POLI 319.001 Democracy, Participation, and Economic Inequality
Philip H. Jos/ Spring 2019
MWF 11-11:50 Maybank 111
Office Hours: W 12-1:00, F 10:30-11:30 & by appointment.
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

There is considerable evidence to suggest that democracy is in decline in the U.S. and in other Western nations. In this class we will pursue answers to the following questions: What does democracy require? What economic and political factors constrain the development of American democracy? How has rising inequality helped to undermine popular representation? How have populist movements challenged democratic norms? What factors have contributed to an increasingly polarized electorate? To what extent is democracy in decline in the U.S. and Western liberal democracies more generally? What are the primary threats to democracy and what does strengthening democracy require?

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of the course are for students to:

➢ Understand the tension between privately held wealth and political power in the U.S.
➢ Understand the nature of liberal democracy and current threats to its political institutions and processes in the U.S. and the West.
➢ Understand the norms and cultural attributes that support democratic governance.
➢ Critically assess the current state of democracy and potential avenues of reform.

READINGS

Books Available for Purchase


Notes: the William Galston book is also available for free in electronic form through the CofC library. All other readings are on OAKS, or links are provided in the syllabus. Completing Contemporary Development assignments (see below) will require reading reputable news sources. Publications like the New York Times, the Washington Post, and the Wall Street Journals can be scanned online and when free access expires the CofC Library resources will allow you to search and print specific articles.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Exam 1…………………………………………………….15
Exam 2…………………………………………………….15
Exam 3…………………………………………………….15
Final Exam and Take Home Essay........................... 25
Contemporary Development Submissions (5) .......... …20
Preparation Assignment 1...................................... 2.5
Preparation Assignment 2...................................... 2.5
Attendance and Class Participation............................ 5

100 pts
Examinations (3) will consist of terms, compare and contrast terms, short discussion questions, and other more narrowly focused questions such as multiple choice. No one will be permitted to take an exam if they arrive more than 20 minutes late. Make-up exams will only be given if the student notifies me of the difficulty at least an hour before class, agrees to take a make-up not later than three days after the regularly scheduled exam, and presents a written, bonafide excuse. The Final Exam (1) will be similar in format to other exams and the Take Home Essay (1) will require a longer more in depth analysis.

Contemporary Developments Submissions (5) On six occasions (mostly on Fridays) you will be asked to find, summarize, and discuss a news article relevant to some specific aspect of democracy. The article must be from a reliable news source (with a link or copy of the article attached) and after your brief summary you must discuss how the article reflects or illustrates a specific idea, argument, or concern that has been developed in the course readings leading up to the CD assignment. Anticipated length: between three quarters of a page to a page, plus the article or link. Submissions are due in the OAKS dropbox no later than 9 am on the day it is due. Your work will form the basis of that day’s class and so full credit requires you to attend and share your work. I will drop your lowest grade.

Preparation Assignments (2) require you to assess a particular reading or set of readings. A specific set of questions will be assigned for each. Anticipated length: one page.

Attendance and Class Participation. The class can best meet its objectives if students come to class ready to participate in class discussions and reflect on issues raised in the assigned readings and those raised by the instructor and fellow students.

Grading Scale/Special Needs: 92 and above =A, 90-92=A minus, 88-89=B plus, 83-87=B, 80-82=B minus, 78-79=C plus, 73-77=C, 70-72=C minus, 68-69=D plus, 63-67=D, 60-62=D minus, 59 and below=F. If you are in the SNAPS program or have other special needs please let me know during the first week of class. Deadlines and expectations are subject to change but adequate notice of such changes will be given.

Writing Lab I encourage you to take advantage of the Writing Lab in the Center for Student Learning (Addlestone Library, first floor). Trained writing consultants can help with writing for all courses; they offer one-to-one consultations that address everything from brainstorming and developing ideas to crafting strong sentences and documenting sources. For more information, call 843.953.5635 or visit http://csl.cofc.edu/labs/writing-lab/.

Honor Code and Academic Integrity Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when identified, are investigated. Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported directly to the Dean of Students. A student found responsible for academic dishonest will receive an XF for the course, indicating failure due to academic dishonesty. Unauthorized collaboration is a form of cheating and research conducted and/or papers written for other classes cannot be used in whole or part for any assignment without obtaining prior permission from the professor. Plagiarism includes the verbatim repetition, without acknowledgement, of another’s work, borrowing without acknowledging a source, paraphrasing without acknowledgement, and allowing any other person or organization to prepare work which one then submits as his or her own. For the complete Honor Code see http://www.cofc.edu/studentaffairs/general_info/studenthandbook.html.

COURSE OUTLINE

SECTION 1 ON DEMOCRACY

Jan 9 (W) Introduction and expectations.

Jan 11 (F) What is liberal democracy?

*William Galston, Anti-Pluralism: The Populist Threat to Liberal Democracy, ch. 2.

