

PT122 Democracy in Theory and Practice

Seminar Leader: Riaz P Khan

Email: rpkhan@berlin.bard.edu

Office Hours: Mon & Wed 4:00-5:00 pm and by appointment

Course Description

This course offers an introduction to the histories, theories, and practices of democracy. The main aim of the course is to provide students with a broad yet systematic overview of the complex discourses and practices of democracy in the past, and their contested legacies in contemporary societies. In Part One, the course begins with a conceptual overview of Athenian democracy and Roman republicanism, and the legacies of liberal democratic and revolutionary traditions. Part Two comprises the bulk of the course: here, we will focus on a range of democratic theories of political participation, representation, pluralism, and deliberation. Our inquiry will be guided by such questions as: Who are the “people” as bearers of sovereignty, and when, where, and how do they express their will? Does representation lead to a “tyranny of the majority?” How do representative structures account for dissenting and diverse voices marked by gender, racial, and class distinctions? Can deliberative principles and procedures produce legitimacy in a pluralist society? In Part Three, students explore these themes by focusing on one of the following historical contexts and challenges of democratic consolidation: (1) Post-Civil War reconstruction in America, (2) legal and political crises in Weimar Republic, and (3) contemporary challenges of democratization and democracy promotion in a global context.

Course Requirements

Students are expected to do the readings, attend all sessions, participate in discussions, and complete all written assignments. Student performance will be evaluated on the basis of three components: *class participation*, *readings*, and *writing assignments*. Each component is described below:

(1) **Participation** in discussions constitutes an important component of course activities, and makes up a significant portion of student grades. You will have the opportunity to further explore the course readings and topics, seek clarifications, express your views, and engage in peer discussions.

(2) The course is **reading-intensive**. Students will demonstrate familiarity with the readings by means of (a) **two written comments (or questions) on weekly readings, due at the start of lecture**, (b) **In-class presentations** on the readings, and (c) **small-group discussions**.

(3) The course is also **writing-intensive**. Students will write two essays (2,500-3,000 words each) on selected topics, due at the mid-point and end of the semester, respectively. Please arrange to meet with me at the earliest opportunity to discuss your research interests and writing assignments. You are encouraged to avail yourselves of the tutorial services at the Learning Center for assistance with your essays writing.

Course Texts

Students should purchase the following texts:

Course Reader.

Larry Diamond & Marc Plattner (eds.), *Democracy: A Reader*, Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2009.

Steven Levitsky & Daniel Ziblatt, *How Democracies Die*, Penguin Random House, 2018.

Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin maintains the highest standards of academic integrity and expects students to adhere to these standards at all times. 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.

Attendance

Attendance at all classes is a crucial part of the education offered by Bard College Berlin. A maximum of two excused absences during the semester may be granted to account for minor circumstances. Further absences are granted under exceptional circumstances, and require supporting documentation. No unexcused absences are permitted. Unexcused absences will adversely affect participation grade in the course. In case of authorized absences, students are responsible for making up any missed work.

Bard College Berlin does not offer credit for any course in which a student has missed more than 30% of classes, regardless of the reasons for the absences. The full Bard College Berlin attendance policy can be found in the Student Handbook, Section 2.8.

Assessment Components and Dates

Student performance and final grades are evaluated on the basis of timely and satisfactory completion of all course requirements. The main components of assessments are listed below:

Weekly Reflections: Due at the beginning of each class session;
Student Presentation: Individual presentation dates will be determined during the first week.
Mid-Term Essay (2,000-2,500 words): **DUE on April 10, 2022.**
Final Term Essay (3,500-4,500 words): **DUE on May 20, 2022.**

Policy on Late Submission of Papers

Late submission of essays are accepted only in exceptional circumstances. However, late essays must be submitted within a maximum of four weeks in order to receive a passing grade in the course. Please note that essays submitted 24 hours after the deadline may be downgraded up to one full grade (e.g., B+ to C+).

Individual Meetings with Course Instructor

All students are required to meet with me *at least twice* during the course of the semester. The initial meeting should take place within the first 2-3 weeks, and the second meeting after mid-term papers are returned. Students are encouraged to set up additional meetings with during the semester.

Grade Breakdown

Overall performance and final grades will be evaluated on the basis of the following components:

- (1) **Attendance and Participation:** 20%
- (2) **Weekly Written Comments and In-class Presentation:** 20%
- (3) **Mid-Term Essay:** 20%

* The “background readings” are optional except for students presenting or writing on the specific topic.

