

Democratic Political Philosophy

790:374:01

Fall 2015

Mondays & Thursdays 12:35–1:55 PM (FS-109)

Instructor: Noah Eber-Schmid

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Office Hours:

Thursdays 2:00–4:00 PM (and by Appointment)

Hickman Hall

Room 602

“When it is taken for granted in every discourse that “democracy” is the only kind of political regime deemed acceptable by a humanity that has come of age, that has been emancipated, and that has no other end than itself, then the very idea of democracy loses its luster, becomes murky, and leaves us perplexed...It is thus impossible to be simply ‘democratic’ without asking what this means...”

-Jean-Luc Nancy, “The Senses of Democracy”

More than twenty years after the end of the Cold War, democracy has become the default political position. The dominance and hegemony of democracy has reached such great heights and global popularity that some have even wondered whether or not “we are all democrats now.” Yet, when democracy is the norm and its virtues are promoted—so much so that to be anything but democratic appears to us to be absurd—the meaning of *democracy* becomes more important than ever. At its most basic level, democracy can be understood as the *rule of the people*, but what does that mean? What is “democracy?”

This course will provide students with a critical exploration into the historical emergence of modern democracy as political philosophy, theory, and practice. Through readings, written assignments, lectures, and in-class discussions we will examine historical and contemporary democratic thought. Students will investigate the meaning of democracy by engaging works of political philosophy and political theory that seek to define democracy as an ideal, theory, and philosophy. They will explore the classical origins and criticisms of democratic thought, the development of democracy and republicanism as a revolutionary political philosophy in the American and French Revolutions, the debates between supporters and critics of democratic political philosophy, as well as engage contemporary democratic political thought in light of modern considerations and lessons from history. The goal of this course is for students to gain a deeper understanding of democratic political philosophy, its significance, its critics, and the fundamental tensions between freedom, equality, and popular sovereignty at the heart of democracy.

Required Reading

The following texts will be used during this course. Many of the assigned readings listed in the course schedule below may be found in the specific texts listed here as well as in alternate editions. Shorter selections will be made available on reserve in the library and through Sakai when possible. Readings will be assigned in each class for the next class section. Assigned and the required page numbers, chapters, and section headings will be noted in a format that allows for the use of alternative editions when possible. If there are any questions regarding which edition to use, please contact the instructor.

Aristotle, *The Politics* (Penguin Classics), ISBN: 978-0140444216

Michael Bakunin, *God and The State* (Dover), ISBN: 978-0486224831

Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (Dover), ISBN: 978-0486445076

Thomas Jefferson, *Michael Hardt Presents: Thomas Jefferson – The Declaration of Independence* (Verso), ISBN: 978-1844671571

James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay, *The Federalist Papers* (Signet Classics), ISBN: 978-0451528810

John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty and Other Essays* (Oxford University Press) ISBN:978-0199535736

Thomas Paine, *Thomas Paine – The Rights of Man & Common Sense*, (Verso) ISBN: 978-1844673803

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Basic Political Writings*, 2nd Edition (Hackett), ISBN: 978-1603846738

Carl Schmitt, *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy*. The MIT Press. ISBN:978-0262691260

Course Expectations & Grades

Students will be responsible for completing an in-class midterm and final exam. In addition to these exams, students must complete a midterm paper and will be responsible for writing short, but frequent in-class writing prompts or take-home reaction papers (1–2 pages). Assignments must be completed by the deadline set by the instructor. Late and missing assignments will be penalized.

Final Grade Breakdown

25% Midterm Exam

25% Final Exam

25% Short Responses and In-Class Writing Prompts

25% Midterm Paper

Attendance and Participation: Students must attend all scheduled course meetings and abide by the university's attendance policies regarding absences. Any student intending to miss class for excusable reasons must inform the instructor a minimum of one week prior to the class. Active and critical participation is a must for any understanding of what it means to be democratic, and accordingly students are expected to read all materials and come to class prepared to discuss and actively participate. It may be a cliché but democracy is not a spectator sport—and neither is this class.

