

Democracy and Its Critics

Political Science 110H -- 721511
University of California, San Diego
Prof. Gerry Mackie, Fall 2011
CSB002; MWF, 4:00-4:50 PM

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 the lectures, and by background reading included in the course packet. 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.

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 322 SSRB*, tel. 534-7015, email gmackie@ucsd.edu (please email rather than telephone). Office hours are Wednesday, 2:30-4:30, or by appointment. *NOT SSB, see directions at <http://polisci.ucsd.edu/~gmackie/> If you do not follow the directions carefully, you will not find it.

The Teaching Assistant is Danny Fierro, dfierro@ucsd.edu. His regular office hours are Thursday 1-3 PM, and he is available at other times by appointment. His office is on the third floor, Room 343, 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 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. I am reluctant to do it, because some students think that having the powerpoints means they can safely skip the lectures. The powerpoints are an outline, the details and the discussion are much richer. If you skip the lectures, it's inevitable that your grade will suffer.

ASSESSMENT

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

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

A 5-page paper is due on Monday, **Mon Nov 14**, 30% of grade.

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

There will be about three unannounced five-minute quizzes at the beginning or end of class, either on lecture content or on assigned readings. Makeups are not allowed except for university-permitted and fully-documented excuses such as genuine religious obligation or illness. If you arrive late, leave early, or skip the class, you will fail the quiz.

The first closed-book, closed-note exam will be 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 5-page paper should be between 1000 and 1500 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

- **Purchase from University Readers:**

- Course Reading Packet, POLISCI 110H
- All readings are in course packet,, www.universityreaders.com
- Sorry, details to be provided in first class and by TED announcement
- **Purchase from University Bookstore** (before Thanksgiving):
- Dahl, *How Democratic is the American Constitution?*, Second Edition (not in yet, just ordered)

The course is text-intensive. You really must obtain complete access to the readings packet. You need to have texts available to follow and participate in class, and to prepare for exams.

SCHEDULE

Fri Sep 23. **Introduction and Overview.**

Dahl, *Democracy and its Critics*, chs. 1, 2, 15

Mon Sep 26. **What is Modern Political Democracy?**

Dahl, continued; Manin, pp. 1-7

Wed Sep 28. **Introduction to Ancient Democracy**

Dunn, Ch. 1, Hornblower; Manin, Ch. 1, pp. 8-41

Fri Sep. 30. **Athens vs. Sparta**

J.S. Mill on Athens, on Plato's *Protagoras*, on Sparta

Mon Oct 3. **Plato**

Plato's *Republic* on democracy, selections;

Wed Oct 5. **Aristotle**

Aristotle's *Politics* on democracy, selections

Fri Oct 7. **From Ancient Rome to Medieval Florence**

Dunn, Ch. 4, Skinner; Marsilius of Padua, *The Defender of the Peace*, selections

Mon Oct 10. **Machiavelli and the Italian City-States**

Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, selections

Wed Oct 12. **The Logic of Equality**

The Putney Debates

Fri Oct 14. **Aristocracy vs. Democracy: Class Debate**

Mon Oct 17. **Why Election Rather than Lot; the English Constitution**

Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws*, Book XI, chs. 2-6

Wed Oct 19. **The American Democratic Revolution**

Dunn, Ch. 6, Wood; Federalist 10, 57; Paine, *Rights of Man*, Part II, Ch. 3

Fri Oct 21. **IN-CLASS-EXAM** (on material up to Wed Oct 19)

Mon Oct 24 **Rousseau and the French Revolution**

Dunn, Ch. 7, Fontana; Rousseau, *Social Contract*,

Wed Oct 26. **Rousseau, continued**

Fri Oct 28. **French Revolution: Democracy, Socialism, and Liberalism Emerge and Diverge**

Rousseau continued; Sieyes, selections from “What is the Third Estate”

Mon Oct 31. **French Revolution Continued: Reign of Terror**

Robespierre, “Report on Principles of Political Morality”; Babeuf, “Conspiracy of Equals”

Wed Nov 2. **French Revolution Continued: Liberalism**

Constant, “The Liberty of the Ancients Compared with that of the Moderns”

Fri Nov 4. **Representative Democracy Emerges and Matures**

Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*

Mon Nov 7. **Representative Democracy, Continued**

J.S. Mill, *On Representative Government*, selections; James Bryce, *American Commonwealth*, selections

Wed Nov 9 **Democratic, Liberal, and Socialist Convergence**

Hobhouse, *Elements of Liberalism*; Bernstein, *Democracy and Socialism*

Fri Nov 11 **VETERANS’ DAY HOLIDAY**

Mon Nov 14. **PAPER DUE Antidemocratic Reaction: Violence and Antisemitism, Elite Theory**

Sorel, *On Violence*, selections; Michels, *Political Parties*, selections

Wed Nov 16. **Fascism: Against Peace, Liberalism, Socialism, Democracy, for True Democracy**

Marinetti, “The Futurist Manifesto”; Mussolini, “The Political and Social Doctrine of Fascism”

Fri Nov 18. **Communism: Against Liberal Democracy, for True Democracy**

Vyshinsky, “Political Basis of the USSR,” from *Law of the Soviet State*,

Mon Nov 21. **Triumph of Modern Political Democracy**

Dunn, Ch 8, Maier; Reread from first week of course: Dahl, Manin 1-7,
Read over holiday Dahl's *How Democratic is the American Constitution?*, 15-20, 31-72, 91-119

Wed Nov. 23 **NO CLASS**

Fri Nov 25 **THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**

Mon Nov 28. **How Democratic is the American Constitution?**

Wed Nov 30. **Class Debate: Topic TBA**

Fri Dec 2. **Review**

Tue Dec 6, 3-6 PM. **Final Exam**

-- END --