudes about politics. Although we do not have pretest results for these questions, we included them in the postsurvey because they were valid and reliable measures of the concepts we wanted to measure and their inclusion allowed us to make comparisons with national samples of college students and young adults.

Tables 1–4 show the responses of our experimental course participants before and after the New Hampshire course and the postcontrol group. In addition to reporting the actual percentage breakdown for each response possibility, we indicate whether the mean differences between the pre- and posttests, and between the quasi-control and quasi-experimental groups are statistically significant. In Tables 1–3 we also include when applicable the results of national surveys of college students from
Table 1. Political engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Before New Hampshire course 12/03 n = 30</th>
<th>After New Hampshire course 12/04 n = 30</th>
<th>Postcourse control group 12/04 n = 58</th>
<th>National control group +Harvard Institute of Politics data, 10/04 + + Michigan 2004 NES data + + + Maryland 2004 CIRCLE data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How often would you say that you follow what’s going on in government and public affairs?</td>
<td>b***</td>
<td>c***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Most of the time</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>16%++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Some of the time</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>28%++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Only now and then</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>36%++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Hardly at all</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>20%++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximately how often do you discuss politics and current events with your friends or family members?</td>
<td></td>
<td>c***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. More than once per week</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>56 + 33++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. About once per week</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28 + 39+++</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. A few times per month</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9 + 16+++</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. About once per month</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3 + 5+++</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. A few times per year</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 + 6+++</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Less than once per year</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1+ −</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How closely would you say you followed the 2004 presidential race?</td>
<td>c***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Very closely</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>35 + 43+++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Somewhat closely</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>52 + 45+++</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Not too closely</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10 + 9+++</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Not closely at all</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4 + 4+++</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Continued)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Before New Hampshire course 12/03</th>
<th>After New Hampshire course 12/04</th>
<th>Postcourse control group 12/04</th>
<th>National control group +Harvard Institute of Politics data, 10/04 ++ Michigan 2004 NES data +++ Maryland 2004 CIRCLE data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some people don't pay much attention to political campaigns. How about you? Would you say that you were very much interested, somewhat interested or not much interested in the campaigns this year?</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Not much interested</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Somewhat interested</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>52++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Very much interested</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you vote in the 2004 presidential election?</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>77+++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>77+++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. No</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23+++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It really doesn't matter to me who the President is.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Strongly agree</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Somewhat agree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Somewhat disagree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Strongly disagree</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How strongly do you agree or disagree with this statement: politics is not relevant to my life right now.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreement Level</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>3+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat agree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>63+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Did your experience in New Hampshire make you more or less interested in discussing politics or following politics on a day-to-day basis?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interest Level</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>90</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More interested</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less interested</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure/No difference</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

+Data are from a national random sample of college students, Harvard University, Institute of Politics, http://www.iop.harvard.edu/research_polling.html.

+++Data are from a national sample of students (n = 28), The National Election Studies (NES), Center for Political Studies, University of Michigan. Electronic resources from the NES World Wide Web site (www.umich.edu/~nes). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, Center for Political Studies [producer and distributor], 1995–2000.


b-indicates a significant difference with pretest, c-indicates a significant difference with posttest (t test for equality of means).

**p < .001.**
Table 2. Political efficacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Before New Hampshire course 12/03 ( n = 30 )</th>
<th>After New Hampshire course 12/04 ( n = 30 )</th>
<th>Postcourse control group 12/04 ( n = 58 )</th>
<th>National control group ++Harvard Institute of Politics data, 10/04 ++Michigan NES data, 2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How much attention do you feel the government pays to what young people think when it decides what to do—a good deal, some or not much?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Not much</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Some</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. A good deal</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? “There is a special role for young people in the political process. It is very important that young people participate.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Agree</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How strongly do you agree or disagree with this statement: political involvement rarely has any tangible results?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Strongly agree</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Somewhat agree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td>20+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Somewhat disagree</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
<td>40+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Strongly disagree</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td>33+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How effective do you think political engagement is as a way of solving the issues facing the country?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>48</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21+</td>
<td>61+</td>
<td>9+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement, "public officials don't care much what people like me think"?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1. Agree</th>
<th>2. Disagree</th>
<th>3. Neither</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60++</td>
<td>20++</td>
<td>20++</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N/A = Not Applicable.

