Democracy and Its Critics

Political Science 110H -- 786851
University of California, San Diego
Prof. Gerry Mackie, Fall 2013
HSS 1128A; WF, 9:00 – 9:50 AM

PURPOSE
A student completing this course would learn how the intellectual justifications of modern political democracy developed from the ancient world, through the modern democratic revolutions, against the alternatives of fascism and communism, to the practical triumph of liberal democracy today.

The course is focused on historical texts, most of them philosophical. Context for understanding the texts and the course of democratic development will be provided in lecture and discussions, and by some background readings (Dunn). We begin with the remarkable Athenian democracy, and its frequent enemy the Spartan oligarchy. In Athens legislation was passed directly by an assembly of all citizens, and executive officials were selected by lot rather than by competitive election. Athenian oligarchs such as Plato more admired Sparta, and their disdain for the democracy became the judgment of the ages, until well after the modern democratic revolutions. Marsilius of Padua in the early Middle Ages argued for popular sovereignty. The Italian city-states of the Middle Ages did without kings, and looked back to Rome and Greece for republican models. During the English Civil War republicans debated whether the few or the many should be full citizens of the regime. The English, French, and American revolutions struggled with justifying and establishing a representative democracy suitable for a large state, and relied on election rather than lot to select officials. The English established a constitutional monarchy, admired in Europe, and adapted by the Americans in their republican constitution. The American Revolution helped inspire the French, and the French inspired republican and democratic revolution throughout Europe during the 19th century.

The doctrines of liberalism, democracy, and socialism emerged and diverged in the early 19th century. The theory and the practice of representative democracy was refined, and democracy grew as the right to vote in elections was gradually extended. Liberalism and socialism converged in democratic practice in the late 19th century; but a strongly antidemocratic reaction emerged around the beginning of the 20th century and developed into fascist and communist tyrannies after World War One, each claiming to realize true democracy. Fascism or communism was endorsed by many intelligent and educated people, and democracy had few intellectual defenders during the years of the Great Depression. Fascism died with defeat of the Axis powers in World War Two, and communism died as an idea with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989. Modern representative democracy was triumphant from about 1989 to about 2008 and the advent of the Great Recession. Now, even in the most developed democracies, alternating political coalitions support unpopular policies that benefit a few at the expense of many.
You are expected to attend and to be completely prepared for each session. You must keep current or ahead of the readings as listed in the syllabus. Readings average about 15 pages per session.

**CONTACTS**

My office is at SDSC 153E, Center on Global Justice, San Diego Supercomputer Center, tel. 858 534-7015, email gmackie@ucsd.edu (please email rather than telephone unless urgent). Office hours are Friday, 10-12, or by appointment.

- The CENTRAL (WEST) entrance of the SDSC is on Ridge Walk, north of the Social Science Building and south of Rimac Arena. A path goes downhill to the east. Take the path, enter the main door, continue straight and to the east until you run into windows and can go no further. Then, look right, you will see a sign for UC San Diego Center on Global Justice. At the sign, turn left, and go to the end of the wing; CGJ offices are here.

- The EAST entrance of the SDSC is on Hopkins Drive, north of the Hopkins Parking structure and south of Rimac Arena. Walk west up the outside stairs to SDSC East Entrance. Enter, and go west up one more flight of stairs. At the top, turn 180 degrees and head east, and continue until you can go no further. Then, look right, you will see a sign for UC San Diego Center on Global Justice. At the sign, turn left, and go to the end of the wing; CGJ offices are here.

- BY CAR: From N. Torrey Pines Road, turn east on North Point Drive, follow the road right as it turns into Hopkins Drive, proceed, at the stop sign turn right and uphill on Voight Lane for a short way, then turn right onto floor 6 of the Hopkins Parking Structure. Walk up one flight to 7, take the bridge west to the Social Science Bldg, turn right at SSB and walk north along it, then as SDSC Bldg. becomes visible you will run into a path that goes east downhill to the Central (West) Entrance of SDSC.