(4) **Final Term Paper:** 40%

* The “background readings” are optional except for students presenting or writing on the specific topic.

**PT122: Democracy in Theory and Practice
Schedule of Topics and Readings**

INTRODUCTIONS

Monday (Jan 31) Introduction to Topics and Readings

Wednesday (Feb 2) What is Democracy?

Required Readings

J-J. Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, Books II, III (Chapters 1, 4, 15), IV (Chapters 1-2).

Optional Readings

J-J. Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, Book I (Chapters 1, 5-8).

CLASSICAL ANTECEDENTS

Monday (Feb 7) Athenian Democracy

B. Manin, "Direct Democracy and Representation: Selection of Officials in Athens," in *The Principles of Representative Government*, Chapter 2, 8-41.

Background Readings*

M. H. Hansen, *Athenian Democracy in the Age of Demosthenes*, Chapters 2 -4.

Wednesday (Feb 9) Roman Republicanism

Required Readings

B. Straumann, "Constitutional Thought in the Late Roman Republic," *History of Political Thought*, 32 (2), 2001, 280-292.

Background Readings*

A. Lintott, *The Constitution of the Roman Republic*, Chapters I, IV.

REVOLUTIONARY TRADITIONS

Monday (Feb 14) Revolutions and the Politics of Freedom

Required Readings

H. Arendt, "The Meaning of Revolution," in *On Revolution*, 21-58

H. Arendt, "The Disclosure of the Agent in Speech and Action," in *The Human Condition*, 175-181.

Wednesday (Feb 16) Revolutions and Democracy

Required Readings

S. Wolin, "Norm and Form: The Constitutionalizing of Democracy," in J. Peter Euben et al (eds.), *Athenian Political Thought and the Reconstitution of American Democracy*, 29-58.

P. Markell, "The Rule of the People: Arendt, Archê, and Freedom," *The American Political Science Review*, 100 (1), Feb. 2006, 1-14.

* The "background readings" are optional except for students presenting or writing on the specific topic.

CONSTITUTIONS, NATIONS, AND DEMOCRACY

Monday (Feb 21) **Constitutions and Democracy**

Required Readings

C. Sunstein, "Constitutions and Democracies: An Epilogue," in J. Elster & R. Slagstad (eds.), *Constitutionalism and Democracy*, 327-355.

Wednesday (Feb 23) **Nations and Democracy**

Required Readings

J. Habermas, "On the Relation between the Nation, the Rule of Law, and Democracy," in *The Inclusion of the Other*, 129-153.

REPRESENTATION AND DEMOCRACY

Monday (Feb 28) **The Concept of Representation**

Required Readings

H. Pitkin, "Introduction" and "The Mandate-Independence Controversy," in *The Concept of Representation*, 1-13, 144-167.

Wednesday (Mar 2) **Representation and Democracy**

Required Readings

Joseph Schumpeter, "The Classical Doctrine of Democracy" & "Another Theory of Democracy," in *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, 250-283.

REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT

Monday (Mar 7) **Representative Government**

Required Readings

B. Manin, "The Verdict of the People" in *The Principles of Representative Democracy*, 161-192.

Wednesday (Mar 9) **Representation and Democracy**

Required Readings

A. Przeworski, "Consensus, Conflict, and Compromise in Western Thought on Representative Government," *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences* 2, 2010, 7043-7055.

MOBILIZATION, PARTICIPATION, AND DEMOCRACY

Monday (Mar 14) **Participatory Democracy**

C. Pateman, "Classical Theories of Democracy," in *Participation and Democratic Theory*, 1-21.

Wednesday (Mar 16) **Participation and Mobilization**

C. Pateman, "Rousseau, John Stuart Mill, and G. D. H. Cole: A Participatory Theory of Democracy," in *Participation and Democratic Theory*, 21-43.

* The "background readings" are optional except for students presenting or writing on the specific topic.

M. A. Kadivar, "Mass Mobilization and Durability of New Democracies," *American Sociological Review*, 83 (2), 2018, 390-417.

DELIBERATION AND DEMOCRACY

Monday (Mar 21) Models of Deliberation

S. Benhabib, "Toward a Deliberative Model of Democratic Legitimacy," in *Democracy and Difference*, 67-94.

J. Habermas, "Three Normative Models of Democracy," in *Democracy and Difference*, 21-30.

Wednesday (Mar 23) Deliberation and Legitimacy

J. Cohen, "Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy," in J. Bohman & W. Rehg (eds.), *Deliberative Democracy*, 67-91.

