Democratic Theory

Kennedy School of Government, DPI 216

Faculty: Jane Mansbridge, Adams Professor
Semester: Spring 2012
Days: Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:10 – 2:30 p.m.
Room: RG-20
Review: Fridays 2:20 – 4:00 p.m., L332
Office hours: Taubman 468, Thursdays 2:15 - 3:45 or by appointment (for both, please phone – do not email – Matt Salesses and book a specific time.)
Assistant: Matt Salesses, Taubman 402A (617-495-0868)

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course 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 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. Please see “Guidelines for reading responses” on the class website. These responses should be no more than 500 words. They are due by 8 AM on the day of the class in which that reading will be discussed and will be returned, with comments, the same day, in class.. They will be graded “check minus,” “check,” or “check plus.” Grading: 7 mail responses @ 2 points each = 14% of final grade. These responses serve as a significant means of communication between the students in the course and the professor.

2. Three written exams throughout the semester. The exams will take 15 minutes and will ask you to summarize a point in and discuss the relevance to today of two of the authors read. These exams will be given at the beginning of class on Wednesday Feb. 15, Wednesday March 7, and Monday April 9. 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 Matt Salesses in Taubman 402A before 5:00 PM on Monday, **May 7**. 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 30, or in a medical emergency. **Paper topics are due on April 11** (via email attachment by noon that day, with a copy to Matt Salesses), but it is important to have discussed topics with me and settled on one long before this date. Please make an appointment (by phoning Matt Salesses) 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 2:15 - 3:45, 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) and the problem. Please see Guidelines for Paper topics, Papers, and Style on website. **Paper = 40% of 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. **Grading: 10% of grade.**

There will be 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 that the student will be expected to buy, from sources on the web or the course webpage, and from six excerpts in the course packet. Please buy these six books: Aristotle, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Mill, Habermas, and Asad. Many are available used. All of the books except the Asad have been ordered both new and used in the textbooks section of the Harvard Coop. The Asad, which is no longer in stock at the publishers, is still available at Islamic bookstores on the web (make sure to order it ahead of time). 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 (used is fine), but would 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, and 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 six readings in the course packet, available in photocopy from the Course Materials Distribution Office (Kennedy School, Belfer Building Ground Floor), 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 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 most recent theorists

**Important:** 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** and that 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 phone Matt Salesses at 617-495-0868

**ACADEMIC HONESTY:** As in every course at the Kennedy School, there is a strict rule against plagiarism, which includes taking ideas or words from the internet without attribution.
CLASS SCHEDULE:

**Monday Jan. 23:**  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.

**Wednesday Jan 25:**  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.]

**Monday Jan 30:**  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 to1323a22); ch 2 ¶2 (1324a23-25); ch 4 ¶2 (1326a26-b8).

**Wednesday Feb. 1:**  The evolution of the social contract and the meaning of tyranny

Reading:

i.  Manegold of Lautenbach, *Ad Gebhardum Liber* (c. 1085), selection [In course pack].


**Monday Feb. 6:**  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 ¶8 (“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”); 3e ¶1; 3e ¶2, ¶7 (“When therefore”), ¶18, ¶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.
Wednesday Feb. 8:  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 successse”) 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”).

Monday Feb. 13:  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.

Wednesday Feb. 15:  Exam #1; at least two reading responses due by today.

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.

MONDAY FEB 20:  PRESIDENTS’ DAY – NO CLASS

Wednesday Feb. 22:  Rights

Reading:  

i. *Magna Carta (1215)* 

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; 1st 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].]

**Monday Feb 27:** Virtue and interest

Reading:


**Wednesday Feb 29:** 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.

**Monday Mar. 5:** Struggle, “administration,” and democracy

Reading:

Wednesday Mar. 7: Exam #2; at least 2 more reading responses due by today.
   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.

SATURDAY MARCH 10—SUNDAY MARCH 18: SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS

Monday Mar. 19: 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.

Wednesday Mar. 21: “Elitist,” “pluralist,” and “participatory” democracy
   Reading:
   ii. *Port Huron Statement* (1962), ¶1 through last ¶ in “values”; last sentence.(http://lists.village.virginia.edu/sixties/HTML_docs/Resources/Primary/Manifestos/SDS_Port_Huron.html)*

Monday Mar. 26: The case for workplace democracy
   Reading:

Wednesday March 28: A hypothetical contract
   Reading:

Monday April 2: “Capillary power”
   Reading:
*Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, pp. 78-108 (1976); 141-142 (1977) [In course pack.]

**Wednesday Apr. 4:** Democracy in the context of Shariah law. **Important: total of all seven reading responses due by today.**

  Reading:

**Monday Apr. 9:**

  Exam #3.

  **No reading:**

  Concluding lecture.

**Wednesday Apr. 11:** **Discussion:** What is “democracy”? **Paper topics due.**

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

**Monday Apr. 16:** Discussion: TBA (perhaps: Free speech as basis for democracy)

**Wednesday Apr. 20:** Discussion: TBA (perhaps: Pro and con legislative quotas)

**Monday Apr. 25:** Discussion: TBA (perhaps: Is secularism essential to liberal democracy?)

**Wednesday Apr. 27 (last class):** TBA (perhaps: What can give democratic legitimacy to an opposition within an authoritarian regime?)

............

**Monday May 7:** Papers due in office of Matt Salessas, Taubman 402A by **5 PM sharp** (with accompanying email attachment to me).