Sometimes I will hold office hours at SSRB 322. *NOT SSB, see directions at http://polisci.ucsd.edu/~gmackie/ If so, I will announce it in class. Check with me by email if you want certainty.

The Teaching Assistant is Yin Yuan, yiy055@ucsd.edu. Her regular office hours are Thursday 2-4 PM (check, this may change to Tuesday), and she is available at other times by appointment. Her office is on the third floor, Room 352, in the Social Sciences Building.

*All course-related email must contain 110H in the subject line. Otherwise, it may be neglected.*

Course Announcements and Instructions will be posted at the Announcements function of TED. I’ll usually say in class when an important announcement is posted, but it’s your responsibility to check the announcements regularly.
I will post class powerpoints on TED, I will try to do so in advance, but sometimes will do so right before class or even after. It seems to benefit many students. Some students think that having the powerpoints means they can safely skip the lectures. The powerpoints are an outline, the lecture details and the discussion are much richer. Thus, I require attendance at class sessions. Attendance is measured by quizzes, explained below.

**ASSESSMENT**

About six unannounced 5-minute quizzes, 10% of the grade.

An in-class exam on **Fri Oct 21**, 25% of the grade.

A 4-page paper is due on **Mon Nov 14**, 30% of grade.

A final exam on **Tue Dec 6, 3-6 PM**, 35% of grade.

There will be about six unannounced five-minute quizzes at the beginning or end of class, either on lecture content or on assigned readings. You may miss one quiz with no penalty. Otherwise, makeups are not allowed except for university-permitted and fully-documented excuses such as genuine religious obligation or illness (send excuses to TA, preferably before a class you’ll miss).

The first closed-book, closed-note exam will cover everything up to that point. It will be one-half identifications and one-half essay questions. Identifications quote something in the readings or lectures, and ask you to identify the source of the quote and explain its meaning and context. It could be something from the readings that we never discussed, or something presented in the lectures but not in the readings. This is meant to assess how much effort you put into learning the content of course materials. The identifications will be neither obscure nor obvious (I’ll provide examples well before the exam). The essay questions are meant to assess how deeply you have thought about themes of the course.

The 4-page paper should be between 1000 and 1250 words (word-count determines). We will provide three topics on material in the second third of the course, and you may choose one of them, or obtain permission from the TA for your own topic. A paper above 1600 words is deducted one whole grade (e.g., from A- to B-). Papers are due no later than the beginning of class on the due date; any submitted after that time will be considered late. We will use Turnitin.Com. Late papers will be penalized ½ grade for 5 minutes to 24 hours late, and another ½ grade for each additional week (absent meeting in advance requirements for exceptions stated next). Lateness will be excused only if a) the T.A. is notified by email at least 24 hours before the due date and time, AND b) the student has a university-permitted AND c) properly documented excuse. Papers must have complete and proper citations, using any standard format. Papers should be well-organized, well-considered, and well-written. Solely at our discretion, we may require rewrites, in which case the grade is an average of the original and the rewrite.

The final closed-book, closed-note exam will contain identification questions from the latter two-thirds of the course, from Oct 24 on, worth 15% of the total grade, and a choice of essay questions on the whole course, worth 20% of the total grade. Many students take about two
hours to complete the exam, a few take the whole three hours (it’s up to you). Here are three essay questions. I will randomly select two to appear on the final exam, and you will be asked to write on one of the two.

• How do interpretations of Athens and Sparta inform our understandings of democracy?

• You are sent by the U.S. State Department to an authoritarian country such as Bhutan whose elite wants to transition to modern liberal representative democracy. What values and institutions would you recommend?

• What are the strongest arguments an opponent could make against democracy? How would a democrat answer the opponent?

The average grade in this class will be at least a B, and may be better depending on student effort. Success in the course requires mastering the readings, regularly attending the lectures, and thinking in depth about democracy. Those who skip the readings, the lectures, or both, won’t do well.

HONESTY
We will abide strictly by standards of academic honesty. That means you must not cheat on exams, must not plagiarize on the writing assignments, and must provide proper citations for written work that you submit, among other things. If you have any questions about what is permitted, consult with us, as ambiguities will be construed against the violator. I do not have a forgiving attitude about academic dishonesty.

