

What is the Political Engagement Project (PEP) and Why is it Important?

Overview of PEP

Illinois State University was selected as one of eight institutions to participate in a national American Democracy Project initiative, the Political Engagement Project (PEP). The PEP project, directed by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, addresses the serious problem of political disengagement in young people and advocates a dramatic increase in college and university efforts to strengthen student interest in politics. The primary mission of the Political Engagement Project is to enhance ISU students' awareness and understanding of political engagement and impact their level of political involvement and leadership. The PEP project rests on the assumption that institutions of higher education must educate students for political engagement in order to develop the kind of informed political participation that is essential for a meaningful democracy.

PEP Competencies

The COM 110 PEP project aims to positively influence the following competencies related to political engagement:

- **Knowledge**—an understanding of politics and political processes.
- **Judgment/deliberation**—abilities to use reasoning to justify claims, present evidence in support of a position, and weigh competing claims.
- **Skills**—the abilities to engage in political discourse and processes (e.g., developing communication, critical thinking, as well as information and media literacy skills).
- **Motivation**—being interested in public affairs, feeling committed to being actively engaged, and feeling a sense of political efficacy.

In this course you will develop these competencies through a number of activities and assignments; however, we want to point out that there is no “magic bullet” for developing political engagement. Instead, this course aims to establish the foundation for your future political engagement upon which other courses in the general education program and your major will build.

For more information on PEP, please visit the following web sites:

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

<http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/PEP>

PEP at ISU

<http://www.ilstu.edu/american democracy/pep/>