

## Democratic Theory

Kennedy School of Government, **DPI 216**

**Faculty:** Jane Mansbridge, Adams Professor  
**Semester:** Spring 2016  
**Days:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:15 – 2:30 p.m.  
**Room:** L-332  
**Review:** TBA  
**Office hours:** Taubman 468, Thursdays 2:40 – 4:00 or by appointment (for both, please phone – do not email – Jessica McClanahan and book a specific time.)  
**Assistant:** Jessica McClanahan, Taubman 459B (617-495-8763)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course gives you the essential grounding for understanding democratic ideals. It traces the evolution of the arguments for and against democracy in the west from the ancient Greeks to the present, with particular emphasis on the institutions that influenced and were in turn influenced by these evolving theories. The readings run from Aristotle and Hobbes through Habermas and Foucault, with one foray into Islamic thought. The course has two aims: to foster an appreciation of the particular history behind the ideas that shaped today's democracies and to pose critical normative questions for today. The course requires no background in western history or political theory; that background will be provided in class. It has a strong practical motivation: to give you the background you need, whenever you speak about democracy, to know what you are talking about (and to know that you know it). As you try to improve the governance of whatever organization or nation you are working with, it will help you to know, and to have analyzed critically, what the best minds of the west have thought about the pros and cons of making any entity more democratic.

**ENROLLMENT, WRITTEN WORK, AND REQUIREMENTS:** There are no formal prerequisites to this course. There are four requirements:

1. **Seven email reading responses, two in each third** of the course (by the exam time) on the longer (starred \*) readings and, in addition, one sometime before the third exam on one of the shorter readings. These responses should be no more than 500 words. They are due by 10 PM on the night before the class in which that reading will be discussed and will be returned, with comments, in class. They will be graded “check minus,” “check,” or “check plus.” Please see “Guidelines for reading responses” on the class website. The 7 mail responses @ 2 points each will count for 14% of the final grade. These responses serve as a significant means of on-going communication between the students in the course and me.
2. **Three written exams** throughout the semester. The exams will take 15 minutes each and will ask you to summarize a point in and discuss the relevance to today of quotations from two of the authors read. These exams will be given at the beginning of class on *Tuesday, March 1, Thursday March 24, and Thursday, April 7*. Please see “Guidelines for studying for exams” on the class website. The three exams will count for 36% of the final grade.

3. **A final paper**, 10 pages, submitted both as an attachment in an email to me and in hard copy format to Jessica McClanahan in Taubman 459B before 5:00 PM on Monday, **Monday, April 25**. Papers submitted after 5:00 (exactly) on the date due will have one grade point subtracted (e.g. A → A-, A- → B+, etc.) per day late. Extensions will be granted only if requested, with good reason, by April 21 (the last day of class), or in a medical emergency. **Paper topics are due on April 12** (via email attachment by noon that day, with a copy to Jessica McClanahan), but it is important to have discussed topics with me and settled on a topic long before this date. Please make an appointment (by phoning Jessica McClanahan) to see me *before* deciding on a paper topic; I would also like to meet with you a second time *after* you have chosen your topic, are working on the paper, and have a tentative outline. My office hours are Thursday 2:40 – 4:00, but I can also meet with you at other times. The paper is a culminating experience in the class. It should use one of the readings in the course (more with permission) as an entry point for the analysis of a problem or issue in democracy or governance today, preferably regarding something you know well or want to know well. Grades will depend on analytic rigor, subtlety, and care in the treatment of both the author(s) studied and the problem. Please see “Guidelines for paper topics,” “Guidelines for papers,” and “Guidelines for style” on the website. The paper will count for 40% of the grade.
4. **Class participation**, in all the classes and particularly in the last three discussion-oriented weeks of the class. In the last three weeks, each student will be part of a group leading the class in discussion on a topic that in all but one case (“What is ‘democracy’?”) the group itself will decide. Please see “Guidelines for presentations” on class website. Anyone who does not enjoy class participation is invited to submit, in lieu of participation during the earlier part of the course, four more email responses to the reading throughout the course of the semester. (Please tell me of this choice by email early in the semester.) Class participation will be credited according to: a) contribution to other students’ learning, and b) the clarity and **concision** (particularly important), originality, rigorous analysis, and candor evident in the contribution. Please see “Guidelines for class participation” on the website. Class participation will count for 10% of the grade.