+Data are from a national random sample of college students, Harvard University, Institute of Politics, http://www.iop.harvard.edu/research_polling.html.

+++Data are from a national sample of students (n = 28), The National Election Studies (NES), Center for Political Studies, University of Michigan. Electronic resources from the NES World Wide Web site (www.umich.edu/~nes). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, Center for Political Studies [producer and distributor], 1995–2000.

b-indicates a significant difference with pretest, c-indicates a significant difference with posttest (t test for equality of means).

*p < .10, **p < .001.
Table 3. Political cynicism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Before New Hampshire course 12/03</th>
<th>After New Hampshire course 12/04</th>
<th>Postcourse control group 12/04</th>
<th>National control group+Harvard Institute of Politics data, 10/04 ++Michigan NES data, 2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you think there are any important differences in what the Republicans and Democrats stand for?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. No difference</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>16%++;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Yes, a difference</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>84%++;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Don’t know</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>2%++;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington to do what is right?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Just about always</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>32++;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Some of the time</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>68++;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your impression about government officials?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think quite a few of the people running the government are crooked, not very many are, or do you think hardly any of them are crooked?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Quite a few</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>40++;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Not many</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>52++;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Hardly any</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8++;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Elected officials seem to be motivated by selfish reasons.

| 1. Strongly agree | N/A | 13 | 14 | 12+ |
| 2. Somewhat agree | 52  | 71 | 46 | 29+ |
| 3. Somewhat disagree | 36  | 12 | 29 | 12+ |
| 4. Strongly disagree | 0   | 3  |    |     |

N/A = Not Applicable.
+ data are from a national random sample of college students, Harvard University, Institute of Politics, http://www.iop.harvard.edu/research_polling.html.
++ data are from a national sample of students (n = 28), The National Election Studies (NES), Center for Political Studies, University of Michigan. Electronic resources from the NES World Wide Web site (http://www.umich.edu/~nes). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, Center for Political Studies [producer and distributor], 1995–2000.

b-indicates a significant difference with pretest, c-indicates a significant difference with posttest (t test for equality of means).
the Harvard Institute of Politics study and the responses of students from 2004 National Election Studies data. Since both our quasi-experimental and control groups were predominantly political science majors, we expected that both would show higher levels of political engagement and efficacy than these comparison groups, which are composed of a random sample of all college students.

**Results and Discussion**

**Political Engagement**

Our survey results show that participating in the New Hampshire presidential primary course is strongly associated with an increase in political engagement. The New Hampshire participants showed a marked increase in attentiveness to the news. The percentage who said they followed the news “closely” prior to the course was 45%. This figure increased to 87% in the postsurvey. The change in attitudes on this item was statistically significant at the .001 level. Some increase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4. Considering politics as a vocation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How likely is it that you will run for office yourself one day?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Not likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. A possibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Very likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How likely is it that you will pursue a career in some aspect of politics or public service?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Not likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. A possibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Very likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did your experience in New Hampshire make you more likely or less likely to get involved in future campaigns and/or other political work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Unsure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_c*-indicates a significant difference with posttest (t test for equality of means).

**p < .05, ***p < .001.**
in the intensity with which students followed political news would be expected over the period of our study, since media coverage and discussions about the election increased from December 2003 to December 2004. However, the 87\% of New Hampshire participants reporting they now followed the news “closely” was significantly higher than the 54\% of the postsurvey control group who gave such a response. While control group members did not go to New Hampshire, they were enrolled in at least one political science class in the fall of 2004 and were therefore exposed to a good deal of election-related discussion. Thus the results—the 42 percentage point increase between the pre- and posttest for New Hampshire participants and the 33 percentage point gap between our New Hampshire participants and the control group—strongly support the contention that the experiential course had a substantial and lasting impact on this measure of political engagement.

