



Teaching Strong Democracy Prior to Elections

Dr. Trevor Norris

Associate Professor, Brock University

October 26, 2018

9:00am – 4:30pm

Summary (Abstract)

The election of Donald Trump has provoked national and international debate. The more recent election of Doug Ford raises some similar questions. In this workshop, Dr. 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 and Ford say about the meaning of education in a democratic society? How does democracy relate to notions of the 'public good'? And what exactly is 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? What role can education play in addressing and/or resisting political phenomena? Can—or should—education do anything to address these trends?

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





Required Readings and Resources*

Norris, Trevor (2016) "Interview on Commercialism and Education" Video:

<http://www.wssr.ca/public/videos/norris.mp4>

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?I4EF1AA5>

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/NoFoI0HONIG.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?I4EF1A62>

Additional Resources

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

Workshops on Social Science Research (WSSR)
1455 de Maisonneuve W. – H1 2Z5 3O
Montreal, Qc H3G 1M8
Telephone: 514-848-2424 x7854, x5473

