

## Close Up: Democracy in Action 2009-2010

University of Virginia  
School of Continuing and Professional Studies  
Northern Virginia Center

### Course Information

Course Title: Democracy in Action  
Course Number: PSPL1010  
Course Credits: 1 Undergraduate credit  
Tuition: \$255 Virginia residents; \$408 out-of-state residents  
Course Dates: Runs weekly, October 2009 through July 2010

### General Instructions *(Please read entire syllabus.)*

1. **ENROLLMENT & REGISTRATION:** The University of Virginia must receive your Application for Permission to Enroll and your Registration form at least 10 days before your Close Up program begins. See "Registration & Enrollment Instructions for Close Up Students" at [www.CloseUp.org](http://www.CloseUp.org).
2. **CONFIRMATION EMAIL:** After you have enrolled and registered, you will receive a confirmation email from the University of Virginia. This email also will give you a University email account and access to the Student Information System (SIS).
3. **COURSE VERIFICATION FORM:** On the program's first day, ask your Program Instructor (PI) for a Course Verification Form. At the end of your program, your PI or Program Leader must sign this form indicating that you have materially participated in the program and incorporate the assigned readings as well. Alternatively, you may use the Course Verification Form that is attached to this syllabus.
4. **WHO TO CONTACT WITH QUESTIONS:**

Enrollment or Registration:  
Charlotte Partain  
University of Virginia, Northern Virginia Center  
7054 Haycock Road  
Falls Church, VA 22043-2311  
Phone: 703-536-1123 FAX: 703-536-1111  
Email: [cpartain@virginia.edu](mailto:cpartain@virginia.edu)

Course Requirements:  
Paul Burneko  
Close Up Foundation  
44 Canal Center Plaza, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
Phone: 703-706-3506  
Email: [PBurneko@CloseUp.org](mailto:PBurneko@CloseUp.org)

### Course Instructors

Rick Rockelli, MBA, JD, LLM  
Chief Operating Officer  
Close Up, 44 Canal Center Plaza, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
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Jo-Ann Amadeo, Ph.D.  
Consultant, Curriculum Design & Assessment  
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**Course Description:** This course helps students develop a practical understanding of the core concepts and processes of democratic government, including the behaviors needed to become engaged and informed citizens. Students will gain a greater understanding of citizens' rights and responsibilities in a democracy and will practice behaviors helpful to carrying out those rights and responsibilities.

The course gives students hands-on opportunities to interact with government, interest groups and individual citizens. Students will engage with policymakers and experts through seminars, meetings with Congressional offices and observations of Congress in action. Key institutions and historic sites will be used as classrooms to help students explore the links between history and contemporary policy issues. Emphasis will be placed on how the actions of ordinary citizens can directly affect public policy making.

**Course Objectives:** Upon completion of the course, students will:

1. Gain an understanding of diverse viewpoints regarding domestic and international policy questions facing Congress, the executive branch, and the courts;
2. Be able to identify, describe, and practice various methods by which citizens can participate in the U.S. system of democracy;
3. Practice activities necessary to becoming informed and engaged citizens, including acquiring and using data, assessing personal involvement in political issues, and promoting political interests; and
4. Demonstrate tolerance and respect for differing points of view.

**Course Requirements:** There are 4 requirements needed to complete this course:

1. **COMPLETE THE PROGRAM:** This means much more than attending program components. You must actively participate by providing thoughtful contributions to discussions and presentations; engaging in simulations and role-plays, and helping your peers do the same.
2. **DO THE READINGS:** You must complete all readings assigned and incorporate these into your discussions, group activities and presentations.
3. **INSTRUCTOR CERTIFICATION:** Your Program Instructor must certify that you have completed the program and done the readings. Your Program Instructor does this by initialing and signing your Course Verification Form. *Please submit this form with your Research Paper (described below).*
4. **RESEARCH PAPER:** You also must prepare a paper examining a public policy controversy. We must receive your paper and Course Verification Form within 30 calendar days of the date your program ends. *Submit both together to:*

Paul Burneko, Training & Curriculum Design  
Close Up Foundation, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor,  
44 Canal Center Plaza, Alexandria, VA 22314

**Course Grade:** Your grade will be based on these factors:

<u>Factor</u>	<u>Maximum Score</u>
Quality of your Program participation	25 points
Completion of assigned readings	25 points
Research paper	50 points
<b>Total Possible Score</b>	<b>100 points</b>

The course grading scale is:

<u>Total Points</u>
A = Above 89
B = 80 – 89
C = 70 – 79
D = 60 – 69
F = Below 60

**Course Readings (Required)**

*Close Up Student Notebook* (given to students at the start of the program). Students also will read articles and primary source documents in connection with course sessions as assigned by the Program Instructor. For the research paper, they will read and research at least 3 more sources (see below).

