

Political Science 472H
Democratic Theory
Spring 2008

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Office hours: Mondays, 9:45-11:15am; Thursdays, 1:45-3:15pm

Democratic theory is a large topic and can be approached in many different ways. In this course we will try to come with some answers to this basic but surprisingly difficult question: what is a democracy? We will spend the first part of the course surveying some of the classic theories of democracy; after that we will move to contemporary arguments about democracy. A large part of the course will be devoted to the problems and possible solutions of democratic theory and practice.

Requirements

I expect students to do the readings every week and come prepared to discuss them in class. Make sure you bring the assigned readings with you to class. This class will rise or fall on the shoulders of the students: all students must contribute intelligently to class discussion. There will be one short paper, one long paper, two short quizzes, two simulations and one final exam. The long essay will be 15-20 pages in length on a topic of the student's choosing. Students will have to show me a draft of the paper. The short paper is worth 10% of the grade; each quiz is worth 5%; each simulation is worth 7.5%; the final exam is worth 25% and the final paper is worth 30%; participation is worth 10% of the grade. I will discuss the details of the final paper in class. Each part of the course must be completed to pass the course.

All students will be given one grace day for their papers -- you can hand in one paper one day late without penalty. After that, late papers will be graded down one full grade for each day late. (Weekends count as one day.)

The following books have been ordered for class. Try to get the right edition of each book.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, The Social Contract (Penguin)
J.S. Mill, On Liberty and Other Essays (Oxford)
Bohman and Rehg, Deliberative Democracy (MIT)
Carl Schmitt, The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy (Chicago)
Michael Young, The Rise of the Meritocracy (Transaction)
Madison, et. al, Federalist Papers (Penguin)

Class Schedule

(The schedule is tentative and I may make changes as the semester progresses.)

Foundations

- 1/10 Introduction
- 1/15 Rousseau, Social Contract, Book 1 and Book 2, chs. 1-6
- 1/17 Film: "Twelve Angry Men"
- 1/22 Rousseau, Social Contract, finish Book 2
- 1/24 Rousseau, Social Contract, Book 3 and Book 4, chs. 1-2, 7-8
- 1/29 Mill, Considerations on Representative Government, chs. 1-3
- 1/31 Mill, Considerations on Representative Government, chs. 4-6
- 2/5 Mill, Considerations on Representative Government, chs. 7-8, 10
- 2/7 Quiz; Mill, Considerations on Representative Government, chs. 11, 12, 16
- 2/12 Federalist Papers, #1, 9, 10, 35, 37, 39
- 2/14 Federalist Papers, #47-51, 78; The Letter of Brutus, nos. 1-4 (BB)
- 2/19 Simulation one

Deliberation

- 2/21 Simulation one
- 2/26 Cohen "Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy" in Deliberative Democracy
- 2/28 1st paper due
- 3/4 Benhabib, "Toward a Deliberative Model of Democratic Legitimacy" (ER)
- 3/6 Estlund, "Beyond Fairness and Deliberation" in Deliberative Democracy
- 3/11 Spring Break
- 3/13 Spring Break
- 3/18 Knight and Johnson, "What Sort of Equality Does Deliberative Democracy Require?" in Deliberative Democracy
- 3/20 Michelman, "How Can the People Ever Make the Laws?" in Deliberative Democracy

Criticisms and Complexities

- 3/25 Michels, Political Parties, pp. 5-41, 141-161, 175-179 (BB)
- 3/27 Schumpeter, Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy, part 4 (chs 20-3) (ER)
- 4/1 Individual meetings about final paper
- 4/3 Quiz; Przeworski, "Minimalist Conception of Democracy: A Defense" (ER)
- 4/8 Carl Schmitt, Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy, chs. 1-2
- 4/10 Carl Schmitt, Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy, chs. 3-4
- 4/15 Draft of paper due
- 4/17 Young, The Rise of the Meritocracy, part one
- 4/22 Young, The Rise of the Meritocracy, part two
- 4/24 Conclusion
- 4/28 Final papers due (11am)
- 5/1 Final Exam (4:00pm-5:30pm)

(BB) External link on Blackboard

(ER) Electronic Reserves