When asked directly, 90\% of New Hampshire participants reported that the New Hampshire experience made them more interested in discussing or following politics on a day-to-day basis. In their open-ended responses, students stated that immersion in an exciting political environment sparked a long-lasting interest in following the news. One New Hampshire participant wrote that “Prior to NH I followed politics briefly. After being 100\% involved in the middle of something so exciting and political it peeked [sic] my interests. I find now that I follow politics far more closely than I ever did on a very regular basis.” Increased attentiveness to the news also seems to be a by-product of feeling more vested in the election. As one student wrote, “NH made me more interested in following politics because it caused me to feel truly connected to the 2004 presidential election.” Other students commented that their experience in New Hampshire opened their eyes to the immediate consequences of politics for their own lives and therefore made following the news more important. One student commented that “My political experience allowed abstract issues to become more tangible and following politics on a day-to-day basis more relevant.”

The postsurvey included a number of questions tapping political engagement that were not included in the presurvey. As Table 1 shows, on every one of these measures the New Hampshire participants revealed a higher—in some cases much higher—level of engagement than did either the control group or the national samples. As one might expect, the most pronounced effects are in the level of engagement in the 2004 presidential race. For example, 94\% of the New Hampshire group reported following the presidential race “very closely,” which was 25 percentage points higher than the control group. Similarly, 94\% of the New Hampshire course participants said that they were “very much interested” in the 2004 campaigns, while only 45\% of the control group gave such a response. As expected, both our control and New Hampshire group revealed higher levels of political engagement than the national comparison groups.

The markedly higher level of engagement among the New Hampshire participants was not confined to questions directly related to the 2004 election. A significantly higher number, 84\% of the New Hampshire participants, reported that they discuss politics and current events with their friends and family members more than once per week, whereas just 55\% of the control group gave a similar response. Although the differences did not reach standard levels of statistical significance, the New Hampshire participants were also more likely to say politics was relevant to their lives than were the other young people surveyed. In their open-ended responses, several students stated that their experience in New Hampshire had
increased their ability to form informed and interesting insights about politics and the presidential race, which in turn made them more eager and likely to engage in political discussions. Others commented that their direct involvement in the 2004 presidential primary race made them want to discuss politics more. As one student wrote, “When you are engaged in the process and have something invested in it you care more, you talk about it more.”

In the weeks immediately following the New Hampshire program, many students spoke about how “obsessed” they were with following political news and how eager they were to continue discussing campaign developments with their friends, families, and classmates. What the postsurvey results reveal is that this high level of interest in politics had considerable staying power. It was not just in the immediate aftermath of the New Hampshire program that students were politically engaged. They continued to be intensely interested 10 months after the end of the course and a month after the conclusion of the 2004 election season.

Although not included in our tables, another intriguing finding worth mentioning was that the course made students more partisan. Undoubtedly due to the noncompetitive Republican nomination in 2004, the vast majority, about 83%, of the participants in our program identified as Democrats. While the percentage identifying as Democrats did not change over time, the strength of their identification did. Prior to the New Hampshire course, 46% of the participants identified as strong Democrats while 36% identified their partisanship as “weak.” In the postsurvey, however, a remarkable 77% of New Hampshire participants identified as having strong Democratic partisanship and only 7% identified as weak partisans. What is perhaps most surprising about these results is not that working on Democratic campaigns acted to strengthen the Democratic identification of the participants, but the lasting power of this change. In light of research showing that stronger partisans exhibit higher levels of political engagement and participation, these findings are encouraging (Flannigan and Zingale 2002, 81). In fact, one of the explanations offered for the decline in turnout since the 1960s has been the weakening of partisanship over this period (Abramson and Aldrich 1982; Wattenberg 2002). While there are reasons to find the strengthened partisanship a positive outcome, those concerned that the American political community is threatened by the increased polarization of the electorate will be troubled by this aspect of our findings.