**Course Readings (Recommended)**

*Current Issues*, 33<sup>rd</sup> edition (Close Up Press, published September 2009).

For information on how to obtain this text, visit [www.CloseUp.org](http://www.CloseUp.org) or email [CurrentIssues@CloseUp.org](mailto:CurrentIssues@CloseUp.org).

**Course Sessions:** Students shall participate in these sessions (at least 30 academic hours):

1. *Workshops:* In conjunction with students from schools nationwide, the student will explore a question of U.S. democracy using current issues as examples. (4 sessions, 75-90 minutes each)
2. *Study Visits:* Study visits include 7 memorials in addition to other monuments and sites. Through group interaction, students connect U.S. history to contemporary issues and debates. (8 hours)
3. *Seminars:* Students interact with public officials, media, and others involved in policymaking. Seminars on topics such as the judiciary, lobbying, media, and foreign policy give students the opportunity to examine the U.S. political system and current choices facing policymakers. Seminars are conducted on-site, such as at the U.S. State Department. (2-3 sessions, 60 minutes each)
4. *Domestic Issues Debate:* Students explore domestic issues and engage in a “Q&A” session with 2 professionals, one representing a liberal view, the other a conservative perspective. (90 minutes)
5. *Large Group Simulation:* Students participate in a simulation of a major government process. For example, students act as members of Congress discussing and voting on a collection of bills as they move through committee hearings and floor debates. (2 hours)
6. *Congress & Capitol Hill:* Students work with other students from their community to create questions and advocacy plans. They then meet with members of Congress or Congressional staff. Students also watch committee hearings and floor debate (as available) and visit the Supreme Court. (10 hours over 2 days).

**Course Paper:** The paper must be double-spaced, 5-7 pages, 11 point font and with 1 inch margins. It must include your signed consent to the University of Virginia's Honor Code (see below) and will be graded on the following criteria:

- a clear and concise description of the policy issue and the position you are taking;
- a thoughtful description of the underlying problem(s), including key facts and impacts on the public;
- a persuasive argument supporting your position, part of which should clearly identify existing policies, laws, or court decisions that you support or changes to them that you propose—as well as the relevant branches of government that must take action;
- an explanation of why your position is better than credible views opposed to your position; and
- clear citations to sources you used (including books, web sites, articles, interviews, etc.). Citations must be made both at the point the source is used in your paper and in a List of Sources at the end of your paper. No formal citation style is required; just make sure your citations give us enough information to duplicate your research. Example: *The Economist*, May 20<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup>, 2004, p. 18

Your research must include at least four articles or publications from nationally recognized sources suitable for an academic paper; these can include newspapers or newsmagazines, research institutions, government agencies, academic journals or Internet sites (the *Close Up Student Notebook* will not count as one of these).

Be sure page one of your paper includes your name, date, and the title of your issue.

**Late Assignments/No Incompletes:** Late papers will not be accepted for credit -- unless you receive written or email permission from us before the original due date. In that event, the paper will receive one full letter-grade reduction for every 3 calendar days it is late. Incomplete grades will not be given.

**University of Virginia Honor Code:** All work should be pledged in the spirit of the Honor System of the University of Virginia. Your Program Instructor will indicate which assignments are to be done individually and which permit collaboration. You should write or type this pledge at the end of all individual assignments and papers (and then sign your name at the end of the pledge): ***“I pledge that I have neither given nor received help on this assignment.”*** The University of Virginia relies upon and cherishes its community of trust. We firmly endorse, uphold, and embrace the University’s Honor principle that students will not lie, cheat or steal, nor shall they tolerate those who do. We recognize that even one honor infraction can destroy an exemplary reputation that has taken years to build. Acting in a manner consistent with the principles of honor will benefit every member of the community both while enrolled in the course and in the future.

**Special Needs:** If you are a student with special needs, please tell your Program Instructor on the first day of the course. Written documentation will be required. You should also visit this site to review your rights and responsibilities as a student (<http://www.virginia.edu/vpsa/rights.html>) and this site for the Learning Needs and Evaluation Center: <http://www.virginia.edu/studenthealth/lnc/contact.html>.