REQUIRED TEXTS

• Most readings will be on electronic reserve or via a web URL posted on TED
• All readings for first week on electronic reserve
• **Purchase from University Readers:**
  o Course Reading Packet, POLISCI 110H (100 pp. Dunn, Unfinished Journey)
  o Sorry, details to be provided

SCHEDULE

Fri Sep 27. *Introduction and Overview.*
Dahl, *Democracy and its Critics*, chs. 1, 2, 15

Mon Sep 30. *What is Modern Political Democracy?*
Dahl, continued; Manin, pp. 1-7  Start Dunn Ch. 1

Wed Oct.2. *Introduction to Ancient Democracy*
Finish Dunn, Ch. 1, Hornblower; Manin, Ch. 1, pp. 8-34
Fri Oct. 4. **Athens vs. Sparta**
J.S. Mill on Athens, on Plato’s *Protagoras*

Mon Oct 7. **Plato**
Plato’s *Republic* on democracy, selections;

Wed Oct 9. **Aristotle**
Aristotle’s *Politics* on democracy, selections

Fri Oct 11. **From Ancient Rome to Medieval Florence**
Dunn, Ch. 4, Skinner; Marsilius of Padua, *The Defender of the Peace*, selections

Mon Oct 14. **Machiavelli and the Italian City-States**
Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, selections

Wed Oct 16. **The Logic of Equality**
The Putney Debates

Fri Oct 18. **Aristocracy vs. Democracy: Class Debate**

Mon Oct 21. **Why Election Rather than Lot; the English Constitution**
Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws*, Book XI, chs. 2-6

Wed Oct 23. **The American Democratic Revolution**
Dunn, Ch. 6, Wood; Federalist 10, 57; Paine, *Rights of Man*, Part II, Ch. 3

Fri Oct 25. **IN-CLASS-EXAM** (on material up to Wed Oct 19)

Mon Oct 28 **Rousseau and the French Revolution**
Dunn, Ch. 7, Fontana; Rousseau, *Social Contract*

Wed Oct 30. **Rousseau, continued**

Fri Nov 1. **French Revolution: Democracy, Socialism, and Liberalism Emerge and Diverge**
Rousseau continued

Mon Nov 4. **French Revolution Continued: Reign of Terror**

Wed Nov 6. **French Revolution Continued: Liberalism**
Constant, “The Liberty of the Ancients Compared with that of the Moderns”

Fri Nov 8. **Representative Democracy Emerges and Matures**
J.S. Mill, *On Representative Government*, selections
Mon Nov 11  VETERANS’ DAY HOLIDAY

Hobhouse, Elements of Liberalism; Bernstein, Democracy and Socialism

Fri Nov 15  PAPER DUE  Antidemocratic Reaction: Violence and Antisemitism, Elite Theory  
Sorel, On Violence, selections; Michels, Political Parties, selections

Mon Nov 18.  Fascism:  Against Peace, Liberalism, Socialism, Democracy, for True Democracy  
Marinetti, “The Futurist Manifesto”; Mussolini, “The Political and Social Doctrine of Fascism”

Wed Nov 20.  Communism:  Against Liberal Democracy, for True Democracy  
Vyshinsky, “Political Basis of the USSR,” from Law of the Soviet State

Fri Nov 22.  How Democratic is the U.S. Polity?  
Readings TBA

Mon Nov 25.  Oligarchic Subversion  
Readings TBA

Wed Nov 27 NO CLASS  Triumph of Modern Political Democracy  
Dunn, Ch 8, Maier; Reread from first week of course:  Dahl, Manin 1-7  
You are responsible for reading and knowing this review material, but it will not be discussed in class.

Fri Nov 29  THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Mon Dec 2.  Democracy vs. Globalization  
Readings TBA

Wed Dec 4.  Class Debate:  Topic TBA

Fri Dec 6  Review

Wed Dec 11, 8 AM:  Final Exam

-- END --