Students with more than four absences are at risk of failing the course. Students are expected to attend each class session on-time. A student that is twenty minutes or more late to class will earn

half an absence. All students should report absences (regardless of the reason) using the University's self-reporting absence system online (<https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/>). The University's policy on absences for religious observances is as follows:

“It is University policy (University Regulation on Attendance, Book 2, 2.47B, formerly 60.14f) to excuse without penalty students who are absent from class because of religious observance, and to allow the make-up of work missed because of such absence. Examinations and special required out-of-class activities shall ordinarily not be scheduled on those days when religiously observant students refrain from participating in secular activities. Absences for reasons of religious obligation shall not be counted for purposes of reporting.”

It is the responsibility of the student to provide timely notification to the instructor about necessary absences for religious observances. Students are also “...responsible for making up the work or exams according to an agreed-upon schedule.”

Makeup Exams and Missed Assignments:

All makeup exams must be arranged with the instructor prior to the missed exam. Makeup exams will be given at a scheduled time in the Political Science Department.

Email, Announcements, and Classroom Technology: You are required to regularly check your Rutgers University student email account and the Sakai Course Site at sakai.rutgers.edu. (To access Sakai, you will need your Rutgers Net ID and password. You will receive announcements from Sakai at your Rutgers e-mail address, so it is important for you to check that account frequently.) Failure to regularly check your Rutgers e-mail account is not an acceptable excuse for anything. You may contact the instructor with questions and concerns at the email address provided in this syllabus. Please be advised that you must allow 24 hours (Monday–Friday) or 48 hours (Saturday, Sunday, and Holidays) from the time your email is sent to receive a response. The use of phones and other mobile devices to make or receive, calls (telephone or other), text messages (SMS), tweets, status updates, or any communication with your physical, digital, or imaginary social network during class is strictly prohibited. In other words, your phone should be off (not just on vibrate) and your computer should only be used for taking notes during class. The use of smartphones, tablets, netbooks, laptops, etc. during class is at the discretion of the instructor, and the instructor reserves the right to prohibit the use of technological devices if they prove disruptive or distracting. Should you choose to use a computer to take notes during class, the instructor reserves the right to request electronic copies of your notes for the day the computer was used.

Disability Services: Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey abides by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Americans with Disability Act Amendments (ADAA) of 2008, and Sections 504 and 508 that mandate that reasonable accommodations be provided for qualified students with disabilities. If you have a disability and may require some type of instructional and/or examination accommodation, please register with the Office of Disability Services for Students, which is dedicated to providing services and administering exams with accommodation for students with disabilities. **The Office of Disability Services for Students can be contacted**

**by calling (848) 445-6800 and is located on the Livingston campus at the following address:
54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Suite a145, Piscataway, NJ 08854.**

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

All students should be familiar with and abide by the University's policy on academic integrity. Information on this policy, as well as resources to learn more about your responsibility as a student to act with integrity is available online at: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu>. Plagiarism and the University's policy on academic integrity can be complicated. You are expected to make an effort to learn about plagiarism and other violations of academic integrity, as well as how to avoid them. Taking the time to do so will help ensure that you do not violate the University's policy.

Please Note: This syllabus is subject to change and students should regularly check the Sakai site for the most recent version. Readings and assignments may be removed, added or modified at the discretion of the instructor.

Tentative Course Schedule and Assigned Readings

Assigned readings are listed below the dates on which they will be discussed. Readings marked with an asterisk "*" will be made available on Sakai or library course reserves.

Introduction

Thursday 9/03

No Reading Assigned

Classical Democracy

Monday 9/7 – NO CLASS

Tuesday 9/8 – CHANGE OF DESIGNATION: MONDAY SCHEDULE

Required

Thucydides, "Funeral Speech of Pericles"*

Aristotle, *The Politics*

Suggested

David Held, *Models of Democracy*: Chapter 1.*

Thursday 9/10

Required

Benjamin Constant, "The Liberty of the Ancients Compared with that of the Moderns"*

Aristotle, *The Politics*

Democratic Revolutions, Part I: The American Revolution

Monday 9/14

Required

Thomas Paine, "Common Sense," in *The Rights of Man and Common Sense (Revolutions)*

