

CONTEMPORARY DEMOCRATIC THEORY

POLS 268 01 ~ Fall 2017

Instructor Information

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Course Information

Meeting Times: MWF 1:00 PM – 1:52 PM
Location: ACWS 116
Office Hours: Tu/Th 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM
& By Appointment

I. INTRODUCTION

“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-five 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 “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 contemporary theories of democracy and democratic politics. Through a variety readings, written assignments, and in-class discussions we will examine some of the major questions and concepts of modern democracy, and explore key theoretical approaches to 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 reality, and which aim to address some of the fundamental tensions and persistent problems in modern democratic life. We will begin by thinking broadly about the meaning and significance of democracy. We will then spend much of the semester interrogating different contemporary theoretical approaches to (and critics of) democracy, as well as the implications for modern democracy and democratic politics of each approach. The remainder of the semester will be spent examining some of the fundamental concepts of democracy, as well as tensions facing contemporary democratic politics. The goal of this course is for students to gain a deeper understanding of contemporary democratic theory, its significance, its critics, and the fundamental tensions between freedom, equality, and popular sovereignty at the heart of democratic life.

Class Goals

1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of some of the major theories and concepts in political science and the major sub-field of political theory.
2. Students will demonstrate proficiency in thinking systematically about the ethical dimensions of politics.
3. Students will write effectively, engage in intellectually grounded oral debate, and form and express cogent arguments.
4. Students will synthesize, analyze, and critically evaluate major arguments in the discipline.
5. Students will assess original and secondary sources of argumentation and evidence, and apply scholarly findings to new situations.
6. Students will develop intellectual skills for graduate work and employment.

II. COURSE OVERVIEW

Required Materials: The following books will be available for purchase from the university book store and should be acquired in advance. Additional course readings will be made available electronically via the course site and/or on reserve through the library. If there are any questions regarding the use of alternate editions, please contact me.

- Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson. 2004. *Why Deliberative Democracy?* Princeton: Princeton University Press. ISBN: 978-0-691-12019-5
- Chantal Mouffe. 2009. *The Democratic Paradox*. London & New York: Verso. ISBN: 978-1-84467-355-1
- Jan-Werner Muller. 2016. *What is Populism?* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. ISBN: 978-0-8122-4898-2
- Hannah Pitkin. 1972. *The Concept of Representation*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press. ISBN: 978-0-5200-2156-3
- Philip Petit. 2012. *On the People's Terms: A Republican Theory and Model of Democracy*. ISBN: 978-0-521-18212-6

Course Format, Expectations, and Grades: This course will take the form of a directed discussion, combining instructor-led presentations, in-class discussions, in-class group work, and written assignments. Though I will frame the material and lead the discussion, students should bring the assigned reading with them to class and come prepared to talk and ask questions about what they've read. To better prepare for class, you should keep a brief list of questions or comments on each of the readings that you may use during class discussions. Assignments must be completed on time. Late and missing assignments may be penalized.

Assignment	Percentage of Final Grade
Attendance & Participation	10%
Reading Quizzes & Class Work	10%
Review Papers (x 2)	40%
Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	20%

III. COURSE POLICIES AND ADMINISTRATION

Attendance: Students must attend all scheduled course meetings and abide by the university's attendance policies regarding absences. This means that **you must arrive to class on time and stay for the duration. If you have 3 or more unexcused absences, you are at risk of failing this course.**

It is the policy of this course 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. It is the responsibility of the student to provide timely notification about necessary absences for religious observances. Students are also responsible for making up the work or exams according to an agreed-upon schedule. All make up exams must be arranged with me prior to the missed exam.

Participation: This class depends on the active involvement of each student. Your participation is essential to discussing and learning about the subject matter. Participation will be considered when determining your final grade and you will have a variety of ways to earn credit for your participation. Aside from impacting your final grade, active participation and in-class discussion is central to getting the most out of this course for yourself and your peers. It may be a cliché but democracy is not a spectator sport—and neither is this class.