Political Efficacy

The table on political efficacy highlights an interesting, if somewhat contradictory, set of findings. Two of the five items indicated that participation in the New Hampshire course contributed to a statistically significant higher sense of political efficacy, but the other three items tapping this concept did not show any impact. The New Hampshire participants were 18 percentage points more likely to disagree with the statement, “public officials don’t care much what people like me think” after participating in the New Hampshire course; prior to going to New Hampshire the responses of the experimental group were fairly similar to the control group. Similarly, the postsurvey results indicated that the New Hampshire participants were 32 percentage points more likely than the control group and the national sample of college students to say that political involvement has tangible results.

On other measures of political efficacy, however, there was little change in the attitude of New Hampshire participants over time or little difference between them
and the control group. New Hampshire participants were just as skeptical about government responsiveness to young people after participating in the program as they had been before they left for New Hampshire. Along the same lines, the New Hampshire participants did not come away from their experience with a stronger sense that political engagement is an effective way of solving the issues facing the government than they held before the program.

This mixed picture presented in the Political Efficacy Table is somewhat similar to the results found by Freie (1997) discussed earlier. Freie’s study found that college students who had participated in campaigns felt less cynical about elections per se, but they continued to feel that campaigns did not address substantive issues. The mixed impact of campaign work on measures of political efficacy may be a rational response to the experiences students encounter when engaging in this type of political work. Many students remarked that they enjoyed seeing their campaign work translate into actual results—e.g., mobilizing turnout for campaign events or encouraging people to consider their candidate. Yet, at the same time, many remarked that their campaign work did not affect the policy positions of the candidates or the overall campaign strategy employed by the candidate. Their internships placed them on the frontline of campaigns, far removed from the inner decision-making circles. Moreover, their campaign experiences revealed clearly that the campaigns were much more focused on defining and executing a winning strategy than on meaningfully responding to citizens’ concerns and problems. Many students were disturbed by the staged quality of campaign events and the endless repetition of canned speeches. One student reported that the experience in New Hampshire “gave me empathy for the candidates who must repeat the same speeches with the same enthusiasm. There is more show business and acting that determines political results than many like to admit.”

Finally, it is important to note that the vast majority of our students worked for Democratic candidates, only one of whom (of course) went on to win the New Hampshire primary and the Democratic nomination. The other four candidates for whom the students worked ended up losing. Since the post-survey was conducted about a month after George W. Bush won reelection, we hypothesize that students may have felt frustrated that their efforts did not end up affecting the outcome of the election. Our largely Democratic students may have answered quite differently had John Kerry won the election. More broadly, our results suggest that our hypothesis that involvement in a campaign would lead to higher efficacy was too simplistic; in the future, it will be important to look more carefully at how campaign effects are mediated by the eventual success or failure of that candidate.

**Trust in Government and Political Cynicism**

Perhaps as interesting as the considerable change in political engagement we saw in Table 1 is how little attitudes changed regarding cynicism and trust in government, as shown in Table 3. We hypothesized that meeting candidates in person and being exposed to live political speeches in their entirety, rather than through the more cynical and negative frames provided by both print and television media (Patterson 1993), would lead the New Hampshire course participants toward greater trust in government and more favorable views of elected officials. The survey data did not support this hypothesis. There was neither substantial change in the attitudes of
the New Hampshire participants nor much difference between the New Hampshire participants and the control group.

The students’ impressions of how many elected officials are crooked changed very little between the pre- and postsurveys, and there was little difference among the experimental group, the control group, and the American National Election Studies survey of 18- to 25-year-olds. In all four cases, the most popular response was that “not many” of the people running the government are crooked and the second most popular response was “quite a few.” Both our control and experimental groups were more likely than the national sample of 18- to 25-year-olds to think that elected officials are motivated by selfishness, suggesting that studying political science might actually increase cynicism about the motivations of government officials.

In retrospect we wish we had asked more detailed questions on this topic to separate out attitudes about elected officials in general from the particular politicians our students came in contact with on this program. Despite the combative quality of much contemporary campaigning, it is our strong sense that most of the New Hampshire students came away with markedly more positive evaluations of and warmer feelings toward not only the particular candidate they worked for but all of the candidates they saw in person in New Hampshire. Yet these positive evaluations and feelings were not transferred to their conceptualization of “elected officials” overall. This gap might be explained by the dominance of Republicans in Washington and the heavily Democratic skew of course participants. When these students answer questions about “elected officials,” they might be thinking of the people who control Congress and the White House, of whom they hold negative opinions overall.

