

The Present and Future of Democracy and Civic Engagement in the Age of Mass Communications

Midterm discussion paper

Due October 27

Consider the changes in American civic engagement and political participation described by Putnam and Bennett and the explanations that the authors give of such trends.

Which part(s) of Putnam's and Bennett's arguments are more convincing to you? Why? Which part(s) of their arguments do not convince you? Why?

If you were to make an argument about the causes and consequences of the changes in political participation and civic engagement in the United States (and in other Western democracies), what part(s) of Putnam's and Bennett's arguments would you take?

Do you think other arguments could be made, and which ones?

Answer these questions in approximately **5 pages**.

Use your readings and notes to answer the questions. You can also take a look at my lecture notes on my Web site: www.critsianvaccari.it. When you quote the readings, make it clear to the reader. Try not to quote too much, and to express the authors' ideas with your own words.

In answering the questions, feel free to express your own opinions, even if they do not coincide with what is in the readings or what was said in the class. However, make sure to support your arguments with appropriate data and to organize what you want to say in a way that is persuasive.

Please turn in your paper in the next class, or email it to me before October 27 at c.vaccari@libero.it.

Please be on time with the delivery! Late delivery penalties will be assigned.