

Andrew Abbott
SSRB 313
702-4545
a-abbott@uchicago.edu

Intern: Zack Kertcher

What role should the social scientist play in a democracy? Should social scientists outline the facts and consequences of choices? Should social scientists adhere to the broad goals and values of the citizenry, or perhaps just a voting majority? Or should social scientists adopt a more active role as technocratic supervisors?

To the end of exploring these questions, this first quarter will begin by reading John Dewey's *The Public and Its Problems*, a work of political pragmatism which sets out to first identify what we mean by "democracy" and "the public," and to then consider how scientific elites might assist in remedying "the problems" of the public.

We will then turn to discussion of some of the basic methods that social scientists aim to contribute to a better understanding of democracy. We begin with the *deductive* approach common among economists (as well as some political scientists, sociologists, and anthropologists): start from a set of axiomatic assumptions about the nature of a democracy and deduce logical propositions that then follow. One of the most famous cross-disciplinary applications of the deductive approach is Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, and we will make extensive use of this volume.

We next turn to an *inductive* approach, exemplified by a great deal of empirical research in sociology, economics, political science, and other social sciences. The general idea is to begin with a set of observable empirical facts and attempt to infer regularities among these facts. We will use a combination of chapters drawn from a journalistic study, *An American Pharaoh*, about the first Mayor Daley, and appropriate illustrations of empirical approaches to similar problems as raised by the chapters of the book.

We finish the course with an *ethnographic* approach, exemplified here by Jonathan Rieder's *Canarsie*, an intense observational study of the transformation of a particular neighborhood in Brooklyn from one with a largely liberal culture into one with a pro-Republican culture.

There are four required books:

- John Dewey. 1954. *The Public and Its Problems*. Chicago: Swallow Press.
- Anthony Downs. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Adam Cohen and Elizabeth Taylor. 2000. *An American Pharaoh*. New York: Little Brown and Company.
- Jonathan Rieder. 1985. *Canarsie: The Jews and Italians of Brooklyn against Liberalism*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Your assignments for this course will be a paper, completed in stages, a midterm exam, and a final exam. For your paper, we ask you to identify a recurring problem faced by democracy (in your discussion of Dewey), and then to discuss how each of the three approaches (deductive, inductive, ethnographic) would set out to systematically study the problem you propose in the first part. In your conclusion, you should make a case for which one of the methods is best suited to this problem, explaining why. You should plan to re-write your paper as you go along: Unidrafts will not earn high grades. We will discuss details about the midterm and final as we proceed.

COURSE SCHEDULE

September 26 Introduction

September 28 *What is “the public?” What is the “state?”*

- Dewey, Ch. 1, 2

October 3 *What is a “democratic” state? Where has the public gone?*

- Dewey, Ch. 3, 4

October 5 *Where is the “Great Community?”*

- Dewey, Ch 5

DRAFT #1 (DEWEY) DUE NO LATER THAN OCTOBER 10

October 10 *The logic of deductive approaches; the logic of voting*

- Milton Friedman. 1953. “The Methodology of Positive Economics” in *Essays in Positive Economics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Downs, Ch. 1-3.

October 12 *Voting cycles*

- Marquis Jean-Antoine-Nicolas de Caritat de Condorcet, 1788. “On the Constitution and Function of Provincial Assemblies, 1788” in Iain McLean and Arnold Urken (eds) 1995. *Classics of Social Choice*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Jonathan Levin and Barry Nalebuff, “An Introduction to Vote Counting Schemes” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* Winter 1995: 3-26.

- October 17 *Ideologies*
- Downs, Ch. 5, 7
 - Karl Mannheim, 1929. *Ideology and Utopia*, Ch 2. San Diego: Harvest Press.
- October 19 *Spatial models*
- Downs, Ch 8
 - Thomas Schelling, 1978. *Micromotives and Macrobehavior*, Ch. 4. New York: W.W. Norton.
- October 24 *Information*
- Downs, Ch. 11, 12.
 - Micheal X. Delli Carpini and Scott Keeter, 1996. Ch. 2 in *What Americans Know About Politics and Why it Matters*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- October 26 *Rational abstention*
- Downs, Ch. 14.
 - John Aldrich. 1993. "Rational Choice and Turnout," *American Journal of Political Science*, 37(1):246-278.
 - J. Eric Oliver and Raymond E. Wolfinger. 1999. "Jury Aversion and Voter Registration," *American Journal of Political Science*, 93(1):147-152.
- October 31 **MIDTERM**
- DRAFT #2 (DEDUCTIVE METHODS) DUE NO LATER THAN NOVEMBER 2**
- November 2 *Rise to Power (Political Machines in Chicago)*
- Cohen and Taylor, Ch 1,2
 - Harold Gosnell, 1937. Ch, 5 in *Machine Politics: Chicago Model*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press
- November 7 *Political Control*
- Cohen and Taylor, Ch. 4
 - Ronald N. Johnson and Gary D. Libecap, 1994. *The Federal Civil Service System and the Problem of Bureaucracy*, Ch. 3. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- November 9 *Crushing the Civil Rights Movement with Cooperation*
Crushing the Anti-War Movement by Force
- Cohen and Taylor, Ch. 9, 13
 - Donald R. Kinder and Lynn M. Sanders, 1996. Ch 5. In *Divided by Color*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
 - Sidney Verba, Kay Schlozman and Henry Brady, 1995. “Beyond SES: A Resource Model of Political Participation,” *American Political Science Review* 89(2):271-294.

DRAFT #3 (INDUCTIVE METHODS) DUE NO LATER THAN NOVEMBER 14

- November 14 *Institutions as a Bridge?*
- Publius. 1787. Federalist #10, 39, and 51 in Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Jay. 1961 *The Federalist Papers* New York: Signet.

- November 16 *Early ethnography: Groups in America*
- Alexis de Tocqueville, Volume One, Part II, Ch. 4., “Political Association in America” in Tocqueville (translated by George Lawrence, edited by J.P. Mayer) 1969. *Democracy in America* New York: Harper and Row Publishers Inc.
 - Frederick Law Olmsted, *A Journey in the Back Country*, Chs. 3 and 6 (Schocken edition).

- November 21 *Canarsie (Then)*
- Rieder, Ch. 1-4

- November 28 *Canarsie (Now)*
- Rieder, Ch 5-8

**DRAFT #4 (ETHNOGRAPHY, CONCLUSION) DUE NO LATER THAN
DECEMBER 1**