

POLS 482
University of Illinois, Chicago
Fall 2008

Professor Lida Maxwell
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1108-D BSB
Office Hours: Mondays, 3-5

Democratic Theory

Wednesdays, 3:30-6:00pm
Room: 1115 BSB

Course Description:

In this course, we will explore the tensions, problems, and promise of the “rule of the people” by reading and examining important texts in contemporary democratic theory. Through analysis of contemporary debates, we will ask: Should we think of democracy as a form of rule or as a political activity? What role does and should democratic politics have in contemporary political associations? What do or should we imagine democratic politics to look like? Are liberal rights and institutions a threat or an aid to democracy? What kind of ethos or sensibility best suits democratic politics in our contemporary age? Should we respond to threats to democracy by attempting to regulate or solicit the people? Or both?

Required Texts (available for purchase at university bookstore):

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*
Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*
John Rawls, *Political Liberalism*
Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*
Carl Schmitt, *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy*

*Readings on electronic reserve are noted as **ER** on the course schedule.

To access the electronic reserve readings, go to the following website:

<http://uic.docutek.com/eres/coursepass.aspx?cid=1472>

The password is: **elephant**

Course Mechanics and Requirements:

This is an upper level political theory seminar. Each student should come to class with the assigned texts in hand and prepared to engage in spirited discussion about the week’s readings. To this end, you are responsible for writing 1-2 page weekly responses to the readings. Response papers should focus on interpretive and critical questions about the readings while avoiding synopsis: for example, what are the problems with the authors’

argument(s), even on their own terms? Are there puzzling passages that make his/her argument unclear and that we should think through? What are differences and similarities between the texts for this week and other texts we have read? What kinds of critical questions might we pose to the author(s)? Also, each student will be responsible for leading discussion during one seminar meeting, which should include a 10-12 minute presentation consisting both of summation and critical questions. A sign-up sheet will be passed around the second week of class. **Your response papers, presentation, and participation in class discussion constitute 30% of your grade.**

***You may skip up to two response papers during the semester without penalty; no explanation required.**

***Consistent attendance is mandatory. More than two absences constitutes grounds for failing the class.**

The other requirements for the course differ for graduate and undergraduate students.

***Undergraduate students** are responsible for writing two papers for the class:

1) A 5-6 page paper due on Friday, October 17th at 4:30pm to my office, BSB 1108-D. I will hand out topics for the paper at least a week and a half in advance. **This paper constitutes 20% of your grade.**

2) A final paper (13-15 pages) that incorporates research conducted outside of class and uses materials (at least 3 outside sources) not required for the course. A Research Proposal of 1-2 pages outlining your research question is due on the last day of class, Wednesday, December 3rd. The final paper is due on Wednesday, December 10th. **The research proposal and final paper constitute 50% of your grade.**

***Graduate students**, by contrast, are responsible for writing one final paper of about 20 pages on the topic of their choice. While no formal research proposal is required, graduate students should discuss their paper topic with me well in advance of the deadline. **The final paper constitutes 70% of your grade.**

Course Schedule:

Week 1

Wednesday 8/27

Introduction to Course

I. What is Democratic Theory?

Week 2

Wednesday 9/3

*Robert Dahl, "Polyarchical Democracy" & "American Hybrid," from *A Preface to Democratic Theory* [**handout**]

*Joseph Schumpeter, "The Classical Doctrine of Democracy" & "Another Theory of Democracy" (**ER**) [pp. 250-283 in *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*]

*Claude Lefort, "The Question of Democracy" (**ER**)

*Giorgio Agamben, "What is a People?" (from *Means Without Ends*)

Agamben reading available online at:

<http://www.16beavergroup.org/mtarchive/archives/000939.php>

II. What is Democracy?

Week 3

Wednesday 9/10

Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Books I & II, Book III (1, 9-14, 18) & IV (1, 2, 8)

Week 4

Wednesday 9/17

*Bonnie Honig, *Democracy and the Foreigner*, Ch. 2, 4 (**ER**)

*Alan Keenan, *Democracy in Question*, Ch. 1 (**ER**)

III. Democracy and Public Reason

Week 5

Wednesday 9/24

John Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, Introduction (xiii-xxxiv), Lecture I, Lecture II (Ch. 1-4), Lecture IV, Lecture VI

Week 6

Wednesday 10/1

*Jürgen Habermas, “Reconciliation Through the Public Use of Reason: Remarks on John Rawls’ *Political Liberalism*,” in *The Journal of Philosophy* 92 (3): March 1995, pp. 109-131. [Access through JSTOR]

*Rawls, “Reply to Habermas” (in *Political Liberalism*, pp. 372-434) & “The Idea of Public Reason Revisited” (in *Political Liberalism*, pp. 437-490)

IV. Publics and Counterpublics

Week 7

Wednesday 10/8

*Craig Calhoun, “Habermas and the Public Sphere” (ER)

*Nancy Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere: Contribution to the Critique of an Actually Existing Democracy” (ER)

*Michael Warner, Selections from *Publics and Counterpublics*: “Introduction,” “Public and Private,” “Publics and Counterpublics,” “The Mass Public and the Mass Subject,” & “Sex in Public” (w/Lauren Berlant) (ER)

V. Democracy and Disagreement

Week 8

Wednesday 10/15

Ranciere, *Dis-agreement*, Preface, Ch. 1-2 (ER)

****First Paper due (for undergraduates) on Friday 10/17 by 4:30 to my office, BSB 1108-D**

VI. Democracy, Deliberation, and Law

Week 9

Wednesday 10/22

Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, Preface, Ch. 1-4

Week 10

Wednesday 10/29

Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, Ch. 7-8, Postscript, Appendices 1 & 2

Week 11

Wednesday 11/5

*Seyla Benhabib, *The Claims of Culture*, Ch. 3&4 (ER)

*Joshua Cohen, "Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy" (ER)

VII. Critics of Deliberation

Week 12

Wednesday 11/12

Carl Schmitt, *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy*

Recommended:

Chantal Mouffe, "Carl Schmitt and the Paradox of Liberal Democracy," in *The Democratic Paradox* (London: Verso, 2000)

Week 13

Wednesday 11/19

*Lynn Sanders, "Against Deliberation" (ER) *Political Theory* 25:3 (June 1997, 347-376)

*Frank Michelman, "How Can the People Ever Make the Laws?: A Critique of Deliberative Democracy," in *Deliberative Democracy*, ed. Bohman & Rehg, pp. 145-147 (ER)

*Iris Marion Young, "Communication and the Other: Beyond Deliberative Democracy" (ER), in *Democracy and Difference*, ed. Benhabib, pp. 120-135

*Chantal Mouffe, "For an Agonistic Model of Democracy" (ER)

VIII. Democracy in Decline?

Week 14

Wednesday 11/26

Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, Introduction & Ch. 4-6

[CLASS MAY NEED TO BE RESCHEDULED]

IX. Soliciting the People

Week 15

Wednesday 12/3

*Etienne Balibar, “Difficult Europe: Democracy Under Construction” & “Democratic Citizenship or Popular Sovereignty? Reflections on Constitutional Debates in Europe” **(ER)**

*Hannah Arendt, “Civil Disobedience” **(ER)**

*****Research Proposals of 1-2 pages (with Bibliography) due in class!***

*****Final Papers due Wednesday, December 10th by 4:30 to my office, BSB 1108-D***