Course Description:

What are the necessary conditions for maintaining democratic government? What are the reasons and value judgments we affirm in wishing to do so?

Democracies institutionalize collective self-rule. Each of us (theoretically) rules over ourselves when we participate in public decision-making, which includes the processes of collective or “public” reason as well as representative structures by which we signal this collective reason.

The ideal of democratic government is that each person maintains an equal right to participate, and thereby is able to protect his interests as well as develop and judge collective or public interests. Democratic governance works with the assumption that individuals possess the requisite reasoning capacity to decide what is best, and that the community can determine this through majority rule. However, modern liberal democracies place limits on the power of the majority through the rule of law and a commitment to reciprocal individual rights. Modern liberal democracies join rule by the people with the rule of law.

Democratic governance requires institutions to promote inclusive public reasoning. The larger communities become, the more complex our institutions, and the more difficult it is to sustain the kind of reciprocity which underpins the democratic ideal. One author, Dahl, suggests that the key to solving this dilemma is to understand the way in which groups work within democratic systems. He argues that modern, large-scale democratic processes must take both the individual and the plural groups that comprise the collective into account. One could also add the media and the kinds of influence communication networks exert on public reason as relevant “groups” alongside the traditional interest groups and associations Dahl considers.

In addition, liberal democracy requires a democratic rule of law (O’Donnell) that applies universally to all the governed. In this course, we will consider different forms of pluralism (institutional and cultural) within political society, as well as frameworks offered as solutions to the problem of exclusion.

In all, modern, large-scale democracies are faced with the challenge of maintaining inclusive participation as well as institutionalizing and protecting resources that maintain the agency of the governed. In an age of migration and globalization, the governed include both citizens and non-citizens, which stretches the capacity for self-government and democratic institutions within a traditional nation-state. We will end the course with these considerations and reflect on the possibility of democracy in a transnational setting.
Course Requirements:

1) IN CLASS Analytical Essays (3 total): 20%, 25%, 25%. Each essay should be completed in a large blue book (8.5x11). You may use one single-sided page of typed notes, which you will turn in with your exam. Your numerical score will be uploaded to Blackboard. Example: 88(B+), 84(B), 81(B-), etc. In your essays: use blue or black pen; do not write on back of page.

2) Final Exam: 30%. The Final Exam is comprehensive.

3) Assignment Policy:
If you cannot attend class for an “IN CLASS” essay, you must notify me in advance via email to make up the exam. Without advance notice and a legitimate reason for missing class you will not be able to make up the assignment. If you have extenuating circumstances (documented debilitating illness, hospitalization, or family emergency) that prevent you from completing an assignment or the final exam, alternate arrangements can be made.

Note that syllabus dates are subject to change when needed (i.e. if we need an extra day to cover an author, we will shift exam dates). Check blackboard periodically for updated syllabus information, class information, notes, grade scores, and general announcements.

4) Attendance is a requirement for credit. Excessive absences will result in a grade deduction and potential failure of the course (i.e. you will not receive credit for the course if you only attend exams).

Course Objectives:

In this course, you will master material on democratic theory and practice. This means you will be able to discuss, analyze, and critically assess frameworks of democratic thought. You will write analytical essays that present a thesis argument, comparative analysis, and specific support for your argument by integrating different authors’ arguments and practical examples presented in lecture and through course readings.

This course includes class discussion in every lecture and includes a heavy writing component meant to hone your critical thinking and writing skills. Democratic theory is presented through a series of units, which introduce foundational concepts that will build on each other, or stack, as the course progresses. You will define, assess, and comparatively analyze central concepts in democratic thought and politics, and produce well supported arguments in response to class assignments and discussion. Please see course description and posted lecture notes for a slate of central concepts in addition to attending lecture.

Required Course Books


2) Course Reader (Available through Montezuma Publishing)
**General Course Guidelines**
1. Read the assigned material prior to lecture and take notes.

2. All course assignments and requirements must be completed to receive credit for the course. Any missing assignment will result in an F for the course.

