

Humboldt State University
PSCI 323 CRN 23049
Founders Hall 181
Tues, Thurs, 11:00-12:20
Spring Semester 2003

Prof: John Meyer
Office: 138 Founders Hall
Hours: T,R 12:30-1:00; W 11-12
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Topics in Political Theory: DEMOCRATIC THEORY

"Democracy" is often viewed today as the only legitimate form of government. But what does it mean? To many, democracy is distinguished from authoritarian and totalitarian governments by the existence of competitive elections and certain legally protected freedoms. This is often what social scientists, journalists, and others mean when they speak of a "democratic transition" in Latin America or Eastern Europe, for example. By this standard, the number of democratic nations has expanded rapidly in recent years. By contrast, however, democratic critics have argued that this is an overly "thin" and inadequate vision of democracy. Democracy, from this perspective, requires much more of us and of our political systems -- though as we'll see, they are not necessarily in agreement about what 'more' is required. By these standards, many have argued that democracy is losing ground in our contemporary era.

In this class, we will examine the history of these competing models of democracy. We will explore and debate key concepts that swirl around democracy today, including deliberation, citizenship, representation, and participation. We will examine the ability of democracy to address social challenges posed by economic power and technological development. We will also consider whether and how democracy might be relevant outside western societies and on a global scale.

This class will be run, in part, as a (democratic?) seminar. That means that it is especially important to remain current in your reading and come to class prepared to ask questions, discuss, and debate. Many readings will require close attention and real effort, but should repay the work you put into them. If I've done my job well, there will be at least some that you will find persuasive and some that will make your blood boil. Since it probably won't be the same ones for each of us, it is important to be respectful even -- or especially -- when we express strongly held opinions.

Required Books and Course Readings:

The following three required books are available at the HSU Bookstore:

Held, *Models of Democracy*, Stanford, 1996. (noted below as '**HELD**')

Terchek and Conte, *Theories of Democracy*, Rowman and Littlefield, 2001.
(noted below as '**ToD**')

Nussbaum, et. al. *For Love of Country*, Beacon Press, 2002. (*note: this book will not be available in the bookstore until later in the semester.*)

There are many additional required readings that will be available (only) online. I strongly recommend that you download and/or print these readings so that you can highlight relevant passages, write notes on them, and have them available in class. In some cases, this material is available at the web address listed on this syllabus. In other cases, the readings are available through ONCORES (see next).

ONCORES: The HSU Library online course reserve system (ONCORES) is easy to access. Simply go to the **HSU homepage**, select '**Library**,' then select '**HSU Library Catalog**,' then select '**ONCORES/RESERVES**.' You can then find the readings for our class by selecting either my name or the course name from the drop down lists. The password is: **DRAGON**.

Course Requirements

There are **two papers** required for this course; each 6-8 pages long (normal fonts, spacing and margins). I will distribute some possible paper topics in advance; you may choose to write on one of these or to propose your own topic (with my approval *in advance*). Papers should be based upon careful analysis and reflection upon the readings assigned in the course. The second paper will also allow you to connect course readings to an analysis of a contemporary democratic body, organization, or movement. The first paper is due **Thursday, March 27th**; the second paper is due during final exam week on **Tuesday, May 13th**. Each paper will be worth **30%** of your course grade.

You will also be responsible for participating in one of a series of in-class **debates**. Each will be based upon a collection of essays from "New Democracy Forum" published in the *Boston Review*. I will distribute a sign up sheet (and more detailed instructions) early in the semester for you to select a debate. These will be held on: **April 1st, April 15th, April 24th, May 6th** (see reading schedule for topics). In addition to debate participation, you will be responsible for submitting a clear and complete written outline of notes and arguments on the day of your debate.

You must also turn in **8 reading reaction papers** throughout the semester. These papers should be *two paragraphs* in length (no longer!) and should be word-processed. The first paragraph should concisely *explain* -- in your own words -- one specific argument made by the author that you found important, interesting or provocative. The second paragraph should present your own *analysis* supporting, extending, or criticizing this argument. I will read these and record them on a '✓' or '-' basis. Reaction papers must be turned in at the beginning of class on the day the reading under discussion is assigned. **No late reaction papers will be accepted.** These will be worth **10%** of your course grade.

