

Developing Dynamics of Democracy
POL 302E

Instructor: L. Marvin Overby

Office Hours and Contact Information

Office: TBA

Office Hours: TBA

Voice: TBA

e-mail: overby@missouri.edu

Class Meeting Times

TBA

Course Description

This course focuses on the developing dynamics of democracy ... as understood and practiced in the United States, Europe, and elsewhere. Taking the writings of classical thinkers, liberal theorists, and the insightful Alexis de Tocqueville as our points of departure, we will consider various enduring questions about democracy ... what does the term mean, what societal pre-conditions make democracy possible, what sorts of political institutions best support democratic ideals, is democracy “exportable,” what is the future for supra-national democratic institutions? Comparing and contrasting historical developments and contemporary situations in Europe, America, and elsewhere, we will reflect on democratic developments in older versus newer societies; the influence of social, cultural, and economic factors; divergent historical development patterns; and various institutional arrangements and political practices. At the end of the term, students should have a heightened appreciation for the numerous nuances folded into the term “democracy,” as well as a better understanding of the many debates – both classical and current – regarding its meaning and practice.

Course Objectives

At the conclusion of the course, students should:

- understand better the many meanings and facets of the term “democracy”;
- appreciate more fully the arguments – classical and contemporary – for and against democracy;
- be better acquainted with how various societies implement in practice the principles of democracy; and
- comprehend better the historical evolution of democratic theory and practice

Teaching Methods

To the extent possible, the course will be organized as a seminar; class meetings will generally begin with some preliminary overview comments from the instructor, followed by structured class discussion. Students will be expected to have completed all assigned reading materials before the relevant class meetings, so that they may participate more fully in class dialogues and

get more out of the contributions of the instructor and their colleagues. Regular class seminar meetings will be supplemented by occasional guest lecturers and field trips.

Assignments

Students will write two reaction papers, each approximately 1000 words in length. These papers are due **at the beginning of class** (on dates to be specified). These essays will address topics that will be assigned in class. Papers **must** be typed, double spaced, and use reasonable margins (1" on all sides, more or less) and font sizes (10-12). Papers submitted after the assigned deadlines will be reduced one letter grade for each day (in whole or in part) they are late. (N.B. Things get lost. Students are **REQUIRED** to keep copies of their papers in case there is any question about whether they have been turned in or not.) The two examinations will consist primarily of essay and identification questions. The final will be comprehensive. The midterm will be given at the end of the third week of class; the final will be given during the University-assigned time slot.

While attendance is not obligatory, you will get much more out of this course (including, I would wager, a higher grade) if you attend class regularly, complete assigned readings in advance of class, contribute to class discussions, pay attention to both the instructor and your classmates, and participate in extra course activities (*e.g.*, speakers, trips).

If you have a disability and need academic accommodations, it is your responsibility to notify me as soon as possible. I will make all reasonable efforts to accommodate your needs.

Assessment

Course grades will be calculated as follows:

| | |
|---|-----|
| Attendance and Participation in Class Discussions = | 10% |
| Reaction Paper 1 = | 15% |
| Reaction Paper 2 = | 20% |
| Midterm Examination = | 25% |
| Final Examination = | 30% |

Grades will be given both on a 0-20 scale and in a letter grade. The computation of the final grade will be based on the 0-20 scale (which gives a more accurate outcome). Conversion between the two systems of grading will follow the following table. Scores on the 0/20 grade will always be converted in the letter grade that approaches most closely the score.

Grade

Grade points
Score (./20)
Score (./20) to nearest .5
Score (as a %)

A

4,00

| | |
|----|-------|
| | 17,00 |
| | 17,0 |
| | 85% |
| A- | 3,67 |
| | 16,22 |
| | 16,0 |
| | 81% |
| B+ | 3,33 |
| | 15,44 |
| | 15,5 |
| | 77% |
| B | 3,00 |
| | 14,67 |
| | 14,5 |
| | 73% |
| B- | 2,67 |
| | 13,89 |
| | 14,0 |
| | 69% |
| C+ | 2,33 |
| | 13,11 |
| | 13,0 |
| | 66% |
| C | 2,00 |
| | 12,33 |
| | 12,5 |
| | 62% |
| C- | 1,67 |
| | 11,56 |
| | 11,5 |
| | 58% |
| D+ | 1,33 |
| | 10,78 |
| | 11,0 |
| | 54% |
| D | 1,00 |
| | 10,00 |

| | |
|---|----------|
| | 10,0 |
| | 50% |
| F | |
| | 0,00 |
| | 7,67 |
| | below 10 |
| | 38% |

Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct — defined as appropriating the words or ideas of others and using them as your own through cheating or plagiarism — is something I will not tolerate. I will prosecute cases of academic misconduct to the fullest extent of university policy, and that will certainly involve a failing grade *for the assignment*, might entail a failing grade *for the course*, and can mean further disciplinary action. I advise you to speak with me if you have questions concerning what constitutes academic misconduct.

Required Reading

Readings for the course are available either in a packet at a local copy center or on-line.

Schedule

| | |
|---------|--|
| Week 1: | Theoretical Background Topics: introduction, types of government, the Hellenic tradition, social contract theory, classical liberalism, private vice and public virtue Readings: selections from Plato (<i>Republic</i> , book 8), Aristotle (<i>Politics</i> , books 3 and 4), Hobbes (<i>Leviathan</i> , chapters 13 and 14), Locke (<i>Second Treatise</i> , chapters 11-13), Montesquieu (<i>Spirit of the Laws</i> , Book XI, chapter 6), Smith (<i>Wealth of Nations</i> , selections) |
| Week 2 | Democracy in America I Topics: American Revolution and constitutional system, separation of powers, minority rights, federalism, populism Readings: Publius (<i>Federalist 10, 39, 46, and 51</i>), Lipset (<i>The First New Nation</i> , part 1), Grodzins (<i>The Federal System</i> , selections), Dahl (<i>Preface to Democratic Theory</i>) Assignment: Reaction Paper #1 |
| Week 3 | Democracy in America II Topics: civic culture and preconditions for democracy, Tocqueville, the communitarian critique Readings: Tocqueville (<i>Democracy in America</i> , selections), Bella et al. (<i>Habits of the Heart</i> , chapters 1, 2, 6, 8, and 10), Sandel (<i>Democracy's Discontent</i> , chapters 1, 2, and 6), Putnam (<i>Bowling Alone</i> , selections) Assignment: Midterm Examination |

- Week 4 Democracy in Europe I
Topics: feudalism and the French Revolution, capitalist democracy, plural societies
Readings: Tocqueville (*Ancien Regime*, all of part 1, selections from parts 2 and 3); Moore (*Social Origins of Dictatorships and Democracy*, chapters 1 and 2); Lijphart (*Democracy in Plural Societies*, chapter 1)
- Week 5 Democracy in Europe II
Topics: parliaments, parties, prime ministers, proportionality
Readings: Mill (*Considerations on Representative Government*, selection), Lijphart (*Democracies*, chapters 1, 2, 7, 9, 10, and 11); Norris (“Twilight of Westminster?”)
Assignment: Reaction Paper #2
- Week 6 Democracy into the 21st Century
Topics: democratization, supra-national democracy
Readings: Huntington (*Third Wave*, chapters 1, 2, and 6); Diamond (“The Democratic Rollback”); Moravcsik (“Is there a ‘Democratic Deficit’ in World Politics? A Framework for Analysis”)
Assignment: Final Examination