

# Stanford | Continuing Studies

**Course Title:** Voting Rights Advocacy and Mobilization

**Course Code:** SJS 02

**Instructors:** Melissa Goldberg and Antoine de Morree, PhD, [demorree@stanford.edu](mailto:demorree@stanford.edu)

**Schedule:** Sundays, 10:00 – 11:50 am (PST)

6 weeks, January 30 – March 13

No class on February 20

## Course Summary

### What will you learn in this course?

Through this course you will gain:

- Understanding of how to mobilize your communities for voting rights activism
- Methods to advocate elected officials to stand up for voting rights in this country
- Effective listening and influence techniques for mobilization and advocacy
- Knowledge of voting rights history

*\*Please see course page for full description and additional details.*

### What will this course look like?

This course is designed to help you get involved in advocacy and mobilization efforts for voting rights legislation, or at a minimum, learn how to get involved in these efforts. All aspects of the course have been created to further this goal, and, as participants in this class, you will have the opportunity to bring your own thoughts, experiences, and reactions together with the course material. With this in mind, the best things you can bring to this course are your curiosity, willingness to try new things, and enthusiasm.

### Class sessions:

Weekly class sessions will take place on Zoom. Classes will be highly interactive and involve both a lecture component and a student participation component, which can be in the form of group discussions, personal reflections, and practice and planning exercises. Because of this interactive component, it is strongly suggested that you attend the live class sessions.

### Assignments:

You will be asked to try out the mobilization and advocacy techniques and reflect on that experience in class. In addition, after every class, reading materials will be

recommended. These reading materials are not required for your participation in the course but serve as a foothold to further your understanding and to help you delve deeper into a particular topic.

Assignments will include the following:

- 1) Meet with an elected official's office regarding voting rights legislation.
- 2) Participate in one or more action(s) in your community to further voting rights.
- 3) Class Journal:
  - Reflections after meeting with an elected official and after participating in an action in your community. What went well? How did you feel? What would you change next time?
  - Final written class reflection detailing what you will take away from the course and how you envision getting involved in voting rights advocacy or mobilization.

## **Note About Live Attendance and Recording**

### **Live Attendance and Recording**

Recordings will be made available to all students. However, breakout rooms and other specific elements may not be recorded. It is important to participate live to get the full benefit of the course.

### **Zoom etiquette**

The Zoom room will be set to automatically mute participants and keep your video off upon entry. If you are in a noisy area, we ask that you keep yourself muted unless you are actively participating or asking a question. If possible, you are strongly encouraged to leave your video on during class so that we can see each other's faces and build our class community. This is especially important for small breakout group sessions.

With this in mind, however, it is a difficult time for everyone, and we should all strive to be flexible, understanding, and accommodating of one another. I encourage all of you to make our class time together special. For some of you, that might mean a time that is free from distractions, while for others it might mean eating dinner during class or sitting down for class with your favorite beverage.

Life happens, so if you need a stretch break, bathroom break, tea refill, or to care for a pet or child or loved one during class, please feel free to turn your video off for a few minutes to take care of yourself & others.

### **Contact**

As you go through the material, you may have questions during the week that you would like to discuss ahead or outside of class. To this end, you are welcome to

email the instructors. Emails will be answered on Fridays. You can also reach out through Canvas messaging. Office hours will be announced during class. These open sessions will use the same zoom link as regular class sessions.

## Grade Options and Requirements

- No Grade Requested (NGR)  
This is the default option. No work will be required; no credit shall be received; no proof of attendance will be provided.
- Credit/No Credit (CR/NC)  
Students must participate in all live sessions. If you are late, please join when you can. If you cannot attend a session, but are in need of grading, please reach out to the instructor.
- Letter Grade (A, B, C, D, No Pass)  
Students must submit two written reflections in addition to participating in all live sessions. If you cannot attend a session, but are in need of grading, please reach out to the instructor.

One reflection will cover your experience with advocacy for voting rights legislation. If you are unable to schedule an advocacy meeting, your reflection will cover the steps you took to try to schedule the meeting, how you reached out, and what you might change to be effective in the future.

The other reflection will cover your experience with mobilization, either participating in or leading a mobilization effort related to voting rights.

Letter grades will be assigned according to these general standards: A=Excellent (90-100%), B=Good (80-89%), C=Satisfactory (70-79%), D=Minimal Pass (60-69%).

## Weekly Schedule\*

\*exact course topics, order, and assignments subject to change

Week 1. (January 30) Introduction to Voting Rights

Learn the history of voting rights with its setbacks and steps forward, and how to discover proposed voting rights legislation in your state.

Week 2: (February 6) Case Studies in Advocacy

Learn from successful and failed advocacy efforts. By exploring case studies of advocacy campaigns for benefits and green transportation, you will gain an understanding of the dynamics underlying advocacy, and communication techniques

that help you be heard and understood. Emails are one of the most essential tools of outreach and you will learn the art of cold emailing.

Week 3: (February 13) Advocacy Next Steps and Intro to Mobilization

How can your voice be heard by your elected official? Learn how political offices work and key methods to get your message to your representatives. You will also learn and practice a tried-and-true approach to grassroots mobilization in your community.

----- *Break for President's Day Weekend* -----

Week 4: (February 27) Additional Mobilization Techniques

Hear a Guest Speaker share hands-on experience working on the front lines of Voting Rights & Voter Protection. Learn mobilization techniques with a series of case studies from past successes and failures.

Week 5: (March 6) Applied Mobilization Skills

Effective mobilization is not just about what you say, but also about how you say it. Practice techniques based on social psychology research to help your message be convincing. Participate in a hands-on action to mobilize your communities during class.

Week 6: (March 13) Reflections and Next Steps

Share reflections on your advocacy and mobilization efforts and discuss methods for becoming increasingly effective. Sharpen your influence skills, and ask remaining questions. We will also discuss what is next and how you can continue delving deeper into Advocacy and Mobilization after the course ends.

**Potential guest speakers**

Guest speakers will be invited to share personal stories and perspectives that illustrate course teachings. Among our network of potential guest speakers are leaders within Stacey Abrams' organization (Fair Fight Action), Voting Rights Lab, the ACLU's Voting Rights division, etc. Depending on schedules, guest speakers will be announced at course start, and are subject to change.

**About the instructors**

Melissa Goldberg served on the seven-member team that organized the largest political calls program in US history, resulting in the Biden/Harris campaign receiving the highest number of votes ever cast. She also served as Director of Training and Communications for Voter Protection for the Democratic Party of Virginia. Goldberg has taught persuasion, advocacy, and mobilization skills to over 40,000 volunteers. She has

persuaded members of the US Congress to co-sign legislation and has taught influence skills with Stanford Leaders in Communication, mobilization skills with the National Democratic Training Committee, and communication skills for businesses and organizations in a wide variety of industries.

Antoine de Morrée's work has been published in numerous scientific journals including Science and Nature, and he has received multiple awards for his research and leadership. He is a Stanford-certified Compassion Facilitator and author of the book "Magnetic: How Great Leaders Persuade and Inspire" (2020, Kendall Hunt Publishing) and the textbook "Becoming Magnetic: a communication handbook for future leaders" (2021, Kendall Hunt Publishing). Antoine did his postdoctoral training at Stanford University and received a PhD from Leiden University, The Netherlands.