Email, Announcements, and Classroom Technology: You are required to regularly check your Bucknell University student email account and the course site. Failure to regularly check your student email account is not an acceptable excuse. You may contact me with questions and concerns through my email address, noah.eber-schmid@bucknell.edu. 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, tweets, snapchats, status updates, or any communication with your physical, digital, or imaginary social network during class is strictly prohibited. Your phone, computer, or tablet should only be used for taking notes during class or working on in-class assignments. The use of smartphones, tablets, netbooks, laptops, etc. during class is at my discretion. I reserve the right to prohibit the use of technological devices if they prove disruptive or distracting, and to request electronic copies of your notes.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity: All students should be familiar with and abide by the University's policy on academic integrity. Plagiarism and academic integrity can be complicated. You are expected to try 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. Bucknell University is an academic community that assumes personal and professional integrity on the part of all its members. The university's policies and procedures regarding academic responsibility were designed in accordance with our commitment to the five fundamental values that define academic integrity according to Duke University's Center for Academic Integrity: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. These values are inscribed in the Bucknell University Honor Code, which was adopted in spring of

2005. Supporting these values in word and deed is the responsibility of each member of the community and alleged acts of academic misconduct should be taken seriously and dealt with according to the university's policy.

<http://www.bucknell.edu/AcademicResponsibility.xml>

Bucknell University Honor Code.

As a student and citizen of the Bucknell University community:

1. I will not lie, cheat, or steal in my academic endeavors.
2. I will forthrightly oppose each and every instance of academic dishonesty.
3. I will let my conscience guide my decision to communicate directly with any person or persons I believe to have been dishonest in academic work.
4. I will let my conscience guide my decision on reporting breaches of academic integrity to the appropriate faculty or deans.

Office Hours: I will be holding regular office hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:00 PM to 2:30 PM. If you would like to attend office hours but are unable to do so at the regularly scheduled time, please email me to make alternative arrangements. I am happy to answer any questions you may have during the semester and always enjoy the opportunity to discuss your thoughts on the material we'll be covering.

Students with Disabilities: Any student who needs an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact Heather Fowler, Director of the Office of Accessibility Resources at hf007@bucknell.edu, 570-577-1188 or in room 212, Carnegie Building who will coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Please Note: This syllabus is subject to change and students should regularly check the course site for the most recent version. Readings and assignments may be removed, added or modified at my discretion. All major changes will be announced in class and through the course site. Readings marked with an asterisk* will be made available through the library or course site.

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE

Part One: Introduction

Weeks 1-2 | What is democracy? Democracy, the Demos, and Democratic Politics

Monday 8/21

No reading assigned

Wednesday 8/23

Claude Lefort. 1988. "The Question of Democracy." In *Democracy and Political Theory*: 9-20. *

Giorgio Agamben. 2012. "Introductory Note on the Concept of Democracy." In *Democracy in What State*: 1-5. *

Wendy Brown. 2012. "' We Are All Democrats Now...'" In *Democracy in What State*: 44-57. *

Friday 8/25

Sheldon Wolin. 1994. "Fugitive Democracy." *Constellations* 1.1: 11-25. *

Monday 8/28

Sheldon Wolin. 1981. "The People's Two Bodies." *Democracy* 1.1: 9-24. *

Wednesday 8/30 – Friday 9/1 – NO CLASS

Part Two: Approaches in Contemporary Democratic Theory

Week 3 | Competitive Elitist Democracy

Monday 9/4

David Held. 2006. "Competitive Elitism and the Technocratic Vision." In *Models of Democracy*: 125-157 *

Joseph A. Schumpeter. 2003. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*: 269-283. *

Weeks 3-4 | Liberal Democracy

Wednesday 9/6

John Rawls. 1985. "Justice as Fairness: Political Not Metaphysical." *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 14.3: 223-251. *

John Rawls. 2001. *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*: selections TBA *

Friday 9/8

Sheldon Wolin. 1996. "The Liberal/Democratic Divide: On Rawls's Political Liberalism." *Political Theory* 24.1: 97-119. *

Monday 9/11 – Wednesday 9/13

Carl Schmitt. 1988. *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy*: 1-51 *

Friday 9/15

Chantal Mouffe. "Carl Schmitt and the Paradox of Liberal Democracy." In *The Democratic Paradox*: 36-59. *

Weeks 5-7 | Deliberative Democracy

Monday 9/18 – Monday 9/25

Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson. 2004. *Why Deliberative Democracy*:

- Chapter 1: 1-63
- Chapter 2: 64-94

- Chapter 4: 125-138
- Chapter 5: 139-159

Monday 9/25

Jürgen Habermas. 1994. "Three Normative Models of Democracy." *Constellations* 1.1: 1-10. *