3. You may not record lecture or any part of class without prior written permission from me.

4. There are no laptops or other electronic devices allowed during exams.

**READING SCHEDULE: (Items in Course Reader are starred *)**

**Monday, August 27: Introduction to Course and Syllabus Review**

Unit 1: Liberal Democracy in a Plural World

Wednesday, August 29: Constant, “The Liberty of the Ancients Compared with that of the Moderns” (On Reserve, *Political Writings*)

Friday, August 31: Wolin, “Fugitive Democracy”

**Monday, September 3: NO CLASS (Labor Day Holiday)**

**Wednesday, September 5: Mansbridge, “Using Power/Fighting Power: The Polity”**

**Friday, September 7: Mouffe, “Democracy, Power, and the ‘Political’”**

**Monday, September 10: Review Lecture.**

Unit 2: Political Judgment, Values, and Process

Wednesday, September 12: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book 3, 1274b32-1284b34 (available online <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/politics.3.three.html> ; Parts 1-13)

Friday, September 14: Cohen, “Procedure and Substance in Deliberative Democracy”

**Monday, September 17: Dahl, Dilemmas of Pluralist Democracy, Chapters 1-3.**

**Wednesday, September 19: Dahl, Chapters 1-3, 8.**

**Friday, September 21: Bohman, “Deliberative Democracy and Effective Social Freedom: Capabilities, Resources, and Opportunities.”**

**Monday, September 24: Review Lecture.**
Unit 3: Enabling Individuals: Associations and Deliberation
Wednesday, September 26: Habermas, “Three Normative Models of Democracy”
Friday, September 28: Habermas, Dahl, and Cohen
Monday, October 1: Excerpt from Bohman, “Social Complexity.”*
Wednesday, October 3: Review Lecture, “Communication Networks and Public Reason”
Friday, October 5: IN CLASS ESSAY 1.

Unit 4: Assessing Democracy: The Rule of Law and the Demos
Monday, October 8: O’Donnell, “Why the Rule of Law Matters”*
Wednesday, October 10: Beetham, “Freedom as the Foundation”*
Friday, October 12: Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism, Chapter 8, “Tribal Nationalism,” pp. 227-236*
Monday, October 15: Urquhart, “The Outlaw World”*
Wednesday, October 17: Review Lecture.
Friday, October 19: IN CLASS ESSAY 2

Unit 5: At the Margins: Inclusion Frameworks and Democratic Thought
Monday, October 22: Whelan, “Democratic Theory and the Boundary Problem”*
Friday, October 26: Honig, “Difference, Dilemmas, and the Political” and Young, “Difference as a Resource for Democratic Communication.”
Monday, October 29: Forment, “Peripheral Peoples and Narrative Identities: Arendtian Reflections on Late Modernity.”
Wednesday, October 31: Review Lecture
Friday, November 2: IN CLASS ESSAY 3
Unit 6: Multicultural and Transnational Challenges to Democracy

Monday, November 5: David Held, Excerpt from Democracy and Globalization.*

Wednesday, November 7: Brysk and Shafir.*

Friday, November 9: Brysk and Shafir, and Selection from Ngai.

Monday, November 12: Selection from Ngai.

Wednesday, November 14: “Constitutional Citizenship through the Prism of Alienage.”*

Friday, November 16: “Constitutional Citizenship…” continued.

Monday, November 19: Wednesday, November 21: Review Lecture

THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY: November 22-23

Monday, November 26: Lecture, “Individual Rights and Group Dynamics”

Wednesday, November 28: Excerpt, Bohman, “Conclusion.” (Handout)

Friday, November 30: Final Exam Review.

Monday, December 3: Review.

Wednesday, December 5: Review.

Friday, December 7: Review.

FINAL EXAM DURING EXAM WEEK
[Check online schedule to determine the date/time that pertains to your class time]
Essay Evaluation Guidelines

I. General Questions to Consider:
   1. Am I answering the question?
   2. Is my thesis stated clearly in the first paragraph? (or at the end of a two paragraph set-up?)
   3. Are my paragraphs logically ordered and do my points in each paragraph cohere with one another to form a single topic? If not, should I develop my points into separate paragraphs?
   4. Do I have an argument or am I mainly summarizing?
   5. Have I considered counter-arguments to my own?

II. Problems to Avoid
   1. Clarity: use clear language and check grammar.
   2. Transition: transitions between paragraphs help flow of argument.
   3. Organization: is there a logical progression of ideas?
   4. Evidence: stay close to the texts and analyze quotations. Always present your own analysis in addition to the quote or paraphrase.
   5. Citations: be sure to cite correctly (in text) and choose relevant material.

III. Further Suggestions
   1. Check the tone of your argument. Reading your paper aloud may help.
   2. Is your paper too vague? (Using examples counteracts this tendency)
   3. Does your paper have sufficient comparative analysis? Have you considered the counter-argument(s) and examples that either prove your case or do not?