

Course # | Democratic Theory

Description

Is liberal democracy the only justifiable form of government? In his (in)famous 1989 essay, “The End of History,” Francis Fukuyama argued that this question could increasingly be answered in the affirmative as all alternatives had been found wanting. This view seemed to be supported by the wave of democratization that swept the globe in the post-Cold War era. Recently, however, we seem to have entered a period of “democratic backsliding.” Even in longstanding democracies like the United States, faith in democracy, especially *liberal* democracy, is waning. How concerned should we be by this trend? What is the value of democracy? Is democracy separable from liberalism? This graduate seminar considers the justification, authority, and institutional realization of democratic values. Topics will include political equality, procedural fairness, majority and super-majority rule, representation, realism, and the relationship between voting and popular rule.

Assignments

- (1) *Two Reading Critiques*: Sign up for two weeks on which you will write a 1,000-word critique of a reading. These should both summarize and evaluate the reading. While your evaluations should take a position on the reading—i.e., do you agree or disagree with the author’s thesis?—they should also attempt to situate the article in the wider context of both the course as a whole and the section we are studying at that time. A critique does not necessarily mean the same thing as criticism. Strong criticism can often stand in the way of subtlety and depth. If you decide to be strongly critical, you should be sure to be critical in a way that still does justice to the author’s argument. Moreover, although you are responsible for summarizing the reading, a summary is not the same thing as a “play-by-play” of the reading. A good summary should be able to convey the essence of the reading without giving all the details. Fill in details only insofar as it is necessary to explicate the essential points. The best way to approach these critiques is to think of yourself as the teacher. What should students know from your reading? What questions should they ask about it? Finally, your critique should introduce questions and topics that would be useful and important for the class to take up in discussion. On the day that we cover the reading you critiqued, you should also be prepared both to summarize the reading and to facilitate the class’s discussion of this material: you will become the teacher! Also, if writing on more than one reading, you should feel free either to concentrate entirely on one reading or to write an integrative analysis of all of them. This should be posted to the course site forty-eight hours before the class on which the reading is due to give those who will critique it time to write their critiques.
- (2) *Two Peer Critique Responses*: In order further to facilitate productive discussion in class, you will also be responsible for writing two 300-word critiques of your peers’ critiques over the course of the semester. These should evaluate and react to the main arguments that your classmate has made in their critiques. You should answer the following kinds of questions: Do they misunderstand the reading? Do they overstate the author’s case? Do they understate it? Is their disagreement justified? You should email me these critiques before the beginning of the class on which we will cover this reading. This should also be posted to the course site for all to access.
- (3) *Term Paper*: The major work of this semester is the writing of a term paper between 3,000 and 3,500 words in length on an approved topic. A number of mandatory, interim assignments are designed to help you write this paper:
 - a. 500-word proposal due [date]
 - b. 500-word propositional outline due [date]
 - c. Rough draft due [date]
 - d. In-class presentations on [date]
 - e. Final draft due [date]

The End of “The End of History”

- 01.
 - Francis Fukuyama, “The End of History?,” *The National Interest* 16, (Summer 1989): 3–18.
 - Nancy Bermeo, “On Democratic Backsliding,” *Journal of Democracy* 27, no. 1 (2016): 5–19.
 - Roberto Stefan Foa and Yascha Mounk, “The Signs of Deconsolidation,” *Journal of Democracy* 28, no. 1 (2017): 5–15.
 - Sheri Berman, “The Pipe Dream of Undemocratic Liberalism,” *Journal of Democracy* 28, no. 3 (2017): 29–38.
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The History of an Idea

- 02.
 - Melissa S. Lane, “Democracy,” in *The Birth of Politics: Eight Greek and Roman Political Ideas and Why They Matter* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), 93-128.
 - John Dunn, *Democracy: A History*, (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2005), 13-188.
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The Rule of the Many

- 03.
 - Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract and Other Later Political Writings*, ed. Victor Gourevitch, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 41-68, 82-90, and 106-127.
 - Christian List, “The Logical Space of Democracy,” *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 39, no. 3 (Summer 2011): 262–97.
 - Jan-Werner Müller, “Parsing populism: Who is and who is not a populist these days?”
 - Frederick G. Whelan, “Democratic Theory and the Boundary Problem,” *Nomos* 25 (1983): 13–47.
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Democracy’s Critics

- 04.
 - Christopher H. Achen and Larry M. Bartels, *Democracy for Realists: Why Elections Do Not Produce Responsive Government*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), chapters 1-3, 8, 9, and 11.
 - Jason Brennan, *Against Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), chapters 3-6.
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Democratic Realism