Plagiarism: Presenting the words or ideas of someone else as though they are your own is plagiarism. It is the most serious academic offense. **You must *always* provide citations (including page number) for direct references to ideas or information provided by others.** Copying distinctive phrases, sentences, paragraphs, whole pages, or more from the work of another (whether a classmate, newspaper, book, website, etc.) without proper citation will result in the harshest penalties. Changing a few words, while still copying the rest, is actually worse,

even if you cite it! JUST DON'T DO IT. If you are at all unsure about this matter, please see me in advance of turning in a paper.

Disability Resources: If you have a documented disability and would like to discuss academic accommodations, please contact me as soon as possible. The campus Student Disability Resource Center can assist you with the accommodation process and can be reached at (707) 826-4678, (707) 826-5392 (TDD). It is located in House 71 (Little Apartments) off Library Circle.

I. Introduction (Jan 21)

II. Historical (Western) Models of Democracy

A. *Ancient Athenian Democracy*

Jan 23: HELD, Introduction and Chapter 1.
ToD, Chapter 2, Aristotle

B. *Republicanism*

Jan 28: HELD, Chapter 2.
ToD, Chapter 2, Machiavelli.

Jan 30: ToD, Chapter 2, Rousseau

C. *Liberalism*

Feb 4: HELD, Chapter 3
ToD, Chapter 1: Locke (2)

Feb 6: ToD, Chapter 1: Paine, Madison

Feb. 11: ToD, Chapter 1, Tocqueville, Mill (2)

D. *Marxism and the Radical Tradition*

Feb 13: HELD, Chapter 4
Marx, from "The Civil War in France" (ONCORES)

E. *The 'realist' vision of liberal democracy*

Feb. 18: HELD, Chapter 5
ToD, Chapter 5, Schumpeter.

Feb. 20: HELD, Chapter 6 (*to p. 208*)

ToD, Chapter 4, Dahl.

Feb. 25: Fukuyama, "The End of History?" (ONCORES)

First Paper Due: Thursday, Feb.27th

III. Concepts in 20th & 21st Century Democratic Theory

F. *Participation*

Mar.4: ToD, Chapter 6, Barber.
Walzer "A Day in the Life of a Socialist Citizen" (ONCORES)

G. *Deliberation*

Mar.6: ToD, Chapter 5, Downs.

Mar. 11: Cohen, "Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy" (ONCORES)
Levine: www.puaf.umd.edu/IPPP/fall1999/deliberative_democracy.htm

H. Citizenship and Action

Mar. 13: Arendt, from *On Revolution*, chapter 6 (ONCORES)
Sparks, "Dissident Citizenship" (ONCORES)

SPRING BREAK, March 17-21.

I. Representation and Inclusion

Mar. 25: Pitkin, "The Concept of Representation" (ONCORES)
Phillips, "From a politics of ideas to a politics of presence?" (ONCORES)

Mar. 27: NO CLASS: Reading Day

April 1: Richie and Hill, "Reflecting All of Us" Forum:
bostonreview.mit.edu/ndf.html#Reflecting
[IN CLASS DEBATE]

J. Non-Western Democratic Voices

April 3-8: ToD, Chapter 11, all essays

*K. The Scope of the Political
Capitalism and Markets*

April 10: ToD, Chapter 3, Hayek.

Dryzek, "Why Capitalist Democracy Emerges Victorious" (ONCORES)

April 15-17: Bollier, "Ruled By the Market?" Forum:
bostonreview.mit.edu/ndf.html#Market
[IN CLASS DEBATE]

Democracy and Technology

April 22: Winner, "Do Artifacts Have Politics?" (ONCORES)

April 24-29: Sunstein, "Is the Internet Good For Democracy?" Forum
bostonreview.mit.edu/ndf.html#Internet
[IN CLASS DEBATE]

L. Democracy: Cosmopolitan or National?

May 1: HELD, Chapter 10

May 6: Nussbaum, et. al., *For Love of Country*. (book)
[IN CLASS DEBATE]

IV. Course Conclusion, May 8.

Final Paper Due: Tuesday, May 13th, 11am.