Suggested

Peter Linebaugh, "Introduction," in *The Rights of Man and Common Sense (Revolutions)*

Thomas Paine, "The American Crisis No.1"*

Thursday 9/17

Required

John Adams, "A Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal Law"*

Suggested

Thomas Jefferson, "A Summary View of the Rights of British America"*

Democratic Revolutions, Part I: The Tree of Liberty

Monday 9/21

Required

Thomas Jefferson, "The Declaration of Independence." in *The Declaration of Independence (Revolutions)*

—, "Jefferson's draft of the Declaration"

—, "Rebellion Against the Government"

—, "Republicanism and Self-Government"

Michael Hardt, "Introduction to Jefferson on Revolution," in *The Declaration of Independence*

Suggested

Judith Shklar, "Democracy and the Past: Jefferson and His Heirs"*

Thomas Jefferson, "Native Americans and Black Slavery" in *The Declaration of Independence*

Democratic Revolutions, Part I: Democrats, Federalists, and Anti-Federalists

Thursday 9/24

Required

Madison, Hamilton, Jay, *The Federalist Papers* (#1, 10, 39, 40, 49, 51)

Monday 9/28

Required

Philadelphiensis, "The Anti-Federalist Essays of Philadelphiensis" (1787–1788)*

George Mason, "Objections to the Constitution" (1787)*

Brutus, "Brutus VI" (1787)*

—, "Brutus XI" (1788)*

Patrick Henry, Speech: "Virginia Ratifying Convention" (June 5th, 1788)*

Rousseau and The Tensions of Democracy

Thursday 10/01

Required

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*

Monday 10/05

Required

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*

Thursday 10/08

Required

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*

Suggested

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on The Origins and Foundations of Inequality Among Men*

Monday 10/19

*****MIDTERM EXAM*****

Thursday 10/22

*****NO CLASS*****

Democratic Revolutions, Part II: The French Revolution

Monday 10/26

Required

Maximilien Robespierre, “On the Trial of the King,” “On the Principles of Revolutionary Government,” “On the Principles of Political Morality that Should Guide the National Convention in the Domestic Administration of the Republic”*

Thursday 10/29

Required

Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*

National Assembly, “Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen”/”Declaration of Human and Civic Rights”*

Suggested

Di Maistre, *Considerations on the Revolution in France*, chapter one

Monday 11/02

Required

Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*

Thomas Paine, *The Rights of Man*

Liberalism and Representation

Thursday 11/05

Thomas Paine, *The Rights of Man*

Hannah Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation**

Edmund Burke, “Speech to the Electors of Bristol”*

Monday 11/09

Required

J.S. Mill, “Considerations on Representative Government”

Authoritarian Critiques of Democracy

Thursday 11/12

Required

J.S. Mill, “On Liberty”

J.S. Mill, "Considerations on Representative Government"

Monday 11/16

Required

Carl Schmitt, *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy*

Suggested

Ellen Kennedy, "Introduction: Carl Schmitt's *Parlamentarismus* in its Historical Context", in
The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy

Democracy and the State

Thursday 11/19

Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political**

Benito Mussolini, "The Doctrine of Fascism" *

Monday 11/23

Required

Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*

Thursday 11/26 THANKSGIVING RECESS

*****CLASSES DO NOT MEET*****

Monday 11/30

Required

Mikhail Bakunin, *God and the State*

Karl Marx, *On the Jewish Question**

—, *The Civil War in France**

Vladimir Illich Lenin, *The State and Revolution**

Ralph Miliband, *Marxism and Politics**

Thursday 12/03 – Monday 12/07

Conclusion: Democracy and Democratic Thought Today

Required Reading

Chantal Mouffe, *Politics and Passions**

Agamben, "Introductory Note on the Concept of Democracy"*

Brown, " 'We Are All Democrats Now... ' "*

Jacques Rancière, "Democracies Against Democracy"*

Thursday 12/10

Course Conclusion & Review for Final Exam

FINAL EXAM TO BE GIVEN DURING EXAM PERIOD