- 05.
 - Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy* (New York, NY: Harper Perennial Modern Thought, 2008), 250-304.
 - Amartya Sen, “The Importance of Democracy” and “Famines and Other Crises,” in *Development As Freedom* (New York, NY: Knopf, 1999), 146-188.
 - Judith Shklar, “The Liberalism of Fear,” in *Liberalism and the Moral Life*, ed. Nancy L. Rosenblum (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 21–38.
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Democratic Authority

- 06.
 - David M. Estlund, *Democratic Authority: A Philosophical Framework* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).
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Democratic Procedure & Fairness

- 07.
 - Thomas Christiano, “Democracy as Equality,” in *Democracy*, ed. David M. Estlund (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 31–50.
 - Jeremy Waldron, “The Constitutional Conception of Democracy,” in *Democracy*, ed. David M. Estlund (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 51–84.
 - Charles R. Beitz, “A Theory of Political Fairness,” in *Democracy*, ed. David M. Estlund (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 152–72.
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Relational Democracy

- 08.
- Elizabeth Anderson, “Democracy: Instrumental vs. Non-Instrumental Value,” in *Contemporary Debates in Political Philosophy*, ed. Thomas Christiano and John Christman (Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 213–27.
 - Daniel Viehoff, “Power and Equality,” in *Oxford Studies in Political Philosophy Volume 5*, ed. David Sobel, Peter Vallentyne, and Steven Wall (Oxford University Press, 2019), 3–38.
 - Niko Kolodny, “Rule Over None I: What Justifies Democracy?,” *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 42, no. 3 (June 2014): 195–229.
 - Niko Kolodny, “Rule Over None II: Social Equality and the Justification of Democracy,” *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 42, no. 4 (September 2014): 287–336.

Epistemic Democracy

- 09.
- H el ene Landemore, *Democratic Reason: Politics, Collective Intelligence, and the Rule of the Many* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017), 1-26 and 89-241.

Deliberative Democracy

- 10.
- Amy Gutmann and Dennis F. Thompson, *Democracy and Disagreement* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996), 11-50.
 - Ian Shapiro, “Enough of Deliberation: Politics Is About Interests and Power,” in *Deliberative Politics: Essays on Democracy and Disagreement*, ed. Stephen Macedo, Practical and Professional Ethics Series (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 28–38.
 - William H. Simon, “Three Limitations of Deliberative Democracy: Identity Politics, Bad Faith, and Indeterminacy,” in *Deliberative Politics: Essays on Democracy and Disagreement*, 49–57.
 - Iris Marion Young, eds., “Justice, Inclusion, and Deliberative Democracy,” in *Deliberative Politics: Essays on Democracy and Disagreement*, 151–58.
 - Jane Mansbridge et al., “The Place of Self-Interest and the Role of Power in Deliberative Democracy,” *Journal of Political Philosophy* 18, no. 1 (March 2010): 64–100.

Agonistic Democracy

- 11.
- Chantal Mouffe, “Deliberative Democracy or Agonistic Pluralism?,” *Social Research* 66, no. 3 (Fall 1999): 745–58.
 - Mark Wenman, *Agonistic Democracy: Constituent Power in the Era of Globalisation*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013): pp. 3-96, 298-304.

Workplace Democracy

- 12.
- Robert Mayer, “Is There a Moral Right to Workplace Democracy?,” *Social Theory and Practice* 26, no. 2 (2000): 301–25.
 - Nien-h e Hsieh, “Rawlsian Justice and Workplace Republicanism,” *Social Theory and Practice* 31, no. 1 (2005): 115–42.
 - I nigo Gonz alez-Ricoy, “The Republican Case for Workplace Democracy,” *Social Theory and Practice* 40, no. 2 (2014): 232–54.

Global Democracy

- 13.
- Immanuel Kant, “Perpetual Peace,” in *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays*, trans. Ted Humphrey, HPC Philosophical Classics Series (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1983).
 - David Miller, “Against Global Democracy,” in *After the Nation?*, ed. Keith Breen and Shane O’Neill (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2010), 141–160.
 - Robert E. Goodin, “Global Democracy: In the Beginning,” *International Theory* 2, no. 2 (July 2010): 175–209.
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- Laura Valentini, “No Global Demos, No Global Democracy? A Systematization and Critique,” *Perspectives on Politics* 12, no. 4 (December 2014): 789–807.
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14. ▪ In-class presentations

15. ▪ In-class presentations
