

Draft Syllabus

LDST 390

Citizenship, Policy and Regime: Debates in Contemporary Democratic Theory Spring 2008

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“Democracy” is endorsed by almost everyone, yet dissatisfaction with democratic politics in advanced industrialized nations is widespread. Indeed, there is vigorous disagreement among scholars concerning the institutional requirements of stable democracy, the proper aims of democratic policy-making, the appropriate role of mass participation and deliberation in policy-making, the relationship between democratic states and capitalist economic systems, the appropriate role of the state in promoting justice, and the meaning of fundamental terms such as “citizenship.” This course engages recent work in political theory and political science addressing these questions. Our inquiry will focus on four central issues:

1. What does it mean to be a good democratic citizen?
2. What normative aims should public policy advance, and what role (if any) should ordinary citizens have in the formulation of such policies?
3. How must political and economic power be organized and distributed in democratic societies, if stable regimes that advance normatively important goals are to endure and thrive?
4. What possibilities are there in the first quarter of the 21st century for shifting the distribution of political and economic power in ways likely to advance the interests and increase the political influence of ordinary people?

Readings will be drawn primarily from recent work in political theory and political science addressing these questions. The class will run in a weekly seminar format, with students expected to read 150-200 pages a week. This will be an intellectually intensive course, as befits the importance and complexity of the issues being addressed.

Assignments:

1. To facilitate class discussion and ensure responsibility for the readings, each student is to submit a one-page, 600 word paper by email by **9 a.m.** on the day of our class meetings. Students will have the opportunity to revise the paper (if they choose) after the class meeting before being graded. Revisions of these short papers are due by **12 p.m.** on Friday of each week. There are 14 weeks in the course; each student must submit 12 papers. Late papers (those not submitted prior to the class meeting) will not be accepted.

2. Active and insightful participation in class discussion. Come having taken notes on the reading and prepared to ask questions and engage the topic.
3. Presentation of **short** (maximum 5 minutes) overviews of the reading 1-2 times throughout the semester at the start of class.
4. Term paper of 20-25 pages on a topic related to the questions raised by the course.
5. Participation in design, execution, and evaluation of an experiment in deliberative democracy (most likely a “deliberative poll” about a national issue, or a “town meeting” about a local or UR-specific issue). This will take place in April. All students will write a short, theoretically-informed evaluation of the event totaling roughly 3-4 pages.

Evaluation

Weekly papers—35%

In-class participation and engagement, short presentations—15%

Deliberative democracy experiment and evaluation—15%

Term paper—35%

Grading Standards

A range grades are given for truly outstanding written work which not only meets the basic requirements of the given assignment but also demonstrates exceptional insight, clarity, and depth of thought.

B range grades are given for good and very good written work which amply meets all the basic requirements of the given assignment and reflects substantial effort and engagement with the material. Such work is well-written, well-organized, shows good understanding of the course material, and avoids major substantive or logical errors. *B is a good grade for any assignment in this course, and B+ is a very good grade.*

C range grades are given for work which attempts to fulfill the requirements of the assignment but which falls short in some substantial way, with respect to organization, writing quality, understanding of the material, or argumentative logic.

D and **F** grades are reserved for work that comes nowhere close to fulfilling the requirements of the assignment.

Required Texts:

Gar Alperovitz, *America Beyond Capitalism*. Wiley & Sons, 2004.

Richard Dagger, *Civic Virtues: Rights, Citizenship, and Republican Liberalism*. Oxford University Press, 1996.

Stephen Elkin, *Reconstructing the Commercial Republic*. University of Chicago Press, 2006.

The Federalist Papers

David Held, *Models of Democracy*, 3rd. Edition. Polity Press, 2006.

Will Kymlicka, *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, 2nd. Edition. Oxford University Press, 2002.

Thomas Pogge, *John Rawls: His Life and Theory of Justice*. Oxford University Press, 2007.

Henry S. Richardson. *Democratic Autonomy: Public Reasoning About the Ends of Policy*

Robert B. Talisse. *Democracy After Liberalism: Pragmatism and Deliberative Politics*. Routledge, 2005.

Dana Villa, *Socratic Citizenship*. Princeton University Press, 2001.

Mark Warren. *Democracy and Association*. Princeton University Press, 2001.

Course of Study

January 15. Introduction; Models of Democracy

(Students are expected to do first reading prior to class).

