

Political Science 423  
DEMOCRATIC THEORY

Thursdays, 3–6 pm, Cobb 302

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Office hours: Fridays, 3–4 pm or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This graduate seminar is intended to acquaint students with some important recent and classic work on selected problems in democratic theory. Modern political thought has been marked by persistent ambivalence about the idea of democracy. On the one hand, visions of democratic self-government seem to flow naturally from the modern aspiration to achieve freedom and autonomy for all. On the other hand, theorists worry that democracy may be unsustainable under modern conditions, or that it may actually undermine the freedom it purports to realize. Is the idea of self-government intelligible outside the context of the ancient or Renaissance city-state? Can government be both democratically legitimate and substantively rational? What is the relationship between democratic decision-making and individual liberty? Who are “the people” who are supposed to be the bearers of sovereignty in a democracy, and how do they make their will known? Does democracy depend upon a sense of collective (national?) identity, and if so, is democracy inherently exclusive? Can such problems be addressed satisfactorily by replacing the idea of democracy *as such* with hybrid notions like “representative democracy,” “constitutional democracy,” “liberal democracy,” or “deliberative democracy”? Is “democracy” best regarded as a type of regime or government, or as a principle/practice of opposition to domination? What is the relationship between democracy and the concept of “the political”? In considering a range of theoretical answers to these questions, we will also take up some more concrete issues, including the politics of group representation, the relationship between democracy and “globalization,” and the relationship between democracy and civil society. Note that this course devotes very little time to metatheoretical questions about whether it is possible or necessary to provide philosophical foundations for democratic commitments; likewise, we do not read any of the extensive empirical literature on democratization. However, if these topics (or others not included on the syllabus) interest you, I encourage you to bring those interests into the seminar and into your term papers.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Participation in the course will be limited and will be by consent of the instructor. All participants, *whether taking the course for credit or not*, will be expected to attend, to keep up with the reading, to participate in discussion, and to make at least one oral presentation to the seminar on a week's reading assignment. All students taking the course for credit must write a term paper (approximately 20–25 pages) on a topic to be developed in consultation with me, which will be due Thursday, June 8, unless you make other arrangements with me in advance (and I encourage you to do so). Your presentation and participation will make up 30% of your grade; your term paper, 70%.

## BOOKS AND READINGS:

The following 12 books have been ordered at the Seminary Coop Bookstore; they are all books from which we are reading at least two chapters (and in most cases, much more). These books, along with all of the other required reading, will also be placed on reserve in Regenstein Library. In addition to conventional reserve, I have asked the library to put the journal articles and book chapters that are *not* drawn from these 12 books on electronic reserve, which means that you *should* be able to download PDF files of those items from the library reserve website. There is no photocopied reader for this course.

Benhabib, ed., *Democracy and Difference* (Princeton)  
Bickford, *The Dissonance of Democracy* (Cornell)  
Bohman and Rehg, eds., *Deliberative Democracy* (MIT)  
Elster and Slagstad, eds., *Constitutionalism and Democracy* (Cambridge)  
Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms* (MIT)  
Habermas, *The Inclusion of the Other* (MIT)  
Phillips, *The Politics of Presence* (Oxford)  
Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation* (California)  
Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, trans. Cress (Hackett)  
Schmitt, *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy* (MIT)  
Shapiro, ed., *Democracy's Edges* (Cambridge)

## TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF READING ASSIGNMENTS:

1. March 30: Introductory session (no reading)
2. April 6: Approaches to democracy.
  1. J–J. Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, bks. I–II, III (chaps. 1, 4, 15), IV (chaps. 1–2).
  2. Joseph Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*, 250–83.
  3. Carole Pateman, *Participation and Democratic Theory*, 1–44.

4. Sheldon Wolin, "Norm and Form: The Constitutionalizing of Democracy," in *Athenian Political Thought and the Reconstruction of American Democracy*, ed. Euben et al., 29–58.
5. Claude Lefort, "The Question of Democracy," *Democracy and Political Theory*, 9–20.
6. Philip Pettit, "Republican Freedom and Contestatory Democratization," in *Democracy's Value*, ed. Shapiro and Hacker-Cordón, 163–90.