B. Manin, "On Legitimacy and Political Deliberation," 338-344; 351-355.

CRITIQUES OF DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY

Monday (Mar 28) Limits of Discussion

Required Readings

C. Schmitt, *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy*, 22-50.

C. Larmore, "Carl Schmitt's Critique of Liberal Democracy," *The Morals of Modernity*, 175-88.

Wednesday (Mar 30) Deliberation and the Other

I. M. Young, "Communication and the Other: Beyond Deliberative Democracy," in *Democracy and Difference*, 120-35;

J. Sass & J. S. Dryzek, "Deliberative Cultures," *Political Theory*, 42 (1), 2014, 3-25.

THEORIES OF DICTATORSHIP

Monday (Apr 4) Commissarial Dictatorship

Required Readings

N. Machiavelli, *The Discourses*, 193-196.

C. Schmitt, *Dictatorship*, 1-19.

J-J. Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, Book IV, Chapter 6.

Wednesday (Apr 6) Sovereign Dictatorship

C. Schmitt, *Political Theology*, 5-14.

J. Ferejohn & P. Pasquino, "The Law of Exception: A Typology of Emergency Powers," *I.CON*, 2004 (2), 210-239.

MIDTERM ESSAY DUE ON APRIL 10, 2022

SPRING BREAK (April 11 – April 18)

* The "background readings" are optional except for students presenting or writing on the specific topic.

RECONSTRUCTION & DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA

Wednesday (Apr 20) Reconstruction: Historical Background

W.E.B. Dubois, *Black Reconstruction in America*, 3-16.

E. Foner, "The Strange Career of the Reconstruction Amendments," *The Yale Law Journal*, 108 (8), 1999, 2003-2009.

E. Foner, "Rights and the Constitution of Black Life during the Civil War and Reconstruction," *The Journal of American History*, 74 (3), 863-883.

Background Readings*

E. Foner, *A Short History of Reconstruction*, selected pages.

Monday (Apr 25) Reconstruction and Constitution

M. L. Benedict, "Constitutional History and Constitutional Theory: Reflections on Ackerman, Reconstruction, and the Transformation of the American Constitution," *Yale Law Journal*, 108 (8), 1999, 2011-2038.

E. Foner, "The Supreme Court and the History of Reconstruction – and Vice Versa," *Columbia Law Journal*, 112 (7), 2012, 1585-1606.

LEGAL AND POLITICAL CRISES IN WEIMAR REPUBLIC

Wednesday (Apr 27) Weimar Republic: Historical Background

Required Readings

A. Jacobson & B. Schlink, *Weimar: A Crisis of Jurisprudence*, Essays by Jellinek (54-57), Kelsen (84-105), Anschütz (132-150), Heller (256-264)

Background Readings*

E. Weitz, *Weimar Germany: Promise and Tragedy*, Chapters 3-5.

Monday (May 2) Crises of Law and Democracy

Required Readings

P. Caldwell, *Popular Sovereignty and the Crisis of German Constitutional Law: The Theory and Practice of Weimar Constitutionalism*, 1-12, 63-118, 171-177.

CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES OF DEMOCRACY

Wednesday (May 4) Democratization and Electoral Model

Required readings

L. Diamond & M. Plattner (eds.), *Democracy: A Reader*, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 7, & 16.

Background Readings*

S. Levitsky & D. Ziblatt, *How Democracies Die*, Penguin Random House, 2018.

* The "background readings" are optional except for students presenting or writing on the specific topic.

Monday (May 9) Critics of Voting-Centric Models

Required Readings

C. Hobson, "Liberal Democracy and Beyond: Extending the Sequencing Debate," *International Political Science Review*, 33 (4), 2012, 441-454.

M. Kurki. "Democracy and Conceptual Contestability: Reconsidering Conceptions of Democracy in Democracy Promotion," *International Studies Review*, 12 (3), 2010, 362-386.

Wednesday (May 11) Democracy and Democratization

Required Readings

J. Dryzek, "Democratization as Deliberative Capacity Building," *Comparative Political Studies*, 42 (11), 2009, 1379-1402.

R. P. Khan, "Taking Exception to Norm: The Caretaker Governments of Bangladesh."

COMPLETION WEEK (MAY 16 – MAY 20)

FINAL TERM PAPER DUE: MAY 20, 2022

* The "background readings" are optional except for students presenting or writing on the specific topic.