David Held, *Models of Democracy*, Chs. 1 (Athens), 2 (Roman republicanism), and 3 (Mill and liberalism)

Archon Fung, “Democratic Theory and Political Science” (excerpts on four models of democracy)

I. Debating Citizenship (4 weeks)

January 22. Conceiving Active Citizenship

Richard Dagger, *Civic Virtues*, Chapters 1-5, 7-9

Will Kymlicka, *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, 2nd. Edition. Ch. 7, “Citizenship”

Brief excerpts from Putnam, *Better Together* and Sandel, *Democracy’s Discontent*

January 29. Democracy and Civil Society

Mark Warren, *Democracy and Association*

Joshua Cohen and Joel Rogers, “Associations and Democracy” in. Cohen and Rogers, eds. *Associations and Democracy*.

Feb. 5 Citizenship as Skepticism, Politics as Damage Control

Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation"

Dana Villa, *Socratic Citizenship*, Chs. 1 (Socrates), 2 (J.S. Mill) and 4 (Weber)

Brief biographical articles about contemporary "skeptical citizens"

Feb 12. Revolutionary Citizenship?

Held, *Models of Democracy*, Chapter 4.

Jon Elster, "The Marxist Conception of the Good Life," in Elster, ed. *Alternatives to Capitalism*

Jane Mansbridge, "The Making of Oppositional Consciousness," in Mansbridge and Morris, eds., *Oppositional Consciousness*

Naomi Klein, *Shock Capitalism*, very short excerpt

Erik Olin Wright, "What's So Bad About Capitalism?" manuscript

Joshua Cohen and Joel Rogers, *On Democracy*, Chapter Two.

Recommended:

Kymlicka, *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, Chapter 5

II. Debating the Ends of Public Policy (3 weeks)

Feb. 19. Utilitarianism as a Public Philosophy

Robert Goodin, *Utilitarianism as a Public Philosophy*, Part One and Part Four (may replace this in part with excerpts from Goodin's *Reflective Democracy*).

Kymlicka, *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, Chapter One.

Richardson, "The Stupidity of the Cost-Benefit Standard" in *Democratic Autonomy*

Feb. 26. Liberal Egalitarianism as a Public Philosophy

Thomas Pogge, *John Rawls*

John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, brief excerpts.

Will Kymlicka, *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, Chapter Two

Simone Chambers "The Politics of Equality: Rawls at the Barricades", *Perspectives on Politics*, March 2006

Joshua Cohen, "For a Democratic Society," in *Cambridge Companion to John Rawls*

March 4. Deliberative Democracy as an Alternative to (or Extension of) Liberalism

Robert Talisse, *Democracy After Liberalism: Pragmatism and Deliberative Politics*

Joshua Cohen, "Deliberative Democracy and Democratic Legitimacy"

Archon Fung and Erik Olin Wright, *Deepening Democracy*, selected case studies.

III. Regime: Thinking Constitutionally (4 weeks)

March 18. Toward a Deliberative Constitution

Henry Richardson, *Democratic Autonomy*, Parts One and Two
Archon Fung “Deliberation Before the Revolution”; Archon Fung and Joshua Cohen, “Radical Democracy”

March 25: Democratic Market Society: The Idea of a Commercial Republic, I

James Madison et al, *The Federalist Papers*, selections TBA
Stephen L. Elkin, *Reconstructing the Commercial Republic: Constitutional Design After Madison*, Chapters 1-4

April 1. The Idea of a Commercial Republic, II

Stephen L. Elkin, *Reconstructing the Commercial Republic*, Chapters 5-8
Richardson, *Democratic Autonomy*, Part Three.

April 8. The Regime in Practice: Local Democracy in Contemporary America

Elkin, 9-10
Dorothy Holland, Donald Nonini, Catherine Lutz et al. *Local Democracy Under Siege: Activism, Public Interests and Private Politics*, Chapters 1-8

Paper Outlines and Bibliographies Due April 11.

Deliberative Democracy Experiment, TBA

IV. From Theory to Practice: Alternative Strategies for Reforming the American Regime (2 Weeks)

April 15. Democracy, Work and Community

Nien-he Hsieh, “Rawlsian Justice and Workplace Republicanism,” *Social Theory and Practice*, 2005
Gregory Dow, *Governing the Firm: Workers’ Control in Theory and Practice*, Chs. 3-4, 11-12
Gar Alperovitz, *America Beyond Capitalism*, Part I

April 22. An Ownership Society? Bourgeoisie and Radical Perspectives on Broadening Ownership of Property

Thad Williamson, “John Rawls’s Idea of a Property-Owning Democracy and Its Political Plausibility”
Gar Alperovitz, *America Beyond Capitalism*, Part II and Part IV, Conclusion.
Holland, *Local Democracy Under Siege*, 9-11

Final Papers Due Friday May 2nd at 6 p.m.