

# WSSR WORKSHOPS ON SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

## Teaching Strong Democracy: Education and Political Commitments

**Dr. Trevor Norris**

Associate Professor, Brock University

March 16th, 2018

9:00am – 4:30pm

### Summary

The election of Donald Trump has provoked national and international debate. In this workshop, Professor Norris will engage key questions about the nature of the relationship between democracy, education, and the public good.

Questions addressed will include: What does the election of Trump say about the meaning of education in a democratic society? How does democracy relate to notions of the 'public good'? What are the political justifications for the role of neutrality, bias and balance in educational contexts? To whom or what does education owe political commitments? Can—or should—education do anything about these trends? What role can education play in addressing and/or resisting political phenomena?

Norris will explore the pressing issues related to both the political character of education, and the imperative to advance a robust conception of democracy for the public good in the face of current threats and challenges.

### Outline

- 1. The meaning of education in a democratic society**
  - a. Where education fits in democracy
  - b. Challenges to democracy
  - c. How is education in democracy challenged by Trump?
- 2. Neutrality, bias and balance**
  - a. A time for everything
  - b. The justifications for each
  - c. Where these fit in education
- 3. Politics and education**
  - a. Strange bedfellows?
  - b. Should education be used to fulfill political commitments?
  - c. The independence of education from politics
- 4. Teaching strong democracy**
  - a. The role of education in addressing and/or resisting political phenomena?
  - b. Next steps



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## Required Readings\*

- Brown, Wendy (2015) "Educating Human Capital" in *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*. New York: Zone Books, pp. 175-200. <http://reserves.concordia.ca/ares/ares.dll/plink?14EF1AA5>
- Foa, Robert & Yascha Mounk (2017) "The Signs of Deconsolidation". *The Journal of Democracy* 28: 1, pp. 5-15. <http://0-muse.jhu.edu/mercury.concordia.ca/article/645532>
- Honig, Bonnie (2013) "The Politics of Public Things: Neoliberalism and the Routine of Privatization". *No Foundations: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Law and Justice*. 10, pp. 59-76. <http://nofoundations.com/NoFo10HONIG.html>
- Maxwell, Bruce, Kevin McDonough & David Waddington (2018) "Broaching the subject: Developing law-based principles for teacher free speech in the classroom". *Teaching and Teacher Education*. 70, pp.196-203. <https://0-www-science-direct-com.mercury.concordia.ca/science/article/pii/S0742051X17312465?via%3Dihub>
- Norris, Trevor (2011) "Introduction: Consumerism in Our Own Schoolyards" in *Consuming Schools: Commercialism and the End of Politics*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, pp. 3-10. <http://reserves.concordia.ca/ares/ares.dll/plink?14EF1A62>

## Recommended Readings

- Barber, Benjamin R. (2016) "Strong Democracy as a Cosmopolis in the Age of Global Interdependence" in Trevor Norris (ed.) *Strong Democracy in Crisis: Promise or Peril?* Maryland: Lexington Books, pp. 15-28.
- Norris, Trevor (2016) "Introduction" in Trevor Norris (ed.) *Strong Democracy in Crisis: Promise or Peril?* Maryland: Lexington Books, pp. 1-14.
- Baer, Ulrich (2017) "What 'Snowflakes' Get Right About Free Speech" *New York Times*. April 24, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/24/opinion/what-liberal-snowflakes-get-right-about-free-speech.html>
- Bromwich, David (2017) "The New Campus Censors". *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. November 15, 2017. <https://www.chronicle.com/article/The-New-Campus-Censors/241637>

\*If you are registered for non-credit and are unable to locate the readings, please contact us at [wssr@concordia.ca](mailto:wssr@concordia.ca)

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