

PT121 Theories of Liberal Democracy

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Course Description

It is considered to be self-evident that we live in a democratic age: political regimes and societies of all different kinds describe themselves as liberal democracies. But what is a liberal democracy and how should we understand the ideas of freedom and equality on which it is based? To answer this question, this course will offer an introduction to central accounts of democracy from the ancient Greeks to the present time. It is structured in three parts: first, we will trace the evolution of the idea of democracy and uncover those intellectual traditions that have shaped our contemporary understanding of it. One of our findings will be that democracies are fragile forms of government and that a commitment to democracy is a very recent phenomenon. Therefore, the second part of the course will be devoted to grasping the challenges faced by the democratic order today. These challenges can be generated by tensions within democracies themselves (e.g. populism), or they can come from outside, in the shape of forces unleashed by globalization. In the final part, we will discuss how such pressures can be addressed in light of our discoveries concerning the origins of liberal democracy.

Requirements

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity and intellectual engagements in their academic work. Instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section III Academic Misconduct.

Attendance

Attendance at ALL classes is expected. More than two absences (that is absences from two sessions of 90 minutes) in a semester will significantly affect the participation grade for the course. Please consult the Student Handbook for regulations governing periods of illness or leaves of absence.

Assessment

Students are expected to do the readings, participate in discussions, give one class presentation (15 min) and complete two written assignments. The mid-term paper will be due 8 March 2019 and the final paper will be due 17 May 2019. Dates for the class presentations will be determined in the first session. In the class presentation, students are invited to expose the main thesis of the text and formulate an own position or question in order to stimulate the general discussion. Student performance will be evaluated on the basis of four components: *Participation*, *presentation*, *midterm essay* and *final essay*.

Writing Assignments

Students are required to write a mid-term essay of 2000 words based on given questions. Students are also required to write a final essay of 3000 words based on a question of their own choice. Final essays

should be conceived as a critical discussion of the texts in relation to other readings and approaches and can be based on the topic of your presentation. The topics of the final essay will have to be discussed with me in advance.

Policy on Late Submission of Papers

Essays that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. Where an instructor agrees to accept a late essay, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline and cannot receive a grade of higher than C. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment.

Grade Breakdown

Final Essay: 40%

Mid-Term Essay: 20%

Presentation: 20%

Participation: 20%

Readings

Students don't have to purchase any book for this class. Texts will be provided electronically via Google Classroom. A collection of books will be placed on the reserve shelf at the BCB library.

Schedule

1. Introduction – 01. February

Part 1: Tracing the origins of democracy

2. Classical Democracy: Aristotle – 08 February

- Reading: Aristotle, 1960 {345-325 B.C.}: Politics. Edited by Ernest Baker. Oxford: Clarendon Press. Book I, Ch. 1 and 2, Book III, Ch. 1-10, Book IV, Ch. 1-13.

3. Renaissance Republicanism: Machiavelli – 15 February

- Machiavelli, Niccolò, 2014 {1513}: The Prince. New York: Open Road Media. Chapter 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 21.
- Machiavelli, Niccolò, 1989 {1513-1519}: Discourses on the first decade of Titus Livius. In: Gilbert, Allen (ed.): Machiavelli: The Chief Works and Others. Volume I. Durham / London: Duke University Press, Ch. 2, 55, 57, 58, 59.

4. Social Contract Theory: Thomas Hobbes – 22 February

- Hobbes, Thomas, 1991 {1651}: Leviathan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Ch. 13-18, 21.

5. The Liberal Tradition: John Locke – 01 March

- Locke, John, 1950 {1689}: Two Treatises of Government. Edited by Peter Laslett. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Second Treatise, Ch. 2-3, 5, 8-9.
- 6. The Republic and the volonté générale: Jean-Jacques Rousseau – 08 March
 - Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, 2002 {1762}: The Social Contract. In: Dunn, Susan (ed.): Rousseau: The Social Contract and the First and Second Discourses. New Heaven: Yale University Press. Introduction, Book I, Ch. 1-8; Book II, Ch. 1-11; Book III, Ch. 1, 4, 11, 12, 15.
 - **MIDTERM PAPERS ARE DUE IN CLASS!**
- 7. Representative Democracy: The Federalist Papers – 15 March
 - Hamilton, Alexander / James Madison / John Jay, 2009 {1787/88}: The Federalist Papers. Edited by Ian Shapiro. New Heaven: Yale University Press. Articles 1-14.
- 8. Ambivalences of Modern Democracy: Alexis de Tocqueville – 22 March
 - Tocqueville, Alexis de, 1969 {1835}: Democracy in America. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books. Introduction; Volume I, Part II, Ch. 7, 8, 9; Volume II, Part II, Ch. 1-6, Part IV, Ch. 6-7.

Part 2: Democracy in the 20th century

- 9. Minimalist Democracy: Joseph Schumpeter – 29 March
 - Schumpeter, Joseph, 2010 {1943}: Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy. London / New York: Routledge, Part IV.
- 10. Democracy and Pluralism: John Rawls – 05 April
 - Rawls, John, 1985: Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical. In: Philosophy and Public Affairs, Vol. 14, No. 3, pp. 223-251.
 - Rawls, John, 2005: Political Liberalism. Expanded Edition. New York: Columbia University Press, Lecture VI.
- 11. Deliberative Democracy: Jürgen Habermas – 12 April
 - Habermas, Jürgen, 1994: Three Normative Models of Democracy. In: Constellations, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 1-10.
 - Habermas, Jürgen, 1995: On the Internal Relation between the Rule of Law and Democracy. In: European Journal of Philosophy, Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 12-20.

19 April – No class: Spring Break

12. Feminist Perspectives on Democracy and Liberalism – 26 April

- Pateman, Carole, 1988: The Sexual Contract. Stanford: Stanford University Press, Chapters 1 and 3.

Part 3: Challenges of democracy today

13. Democracy and Populism – 03 May

- Müller, Jan-Werner, 2016: What is Populism? London: Penguin.

14. Democracy and Migration – 10 May

- Abizadeh, Arash, 2008: Democratic Theory and Border Coercion. No right to unilaterally control your own borders. In: Political Theory, Vol. 36, No. 1, pp. 37-65.
- Miller, David, 2010: Why Immigration Controls Are Not Coercive. A reply to Arash Abizadeh. In: Political Theory, Vol. 38, No. 1, p. 111-120.

15. Conclusion – 17 May

- **FINAL PAPERS ARE DUE IN CLASS**