Jared Abbott will lead a discussion and review section on Fridays, to go more deeply into the readings, clarify possible misunderstandings, and explore the ideas. These sections are recommended but not obligatory. Participation in them will not be counted toward the grade.

**COURSE MATERIALS:** Readings in the course are drawn from seven books, which the student will be expected to buy, and from sources on the web or the course webpage. Please buy these seven books: Aristotle, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Mill, Habermas, and Asad. Many are available used. All of the books except Asad’s *Principles of State and Government in Islam* have been ordered both new and used in the textbooks section of the Harvard Coop. Asad’s book is no longer in stock at the publishers, but is still available at Islamic bookstores on the web. Make sure to order it ahead of time, because they sometimes take a long time to ship. All of the books are also available on Reserve at the Kennedy School library. I cannot mandate that you buy a copy of the classic books (a used copy is fine), but I urge you to do so rather than downloading them from the web. Although I am assigning only parts of each book, I would like you to have an emotional and cognitive feel for the way the parts fit into the whole. Perhaps owning the book will also tempt you to read further. I hope that many of you will want

to keep some of these books (such as Aristotle's *Politics* and Rousseau's *Social Contract*) forever. If English is not your primary language, it often helps to download translations in your primary language, but you should also have an English version. The other readings in the course packet, available on the class website, consist of selections from Manegold, Aquinas, Schumpeter, Pateman, Rawls, and Foucault. The books from which these readings are taken are available on Reserve in the Kennedy School library. George H. Sabine, *A History of Political Theory* (on Reserve and also available through Questia) provides more background on the classic theorists if you want to go further. There is no single good background reading on the more recent theorists, but the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, on the web, is usually good on the individual thinkers. Those articles will often, however, not pick out the elements stressed in this course and may overwhelm you with detail not relevant to our themes.

**Boldface:** The reading load in this course will **not be spread evenly** throughout the course. Rather, the reading on some days (noted in **boldface**) will be **heavy** but on other days will be relatively light or sometimes even non-existent. Although there will be less than 50 pages of required reading on average per class, at some points 100 or more pages will be required and some of it will be quite dense. Please go through the syllabus at the beginning of the semester, note the amount of reading indicated, and plan your time accordingly.

**AUDITORS AND CROSS-REGISTERED STUDENTS:** To get access to course website, please email Jessica McClanahan at [jessica\\_mcclanahan@hks.harvard.edu](mailto:jessica_mcclanahan@hks.harvard.edu).

**ACADEMIC HONESTY:** As in every course at the Kennedy School, there is a strict rule against plagiarism, which includes taking ideas or words from any source, including the internet, without attribution. Any sentences or paragraphs taken verbatim from the writing of any other person or persons must be placed in quotation marks and their source must be clearly identified. This includes the internet: Do not use any passages, even short ones, from anywhere on the internet without citing the source. Changing the wording of a sentence or passage slightly does not evade the requirement for citation. Whenever you are drawing an important argument or insight from someone else, even if you reword it into your own words, a reference to the source is required. Violations of these policies are subject to severe sanctions up to and including expulsion from the university. From my perspective, the worst feature of such actions is that they undermine the trust between us. If you find yourself behind in your work and are tempted to take words from the internet for any of your assignments, please see me for an extension.

## CLASS SCHEDULE:

**Tuesday Jan. 26:** Introduction: Where did the ideas about democracy that we work with today come from? The “common good” and “resistance” traditions in western democratic theory. The class will include an exercise on the collective action problem.

**Thursday Jan. 28:** The democracy of ancient Athens: how it worked and why.

**Reading:**

\*Aristotle, *Politics*, **Bk I:** *ch 1- 2, 12-13*; **Bk II:** *ch 1- 3, ch 5 ¶ 1-5* (to 1263b15); *ch 7*; **Bk III:** *ch 1, 4-6*.

[Note: In the Dover edition, chapters, which are often only 3-4 paragraphs long, are indicated by the boldface Arabic numeral in the margin. **I.4** means “Book I, chap. 4.” If you have an edition without paragraphs, I have given the Bekker numbers (e.g. 1260a30), which will allow you to know approximately when to stop. Everson’s edition (Cambridge University Press 1988) and Lord’s (Chicago University Press 1984) are excellent.]