Jan 14 (M) Contemporary Developments 1
SECTION 2: CONSTRAINTS ON DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA

A. INSTITUTIONS DESIGNED TO PREVENT THE FORMATION OF MAJORITIES

Jan 16 (W) NO CLASS

Jan 18 (F) NO CLASS/ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE

Read and Prepare Assignment 1 (Reading: James Madison, Federalist Paper #10 and #57)
http://www.foundingfathers.info/federalistpapers/fedi.htm

Jan 21 NO CLASS: ML King Day

Jan 23 (W) What does democracy require?

*John Dewey, Democracy. (OAKS)

B. MARKET CAPITALISM

Jan 25 (F) Markets, Culture, Public Policy

*D.C. Baumer and C.E. Van Horn “Political Culture, the Economy, Public Policy.” (OAKS)

Jan 28 (M) Market Failure, Government, Civil Society

*A. Carnegie, Wealth (1889) (OAKS).
*F.D. Roosevelt (1932) The Commonwealth Club Address (OAKS)

Jan 30 (W) The Rise of Inequality

*J.E. Stigliz, The Price of Inequality, ch. 1. (OAKS)

Feb 1 (F) Inequality and Western Democracy

*Study guide out

C. WHAT IS POSSIBLE WITHIN MARKET CAPITALISM?

Feb 4 (M) Economic Constraints

*J. Cohen and J. Rogers, “Capitalism and Democracy.” (OAKS)

Feb 6 (W) Expectations

*Page and M. Gilens, Democracy in America, Chapter 1.

Feb 8 (F) EXAM 1 (15%)

SECTION 3 PRIVATE POWER: REPRESENTATIVE INSTITUTIONS AND VOTING

Feb 11 (M) Inequality and Democracy in Conflict

*Page and Gilens, Democracy in America, Chapter 2.
Feb 13 (W) Representation and Policy Outcomes
  *Page and Gilens, *Democracy in America*, Chapter 3

Feb 15 (F) Contemporary Developments 2

Feb 18 (M) The Political Influence of the Wealthy
  *Page and Gilens, *Democracy in America*, Chapter 4

Feb 20 (W) Corporations and Interest Groups
  *Page and Gilens, *Democracy in America*, Chapter 5

Feb 22 (F) Contemporary Developments 3

Feb 25 (M) Gridlock and Polarization in Congress
  *Page and Gilens, *Democracy in America*, Chapter 6
  *Study guide out*

Feb 27 (W) Gerrymandering, Voter Suppression, Post-Election Institutional Change
  *TBA*

March 1 (F) Contemporary Developments 4

Mar 4 (M) EXAM #2 (15%)  

SECTION 4 THREATS TO THE FORMATION OF COLLECTIVE PREFERENCES

A. LIES, BULLSHIT, MISINFORMATION, AND A DISILLUSIONED ELECTORATE

Mar 8 (F) Lies as Corrosive to Human Relationships, Personal and Political
  *Spend a few minutes looking over the Trump Database maintained by the Washington Post. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/politics/trump-claims-database/?utm_term=.0bdlf6c851714](*

Mar 11 (M) Lies, Bullshit, and Post Truth Politics

Mar 13 (W) Lies, Bullshit, and Post Truth Politics
  *Lee McIntyre, *Post-Truth*, ch. 4 and 5.

Mar 15 (F) Contemporary Developments 5
  *Study guide out.*

March 16-24 Spring Break

B. POLARIZATION AND A DIVIDED AMERICA

Mar 25 (M) Social Sorting
Mar 27 (W) Social Media


Mar 29 (F) Exam #3 (15%)

SECTION 5 RETHINKING DEMOCRACY: RISKS, PROSPECTS, AND REFORM

April 1 (M) NO CLASS

April 3 (W) Democracy’s Early Skeptics

*Read and Prepare Assignment 2 Due (Reading: Excerpts from Plato’s Republic) (OAKS).

April 5 (F) The Populist Threat


April 8 (M) On Authoritarianism

*S. Levitsky and D. Ziblatt, How Democracies Die, Introduction and ch. 1 (OAKS).

April 10 (W) The Rule of Law and Democratic Norms

*William Galston, Anti-Pluralism: The Populist Threat to Liberal Democracy, ch. 5.

April 12 (F) Contemporary Developments 6

April 15 (M) Economic and Political Reform I


April 17 (W) Economic and Political Reform II

*Page and Gilens, Democracy in America, Chapter 7

April 19 (F) Political Movements or Cultural Rejuvenation

*Page and Gilens, Democracy in America, Chapter 8 and 9.

Study guide and take-home assignment out.

April 22 (M) Communities and Social Capital

*David Brooks, “The Localist Revolution,” December 18, 2018 NYT

*Spend 20 or 30 minutes looking over the various projects at the Aspen Institute
https://www.aspeninstitute.org/

April 26 (F) 8 am Final Exam

April 29 (M) noon Take Home Essay Due