**Political Activism and Career Choice**

In the aftermath of participating in the New Hampshire course, many students stated that they were more likely to get involved in campaign work and political activism and more likely to consider a career in public service or elective office than they had been before taking the course. The survey results showed that after participating in the New Hampshire program, students saying they were “very likely” to run for political office one day increased from 10% to 19%, a statistically significant difference. It appears that the shift came from students who originally said running for office was “a possibility” but after the course said it was “very likely.” There was a similarly significant shift from the pre- to the postsurvey in the expressed likelihood of students to pursue a career in some aspect of politics or public service from 59% to 71%. Only 29% of the control group gave such a response. Finally, 63% of the New Hampshire participants said the experience made them more likely to get involved in future campaigns or political work.

It is also important to point out that a majority of the New Hampshire participants sought out ways to continue to be actively engaged in the 2004 election after the trip was over. At the most extreme, two students took a leave from their studies in the fall to campaign full time. Others added campaign activities to their college and work schedules. Two New Hampshire participants attended their home state’s caucus proceedings; several others contacted one of the presidential campaigns and volunteered in their hometowns over the summer and in their college towns. Quite a few students from this program spear-headed the reemergence and strengthening of the College Democrats and College Republicans on their college campus and were highly active in organizing election-related activities throughout the fall
of 2004 and beyond. Two students started a political show on their campus radio station.

Conclusion

The American Political Science Association has identified encouraging civic engagement as a central goal of the organization (1996 of the Task Force on Civic Education). We believe that civic education is a key component of our jobs as teachers of political science. Like most political science faculty, we believe that our role is not only to educate young adults about the way the political world works but to foster and to promote informed civic engagement (Hunter and Brisbin 2002). The political science course analyzed here, in which students learned about presidential elections while working on presidential nomination campaigns in the weeks leading up to the New Hampshire primary, appears to have been effective at achieving this goal. Democratic theorists have long argued that greater participation begets greater participation; the results of our analyses offer empirical support for this theory. Although our sample size was small and not all of our hypotheses were confirmed, our results show that after taking this course, the participants expressed marked increases in political interest and political engagement. These effects were not the temporary aftereffects of an exciting month in New Hampshire but were present close to one year after the completion of the course. The students had an exciting political experience, and, as a result, they expressed much greater interest in getting involved politically in the future.

As mentioned previously, political theorists such as Dewey (1966), Gutmann (1987), and Barber (1992) have emphasized the importance of bringing the experience of democracy to young people in order to give them a taste of the pleasures of political participation. Our course did just that. It provided young adults with accessible and exciting opportunities for concrete political involvement. Researchers have been attempting to identify the “prods” in the lives of America’s young people that will enhance future civic engagement (Dubnick 2003). Our experiential course on the presidential election acted as one of these prods and stands as a powerful event in the political socialization of the students who participated in the course. In addition to providing a concrete opportunity for participation, the New Hampshire primary course provided resources and incentives shown to foster civic engagement (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). Students felt more knowledgeable as a result of their experiences and expressed a much higher level of interest in following and discussing politics, characteristics predictive of higher civic involvement. Additionally this course provided students with a network of political contacts and a host of politically relevant skills, which are also positively associated with increased civic engagement.