**Tuesday Feb. 2:** Athens as a model of “common good” democracy.

**Reading:**

\*Aristotle, *Politics*, **Bk III:** *ch 7, ch 9-13, 15, 16 ¶1-5; ch 17-18*; **Bk IV:** *ch 1; ch 2 ¶1-5* (to 1289b5); *ch 4, 8-11, 14*; **Bk V:** *ch 1, 8-11*; **Bk VI:** *ch 2-5*; **Bk VII:** *ch 1 ¶1 to 1323a22*; *ch 2 ¶2* (1324a23-25); *ch 4 ¶2* (1326a26-b8).

**Thursday Feb. 4:** The evolution of the social contract and the meaning of tyranny.

**Reading:**

- i. Manegold of Lautenbach, *Ad Gebhardum Liber* (c. 1085), selection.
- ii. Thomas Aquinas, *De regimine principum* (“On Kingship”) (1266), selection: Book 1, ch. 1-4, 7.

**Tuesday Feb. 9:** Virtue and corruption, legitimacy and resistance.

**Reading:**

- i. Niccoli Machiavelli, *Discourses* (1513-17), selections on course webpage [boldface by JM].
- ii. “Junius Brutus,” *Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos* (1579) [course webpage]: **1 ¶4** (“Accordingly”), **¶8** (“Now if we consider”); **1a ¶1** (“When King Joash”); **2 ¶22** (“But this raises”), **¶29** (“But if the king”); **2a ¶1** (“It remains”); **2b ¶5** (“Although the church” only first 2 sentences); **3a ¶s 1** (“We have shown”), **5** (“But this was not enough”), **6** plus last 2 sentences of section; **3b ¶1** (“Now since”) only last 2 sentences, **¶2** (“In a commonwealth”); **3c ¶1**; **3e ¶2, ¶7** (“When therefore”), **¶8, ¶17** (“Seeing then”), **¶18, ¶19, ¶20**; **3f last ¶**; **3j ¶10** (“It is certain”), **¶16** (“And those”), **¶17, ¶19** (“Finally”), **¶51** (“First the law”), **¶64** (“There is ever”), **¶65**.

**Thursday Feb. 11:** Radical individualism and the acceptance of conflict.

**Reading:**

\***Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*** (1651): **Pt 1, ch 1** ¶1 sent 1; ¶2; **ch 2** ¶1, ¶2 sent 1; **ch 6** ¶1 sents 1-2, last sent; ¶2 sents 1-2; ¶3, ¶5, ¶7 (“But whatsoever”), next to last ¶ (“Continuall successe”) sents 1-2; **ch 10** ¶1 -5, ¶15 (“The value”), ¶16; **ch 11** ¶1 -5; **ch 13** all; **ch 14** ¶1-9, ¶18 (“If a covenant”) -19, ¶27 (“Covenants entered”); **ch 15** ¶1-3, ¶7 (“And for”) last sentence, ¶8, ¶20 (“And because”), ¶21-¶26 (“But some things”), ¶31 (“And seeing”), ¶34 (“These are the Lawes”) – end; **ch 16** ¶1-2, ¶4-6, ¶13 (“A multitude”) -15; **Pt 2 ch 17** all; **ch 18** ¶1 – 3 (first half), ¶5 -6; **ch 19** ¶1-4; **ch 21** ¶1-7 (first half), ¶8, ¶10 (“To come now”) - ¶18, ¶21 (“The obligation”); ch 26 ¶8 (“The law of nature”), next to last ¶ (“I find”); **ch 29** ¶9 (“A fourth opinion”) -11; **ch 30** ¶21 (“For the use”).

**Tuesday Feb. 16:** The social contract as a basis for revolution.

**Reading:**

\***John Locke, *Second Treatise*** (1679-1689): ch 1 § 3; ch 2 §4, 6, 7, 13-15; ch. 3 §19 – 21; ch 4 §22-23; ch 5 §25-28; 31-33, 36, 37, 49 – 50; ch 6 §54, 63, 73; ch 7 §77, 82, 85, 87 – 90; ch 8 §95 – 99, 119, 121, 122; ch 9 §123 – 131; ch 11 §135, 137 – 142; ch 13 §155, 157 – 158; ch 19 §210; ch 19 §212- 217, 219-221, 225, 241-242.

