

PT319 Tocqueville's Democracy in America

Wed, Fri 14-15:30, SR

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Office Hours: Wednesday 15:30-16:30 and by appointment

Course Description

In this seminar we will read and discuss Alexis de Tocqueville's classic study of American democracy. Born in the wake of the French revolution in an old family that traced its roots back to the 13th century, Tocqueville understood the aristocratic world to which his family belonged to be over, and another world to be rising. *Democracy in America* is a comprehensive account of this modern democratic world - of its political and social principles, and their intellectual, moral, and psychological ramifications - as seen through the eyes of a sympathetic and critical observer. It helps us understand modern society by comparing it to the social formation and vision of the world it came to replace, and by drawing on a wide range of methodological approaches. Equally important for the development of democratic theory and of social science, the book is a literary masterpiece that instructs its readers by mobilizing their imagination.

Engaging critically with Tocqueville's work, we shall focus on its neglected dimensions, including the enduring significance of colonial legacies and the tensions to which they give rise; the conditions for popular self-government and its limitations; the importance of identity for the ongoing construction of a democratic polity; the relationship between race, religion, nationhood and democracy; and the patterns of thought and feeling that bolster liberal institutions and participatory practices. We will also consider how Tocqueville's work laid the foundation for modern social science, and can be used as a lens through which to view the prospects of democracy in a globalizing and interdependent world.

Required Texts

* Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (University of Chicago Press, 2000), ISBN 9780226805368

* Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (Indiana: Liberty Fund 2014), ISBN 978-0865978409; 4 vol. bilingual edition

Library and Book Purchase Policies

Students are expected to have at their disposal a hard copy of all required texts. Copies of the required books and additional readings are available on reserve at the library.

Requirements

Attendance and Participation

Careful preparation, regular attendance and active participation are essential to the success of this course. Please note: coming late or leaving in the middle of the sessions will count as absence. Absences beyond two reduce your seminar grade.

As part of the course participation, students will take turns to write up protocols of the proceedings in each session, and present these at the beginning of the following session. A 'protocol' is a concise (500-750 word) account of the seminar discussion that recapitulates its main issues, and engages with a key question raised in the discussion.

Writing

Response paper and presentation: over the course of the semester, each student is expected to write a response paper (750-1000 words) that analyses a particular theme or claim advanced in the readings for a given session, and articulates questions for discussion. The paper would serve as the basis of a 10-minute class presentation. The response papers should be circulated online by midnight on the day before the class meets.

Project Proposal and Final Essay: at the end of the semester students will write a substantial **final essay** of up to 3000 words on one aspect of the course reading. To identify the topic of the final essay students are expected to conduct individual research and submit, by Sunday, April 26, a **proposal** (500-words) for the final essay topic to be discussed with the instructor. The deadline for the final essay is May 15, 2020.

Assessment

Assessment will be based on seminar participation including protocol writing and presentation (30%); response paper and presentation (20%); a final project proposal (15%) and final essay (35%).

Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin maintains the staunchest regard for academic integrity and expects good academic practice from students in their studies. Syllabi should note that, instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section 14.3 (Academic Misconduct) in the Student Handbook.

Policy on Late Submission of Papers

Please note the following policy the Student Handbook on the submission of essays: 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.

Deadlines at a glance

The schedule for protocol writing and the response papers will be set up by Friday, January 31

Proposal for final essay: Sunday, **April 26**

Final Essay deadline: Friday, **May 15**

Schedule

week	Date	Wed, 2-3:30 pm	Fri, 2-3:30 pm	special events
1	Jan 27-31	DA Author's Introduction	DA Author's Introduction, vol. 1, part 1, ch. 1	
2	Feb 3-7	DA vol. 1, part 1, chs. 2-4	DA vol. 1, part 1, ch. 5	
3	Feb 10-14	DA vol. 1, part 1, ch. 5	DA vol. 1, part 1, chs. 6-8	
4	Feb 17-21	DA vol. 1, part 1, ch. 8	DA vol. 1, part 2, chs. 1-4	
5	Feb 24-28	DA vol. 1, part 2, chs. 5	DA vol. 1, part 2, chs. 6	
6	Mar 2-6	DA vol. 1, part 2, ch. 7-8	DA vol. 1, part 2, ch. 9	
7	Mar 9-13	DA vol. 1, part 2, ch. 10	DA vol. 1, part 2, ch. 10 + Conclusion	
8	Mar 16-20	DA vol. 2, part 1, chs. 1-6	DA vol. 2, part 1, chs. 7-14	
9	Mar 23-27	DA vol. 2, part 1, chs. 15-21	DA vol. 2, part 2, chs. 1-5	
10	Mar 30-Apr 3	DA vol. 2, part 2, chs. 6-12	DA vol. 2, part 2, chs. 13-20	
	Apr 6-10	SPRING BREAK		
11	Apr 13-17	DA vol. 2, part 3, chs. 1-4	DA vol. 2, part 3, chs. 5-10	
12	Apr 20-24	DA vol. 2, part 3, chs. 11-17	DA vol. 2, part 3, chs. 18-26	
13	Apr 27-May 1	DA vol. 2, part 4, chs. 1-4	Federal Holiday	
14	May 4-8	DA vol. 2, part 4, chs. 5-8	Federal Holiday	
Final essays due Friday, May 15				