The results of this course on the students are promising. Moreover, this was one of the most rewarding and exciting, although exhausting, teaching experiences we have had. We encourage others to consider creating political science courses incorporating political immersion experiences and to assess their impact on civic engagement and knowledge, so that we can better understand the impact of such learning experiences and further improve political science education. We conclude by offering a few tips about how to organize an immersion experience like the one described here and how to assess that experience, drawn from both strengths and weaknesses of our own experience.
Working on a presidential primary campaign in the weeks leading up to the New Hampshire primary is probably a uniquely exciting political experience, not easily replicated every academic semester or in every region of the country. Nevertheless, the presidential primaries of 2008 are not far away. With competitive nomination contests likely within both major parties, the opportunities for integrating intense immersion experiences are great. Both Hartwick College and St. Olaf have four-week January terms, which work extremely well with a program such as the one described in this paper. For our part, we plan to take advantage of this and run a similar course in January 2008. If other institutions have similar academic calendars, we encourage you to join us in New Hampshire or to create a similar program in Iowa or other early primary states. For those without a January term, there are still ways to incorporate a presidential election immersion experience into semester-long American politics classes. Those in states with early primaries could contact nearby campaign offices and get their students volunteering several hours a week in the time before the primary occurs. Additionally, they should plan to take advantage of campaign events, speeches, and debates as they are scheduled. The last-minute scheduling of such events necessitates that flexibility be built into the syllabus. Even taking a class on a weekend trip to Iowa or New Hampshire, during which students would volunteer for a day and attend campaign events, would be a valuable immersion experience. Looking beyond the presidential primary process, exciting political immersion experiences can be built around competitive local, state, and national-level campaigns that are going in districts near colleges and universities.

Equally important to creating immersion experiences is assessing them as well as possible. When we run our course in 2008, we plan to integrate an improved set of assessment measures (better designed pre- and post-surveys, integrating a consistent control group for the pre- and post-surveys) and we strongly encourage other political science faculty to consider doing the same. We also want to stress the importance of starting to design the course and its assessment components as early as possible, and the importance of carefully thinking through and seeking feedback on the research design and survey instrument. Additionally, we emphasize the importance of making specific plans for continuing to assess both a quasi-control and the quasi-experimental group for years after the completion of the study, so we can understand the long-term consequences of such experiences. For our own study, we aim to continue surveying the 2004 New Hampshire course participants in the coming years, tracking their political engagement and career choices, to see if they remain distinct from their counterparts.

Notes

1. Studies show that the political engagement rates of young people increased in the 2004 election cycle. The most accurate estimates of youth turnout in the 2004 presidential race are between 42% and 47% for 18- to 24-year-olds (Lopez, Kirby, and Sagoff 2004). Moreover, surveys from the Institute of Politics show that college students were more interested and discussed the election with others at higher levels than they had in previous years (Patterson 2004).

2. While the Hartwick and St. Olaf groups had slightly different experiences and remained fairly distinct socially, they shared the experiences relevant to our analysis. For the purposes of this paper, we treat the students as one group.

4. Our decision about the timing of the postsurvey was influenced by competing pressures. On the one hand we wanted to wait until the 2004 election was over to see if attitudinal impacts lasted beyond the campaign season. Pushing in the other direction was our need to analyze our postsurvey results in time to present them at the 2005 APSA Conference on Teaching and Learning in Political Science, which was held in mid-February. Thus we chose December, slightly more than one month after the 2004 election, as the time for our postsurvey.

5. We very much wish we had included the Harvard Institute of Politics questions on the presurvey but, unfortunately, did not think to consult their survey until we visited Harvard and heard about this project in more detail as part of our New Hampshire course.

6. As of this writing, the presidential nomination schedule for 2008 has not yet been announced. The Democratic party is considering moving more primaries to occur earlier in the process, which, while potentially taking away from the intensity of the New Hampshire experience, should create more opportunities to get involved in the excitement of early primary states.

7. We plan to do this in the summer of 2007, when all participants will have graduated.

References


Appendix A

2004 Presidential Election Survey

This is a questionnaire about political attitudes and the 2004 Presidential Election. Participation in this survey is entirely voluntary and you may decline to fill out the questionnaire or any particular item. The information you provide will be completely anonymous, so you do not need to put your name anywhere on the survey. The results of this research will be used for research purposes only. Thank you in advance for your time.

Directions: For each of the following questions, circle the most appropriate response.