**Thursday Feb. 18:**

A “common good” approach to the social contract.

**Reading:**

\***Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Social Contract*** (1762), **Bk 1** *pref; ch 1*; ch 2 ¶1 -2; ch 3 ¶1, 4; ch 4 ¶1, ¶6 sent 1, ¶8 (“But it is clear”); ch 5 ¶3; *ch 6-8* all; ch 9 ¶2; last ¶. **Bk 2** ch 1 ¶1; *ch 3*; ch 4 ¶5, ¶10 (“When these distinctions”); ch 6 last ¶; ch 7 ¶1, 3, 9 (“There is a further difficulty”); ch 8 ¶1, 4; ch 9 ¶1 – 3; ch 10 ¶5 – 6; ch 11 ¶1 – 2; ch 12 ¶5. **Bk 3** ch 1 ¶2, 4-5, 11 (“Suppose the state”), 19 (“There is between”); *ch 4-5*; ch 8 ¶1, 5 (“It follows that”), 6; ch 10 ¶ 6(First, when the prince”); *ch 12*; ch 14 sent 1; *ch 15*. **Bk 4**, *ch 1-2*, ch 8 ¶14 (“I believe”)-17, 20-21, 28 (“But I am mistaken”), 31 (“But setting aside”) -33.

**Tuesday Feb. 23:** Rights

**Reading:**

- i. \*Magna Carta (1215)  
[<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/medieval/magframe.htm>]: 1, 7-10, 12-14, 15, 17-21, 25, 28-32, 35, 39-42, 45, 48, 54-55, 60-63. If you want to understand some of the old words:  
<http://www.magnacartaplus.org/magnacarta/definitions.htm>
- ii. \*The English Bill of Rights (1689)  
[<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/england.htm>]: after “declare” up to and not including “And they do claim.”

- iii. \*Declaration of Independence (July 1776)  
[<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/declare.htm>].
- iv. \* French Declaration of Rights of Man and of the Citizen (August 1789)  
[<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/rightsof.htm>].
- v. \*U.S. Bill of Rights (September 1789)  
[<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/rights1.htm#2>].
- vi. [Recommended: Constitutions of Virginia (June 1776), Bill of Rights: particulars against George III; 1<sup>st</sup> 2 paragraphs of constitution [<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/states/va05.htm>], Pennsylvania (September 1776), Bill of Rights [<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/states/pa08.htm#1>], and Maryland (November 1776), Bill of Rights and article 25 [<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/states/ma02.htm>].]

**Thursday Feb. 25:** Virtue and interest.

**Reading:**

- i. Machiavelli, *Discourses* ([1513-17] 1531) reprise from Feb. 13.
- ii. \*James Madison:  
Federalist 10 (1787) [<http://www.constitution.org/fed/federa10.htm>];  
Federalist 51 (1788) [<http://www.constitution.org/fed/federa51.htm>];  
Federalist 57 (1788) [<http://www.constitution.org/fed/federa57.htm>].

**Tuesday Mar. 1:** EXAM #1 + **at least two** reading responses due by today.

Expanding the vote.

**Reading:**

- i. Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions (1848)  
[<http://www.pinn.net/~sunshine/book-sum/seneca3.html>].
- ii. \*John Stuart Mill, *On Representative Government* (1861), ch 3 all; ch 5 ¶14 (“Instead of”), ch 6 ¶12 (“We next proceed”) –end; ch 7 ¶1-9; ch 8, all; ch 10 ¶1-5, ch 15 ¶1-3.