3. April 13: Democracy and representation.

1. Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation*, 1–37, 60–167, 209–240.
2. Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, "Representation," in *Political Innovation and Conceptual Change*, eds. Ball and Farr, 132–54.
3. David Plotke, "Representation is Democracy," *Constellations* 4, 1 (1997), 19–34.
4. Bernard Manin, "The Verdict of the People," ch. 5 in *Principles of Representative Government*, 161–92.
5. F. A. Ankersmit, *Aesthetic Politics*, 21–63.

4. April 20\*: The question of group representation (\*this is the first night of Passover; the session will be rescheduled).

1. Anne Phillips, *The Politics of Presence*, selections.
2. Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, 131–51.
3. Melissa Williams, *Voice, Trust, and Memory*, ch. 7, 203–37.
4. Jane Mansbridge, "Should Blacks Represent Blacks...." *Journal of Politics* (1999)

5. April 27: Democracy, liberalism, constitutionalism.

1. Stephen Holmes, "Gag rules or the politics of omission," in *Constitutionalism and Democracy*, ed. Elster and Slagstad, 19–58.
2. Stephen Holmes, "Precommitment and the paradox of democracy," in *Constitutionalism and Democracy*, ed. Elster and Slagstad, 195–240.
3. Jeremy Waldron, "Disagreement and Precommitment," in *Law and Disagreement*, 255–81.
4. Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, chapter 3, 82–131.
5. Charles Larmore, "The Foundations of Modern Democracy," ch. 10 in *The Morals of Modernity*, 205–21.
6. Alan Keenan, "Promises, Promises," *Political Theory* 22, no. 2 (May 1994): 297–322.

Recommended:

7. Jürgen Habermas, "On the Internal Relation Between the Rule of Law and Democracy," in *Inclusion of the Other*, 253–64.

6. May 4: Democracy, sovereignty, identity.

1. Carl Schmitt, *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy*, 3–83.

2. Charles Larmore, "Carl Schmitt's Critique of Liberal Democracy," in *The Morals of Modernity*, 175–88.
3. Chantal Mouffe, "Carl Schmitt and the Paradox of Liberal Democracy," in *The Challenge of Carl Schmitt*, 38–53.
4. Jürgen Habermas, "On the Relation between the Nation, the Rule of Law, and Democracy," in *The Inclusion of the Other*, 129–53.
5. Jürgen Habermas, "Popular Sovereignty as Procedure," in *Between Facts and Norms*, 463–90.
6. Ernesto Laclau, "Universalism, Particularism, and the Question of Identity," in *Emancipation(s)*, 20–35.

7. May 11: Deliberative democracy.

1. Seyla Benhabib, "Toward a Deliberative Model of Democratic Legitimacy," in *Democracy and Difference*, 67–94.
2. Joshua Cohen, "Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy," in *Deliberative Democracy*, ed. Bohman and Rehg, 67–91.
3. Jürgen Habermas, "Three Normative Models of Democracy," in *Democracy and Difference*, 21–30.
4. Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, chs. 7–8, pp. 287–387.

8. May 18: Critiques of deliberative democracy

1. Jack Knight and James Johnson, "Aggregation and Deliberation," *Political Theory* 22, no. 2 (1994): 277–96.
2. Lynn Sanders, "Against Deliberation," *Political Theory* 25, 3 (June 1997): 347–76.
3. Frank Michelman, "How Can the People Ever Make the Laws," in *Deliberative Democracy*, ed. Bohman and Rehg, 145–71.
4. Iris Young, "Communication and the Other: Beyond Deliberative Democracy," in *Democracy and Difference*, ed. Benhabib, 120–35;
5. Iris Young, "Difference as a Resource for Political Communication," in *Deliberative Democracy*, ed. Bohman and Rehg, 383–406.
5. Susan Bickford, *The Dissonance of Democracy*, selections.

9. May 25: Democracy beyond the nation-state?

1. Selections from *Democracy's Edges*, ed. Shapiro: Dahl; Altvater; Held; Kymlicka; Wendt; Ackerly/Okin
2. William Connolly, "Democracy and Territoriality," in *The Ethos of Pluralization*, 135–61.

10. June 1: Topic and reading TBA. Possibly: Jacques Rancière, *Disagreement*.