Wednesday 9/27

Joshua Cohen. 1997. "Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy." In *Deliberative Democracy*: 67-92. *

Friday 9/29

Cheryl Hall. 2007. "Recognizing the Passion in Deliberation." *Hypatia* 22.4: 81-95. *

Monday 10/2

Lynn M. Sanders. 1997. "Against Deliberation." *Political Theory* 25.3: 347-376. *

Week 7-8 | Participatory Democracy

Wednesday 10/4 – Friday 10/6

Carole Pateman. 1970. *Participation and Democratic Theory*:

- Chapter II: 22-44 *
- Chapter IV: 67-84 *

Monday 10/9 – NO CLASS – FALL BREAK

Wednesday 10/11

Carole Pateman. 2012. "Participatory Democracy Revisited." *Perspectives on Politics* 10.1: 7-19 *

Friday 10/13 – NO CLASS

Weeks 9-10 | Agonal Democracy

Monday 10/16 – IN-CLASS MIDTERM EXAM

Wednesday 10/18 – Monday 10/23

Chantal Mouffe. 2009. *The Democratic Paradox*:

- Chapter 1: 17-35
- Chapter 4: 80-107
- Chapter 5: 108-128
- Conclusion: 129-140

Weeks 10-11 | Neo-Republican Democracy

Wednesday 10/25 – Monday 10/30

Philip Pettit. 2012 *On the People's Terms: A Republican Theory and Model of Democracy*:

- Introduction: 1-25
- Chapter 1: 26-74
- Chapter 2: 75-129
- Chapter 3: 130-186

Wednesday 11/1

Frank Lovett and Philip Pettit. 2009. "Neorepublicanism: A Normative and Institutional Research Program." *Annual Review of Political Science* 12: 11-29. *

Patchen Markell, "The Insufficiency of Non-Domination," *Political Theory* 36.1 (2008): 9-36. *

Part Three: Ideas & Issues in Contemporary Democratic Theory

Weeks 11-12 | Representation

Friday 11/3

Nadia Urbaniti. 2006. "Representation and Democracy." In *Representative Democracy: Principles & Genealogy*: 17-59. *

Monday 11/6 – Friday 11/17

Hannah Pitkin. 1972. *The Concept of Representation*:

- Chapter 1
- Chapter 3
- Chapter 4
- Chapter 5
- Chapter 6
- Chapter 7
- Chapter 10

Edmund Burke. 1774. "Speech to the Electors of Bristol." *

Week 14 | Monday 11/20 – Friday 11/24 – NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 15 | Populism

Monday 11/27 – Wednesday 11/29

Jan Werner-Muller. 2016. *What is Populism?*

Part Four: Conclusion

Weeks 15-16 | Does Democracy Mean Something?

Friday 12/1 – Monday 12/4

Jacques Rancière. 2012. "Democracies Against Democracy." In *Democracy in What State*: 76-81. *

Jacques Rancière. 2010. "Does Democracy Mean Something?" In *Dissensus*: 45-61. *

Final Exam, Date and Time TBA

Grading rubric for all written work submitted in this course

	A	B	C	D/F
Argument/Analysis	Makes clear and compelling argument. Solid reasoning. Offers insightful analysis	Makes clear argument, based on plausible readings. Some effort to sustain argument throughout the analysis.	Attempts to offer a cogent argument and analysis, but argument and analysis are based on faulty reasoning.	Failure to make a cogent argument or to offer sound analysis.
Writing/Grammar	Well-written. Appropriate word choices. Free of grammar and spelling mistakes.	Well-written, but may include a handful of grammar, spelling, or word choice mistakes.	Multiple errors, but still clearly intelligible.	Multiple errors that interfere substantially with comprehension.
Organization/Structure	Clear, easy to follow organization with intro, body, conclusion. Provides reader with a “road map” of essay.	Clear organization with some road map for reader.	Some effort to structure the paper, but organization is problematic or difficult to follow.	Disorganized and difficult or impossible to follow.
Use/mastery of readings	Uses multiple readings and demonstrates mastery of facts and arguments made in readings.	References multiple readings and demonstrates a good degree of understanding.	Minimal use of readings and/or failure to demonstrate adequate mastery of readings.	Failure to use readings