**Thursday Mar. 3:** Class struggle, revolution, and “administration.”

**Reading:**

\*Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Communist Manifesto* (1848), Preface, I, II and IV. [<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch01.htm>]

**Tuesday Mar. 8:** Reaction to “mass man” and the “invention” of the public sphere.

**Reading:**

- \* Jürgen Habermas, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* ([1962] 1989), ch 1 §1, 3; ch 2 §4-5; §7¶1-4.  
[Possible background reading: John Thompson, “The Theory of the Public Sphere,” *Theory Culture Society* (1993) 1:173, section I and less importantly II (pp. 175-185)]

**Thursday Mar. 10:** Deliberative democracy

**Reading:**

- \* Jürgen Habermas, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* ([1962] 1989), §8 ¶10 sent 5 (“The minority”), ¶13 (“In 1792”); §9, §11, §12 ¶7 (“In English”)-9, 14 (“The physiocrats”)-16; §13 ¶8 (“The public of ‘human beings’”)-9; §14 ¶8 (“Marx denounced”); §15 ¶1-8; §19; §20 ¶22 (“The resulting consensus”); §21 ¶3 (“What made it”)-5, 13 (“The parliament itself”); §22 ¶14 (“Thus, on the one hand”); §23 last 3 paras; ch 7 §24 last 2 paras.

**SATURDAY MARCH 12—SUNDAY MARCH 20: SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS**

**Tuesday Mar. 22:** “Elitist,” “pluralist,” and “participatory” democracy.

**Reading:**

- i. Joseph Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* ([1942] 1962), pp. 250-252 (through “dust”; 254 (“I will therefore”) – 259 (through “action); 260-263 (through “political process”); 269 (paragraph 2); 282 (“Voters”) - 283.
- ii. *Port Huron Statement* (1962), Introduction through all of the “values” section plus the last sentence.  
([http://lists.village.virginia.edu/sixties/HTML\\_docs/Resources/Primary/Manifestos/SDS\\_Port\\_Huron.html](http://lists.village.virginia.edu/sixties/HTML_docs/Resources/Primary/Manifestos/SDS_Port_Huron.html))\*

**Thursday Mar. 24: EXAM #2 + at least 2 more reading responses due by today.**

Workplace democracy.

**Reading:**

- Pateman, *Participation and Democratic Theory* (1970), pp. 49-50, 67-69, 98-100 [on course webpage]. [Pp. 1 –35 -- on Schumpeter, Dahl (the leading U.S. “pluralist”), Mill, and Rousseau -- provided for possible background, but not required.]

**Tuesday Mar. 29:** A hypothetical contract.

**Reading:**

- i. \***John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*** ([1971] revised ed. 1999), pp 3-15, and marked passages on pp. 37-8, 52-5, 57, 62-5, 67-8, 104, 109-10, 118-9, 123-4, 130-5, 155-6, 176-83, 214-5, 266-7. [On course webpage]
- ii. Jane Mansbridge, “Notes on Rawls,” on course webpage.

**Thursday Mar. 31:** Capillary power.

**Reading:**

\*Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, pp. 78-108 (1976); 141-142 (1977) [On course webpage.]

**Tuesday Apr. 5:** **IMPORTANT: total of all seven reading responses due by today.**

Democracy in the context of Shariah law.

**Reading:**

\***Muhammad Asad, *The Principles of State and Government in Islam*** (1961). [c. 100 pages].

**Thursday Apr. 7:** **EXAM #3**

Concluding lecture.

**No reading**

**Tuesday Apr. 12:** **Paper topics due.**

**Discussion:** *What is “democracy”? Is it separable from rights? How should we measure it?*

**Reading:**

- i. Freedom House Checklist and Country Ratings [c. 6 pages]
- ii. IDEA Democracy Assessment [c. 13 page]

**Thursday Apr. 14:**

**Discussion: TBA**

Perhaps: Pro and con legislative quotas.

OR: Are capitalism and democracy compatible?

**Tuesday Apr. 19:**

**Discussion: TBA**

Perhaps: Free speech as a basis for democracy.

OR Can meritocracy be a substitute for democracy, assuming that free speech and association, and other “liberal” rights except for the equal vote are assured? (Suggested “reading”: Eric Li TED talk:

[http://www.ted.com/talks/eric\\_x\\_li\\_a\\_tale\\_of\\_two\\_political\\_systems?language=en](http://www.ted.com/talks/eric_x_li_a_tale_of_two_political_systems?language=en))

OR Equal power as basis for democracy.



**Thursday April 21 (last class):**

**Discussion: TBA**

Perhaps: Are “rights” western? (Suggested reading: UN Declaration of Human Rights; South African Bill of Rights.)

OR Is secularism essential to liberal democracy?

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**Monday April 25:** Papers due in office of Jessica McClanahan, Taubman 459B by **5 PM sharp** (with accompanying email attachment to me).