Are you a political science major?
   a. Yes
   b. No

About how many political science classes have you taken?
   a. 1–2
   b. 3–5
   c. 6 or more

What is your gender?
   1. Female
   2. Male

Generally speaking, which of the following do you think of yourself as?
   1. Democratic
   2. Republican
   3. Independent
   4. Other
a. If you consider yourself Independent do you feel that you lean more towards the Democratic party or the Republican party?
   1. Democratic party
   2. Republican party
   3. Neither

b. If you consider yourself a Democrat or Republican, how would you assess the strength of your partisanship?
   1. Strong Democrat
   2. Not very strong Democrat
   3. Strong Republican
   4. Not very strong Republican

Which of the following terms best describes your political views?
   1. Very liberal
   2. Liberal
   3. Slightly liberal
   4. Moderate/middle of the road
   5. Slightly conservative
   6. Conservative
   7. Very conservative

Do you think there are any important differences in what the Republicans and Democrats stand for?
   1. No difference
   2. Yes, a difference
   3. Don’t know

Some people follow what’s going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there is an election going on or not. Others aren’t that interested. How often would you say that you follow what’s going on in government and public affairs?
   1. Most of the time
   2. Some of the time
   3. Only now and then
   4. Hardly at all

Approximately how often do you discuss politics and current events with your friends or family members?
   1. More than once per week
   2. About once per week
   3. A few times per month
   4. About once per month
   5. A few times per year
   6. Less than once per year

How closely would you say you followed the 2004 presidential race?
   1. Very closely
   2. Somewhat closely
   3. Not too closely
   4. Not closely at all
Some people don’t pay much attention to political campaigns. How about you? Would you say that you were very much interested, somewhat interested or not much interest in the campaigns this year?

1. Not much interested  
2. Somewhat interested  
3. Very much interested

Did you vote in the 2004 presidential election?

1. Yes  
2. No

How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington to do what is right?

1. Just about always  
2. Most of the time  
3. Some of the time  
4. None of the time

What is your impression about government officials? Do you think quite a few of the people running the government are crooked, not very many are, or do you think hardly any of them are crooked?

1. Quite a few  
2. Not many  
3. Hardly any

Elected officials seem to be motivated by selfish reasons.

1. Strongly agree  
2. Somewhat agree  
3. Somewhat disagree  
4. Strongly disagree

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement, “public officials don’t care much what people like me think”?

1. Agree  
2. Disagree

How much attention do you feel the government pays to what young people think when it decides what to do—a good deal, some, or not much?

1. Not much  
2. Some  
3. A good deal

It really doesn’t matter to me who the President is.

1. Strongly agree  
2. Somewhat agree  
3. Somewhat disagree  
4. Strongly disagree
How likely is it that you will run for office yourself one day?

1. Not likely
2. A possibility
3. Very likely

How likely is it that you will pursue a career in some aspect of politics or public service?

1. Not likely
2. A possibility
3. Very likely

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? “There is a special role for young people in the political process. It is very important that young people participate.”

1. Agree
2. Disagree

How strongly do you agree or disagree with this statement: Politics is not relevant to my life right now.

1. Strongly agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Somewhat disagree
4. Strongly disagree

How strongly do you agree or disagree with this statement: Political involvement rarely has any tangible results?

1. Strongly agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Somewhat disagree
4. Strongly disagree

How effective do you think political engagement is as a way of solving the issues facing the country?

1. Very effective
2. Somewhat effective
3. Not effective

Did your experience in New Hampshire make you more likely or less likely to get involved in future campaigns and/or other political work?

1. More likely to get involved in future campaigns and/or political work
2. Less likely to get involved in future campaigns and/or political work
3. Unsure

   Please expand on your answer in the space below.
Did your experience in New Hampshire make you more or less interested in discussing politics or following politics on a day-to-day basis?

1. More interested
2. Less interested
3. Unsure/No difference

Please expand on your answer in the space below.

How would you compare the New Hampshire Program J-term class, as a learning experience, to other classes you have taken?

1. I learned more/more deeply in the NH class than in others I have taken.
2. I learned about the same in the NH class as I have in other classes I have taken.
3. I learned less/less deeply in the NH class than in others I have taken.

Please expand on your answer in the space below.

Did participation in the NH program change the way you view politics and/or politicians?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Unsure

Please expand on your answer in the space below.