

DEMOCRATIC THEORY
POLSCI 3VV3
Fall 2022, Term 1

Preliminary - subject to change

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Course Description

Today just about everyone agrees that democracy is the best form of government, and that political life should be organized democratically. But what exactly does that mean? Although the etymology of the word is clear – in ancient Greek *demos* meant ‘people’ (from ‘district,’ into which citizens were organized) and *kratos* meant power, so that in a democracy the people have the power – the theoretical and institutional implications of the concept are complex and difficult to articulate. This class examines the historical development of thinking about democracy as well as contemporary debates about its nature, complexities, and difficulties – what democracy is as well as what it can and should be.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- understand of a political range of crucial concepts and themes from throughout the history of western democratic theory
- read complex theoretical texts carefully and critically in a comparative and synthetic way
- formulate an understanding of the concepts and themes of these theories in a rigorous and systematic fashion
- engage critically, rigorously, and respectfully with the ideas and arguments of these texts and of their fellows

Required Materials and Texts

- David Held’s *Models of Democracy*, 3rd ed. (Stanford University Press, 2006) is required and available for purchase at the bookstore
- Other readings will be made available on A2L

Class Format

Each week will consist of two meetings. The two-hour Tuesday session will be mostly devoted to lecture, though these lectures will tend to open onto general class discussion. The one-hour Thursday session will be devoted mainly to small-group discussion. We will break into small groups to answer questions provided at the beginning of the session before gathering as a class to discuss each group’s answers. Regular attendance and careful preparation for both sessions are essential.

Although there will be some time in the lecture periods to raise and discuss issues, online discussion provides the main opportunity for active individual participation. Students are expected to devote at least the equivalent of one hour per week to carefully reading and thoughtfully posting to the online discussion forum. They should post consistently throughout the term, dividing their posts between direct engagements

with the readings and critical reflection on their fellows' interpretations as well as questions arising from the lectures and in-class discussion.

This course has been designed as an in-person class, and regular in-person attendance is expected. However, at the discretion of the instructor and in accordance with the University and provincial authorities, online elements may be introduced through the course of the semester. Any changes to the format of the course will be announced as far in advance as possible in person, by email, and via the course A2L page. Attendance and participation expectations will remain the same however the course is delivered.

Course Evaluation – Overview

1. Attendance and participation – 20%
2. Online discussion – 30%
3. In-class mid-term, Oct. 20 – 20%
4. Cumulative take-home final exam, due Dec. 14 – 30%

Course Evaluation – Details

Attendance and participation (20%)

Attendance will be taken by sign-up sheet during class or electronically during virtual classes. Perfect attendance and no participation will result in an A- (8/10). Every unexcused absence after the second will result in a 1-point penalty. Constructive participation in general class discussion will be rewarded but, due to the size of the class, not required. Active participation in small-group discussion, on the other hand, is expected.

Online discussion – Avenue to Learn posts (30%)

You are responsible for posting TEN times over the course of the term: at least TWO comments/questions and THREE replies before the midterm (Oct. 20) and least TWO comments/questions and THREE replies after the midterm but before the end of classes (Dec. 8). Each post must be at least a short paragraph (four sentences) in length, and should reflect a substantive engagement with the readings and with your fellow students. You may post more times than required. In each period your mark will reflect your contribution to discussion as a whole. Late posts will not be counted – start early!

Mid-term (20%), in class October 20

The midterm will be written in the regular classroom. It will test all material up to that point in the course and will include a choice among short-answer (quotation identification) and short-essay questions.

Cumulative take-home final exam (30%), December 8-15

The final exam will be distributed on the last class meeting and will require you to respond in essay form to two of four questions covering the whole term's material. Due by the end of Thursday, December 15 via the class's A2L dropbox.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Week 1 (Sept. 6-8) Introduction

Readings:

Held, *Models of Democracy*, Introduction.

Thucydides, "Pericles' Funeral Oration," tr. B. Jowett, *The Peloponnesian Wars*.

Week 2 (Sept. 13-15) Athens & Democracy

Readings:

Plato, *The Republic* (Online Library of Liberty), VIII: 555b-569c.

Aristotle, *Politics*, ed. Bekker (Online Library of Liberty), III: 137-151, IV: 168, VI: 214-220.

Held, *Models of Democracy*, ch. 1.

Week 3 (Sept. 20-22) Rome & Republicanism

Readings:

Machiavelli, *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livius* (Online Library of Liberty), I: Intro, 2-5, 16-17, 55, 57-58.

Held, *Models of Democracy*, pp. 29-43.

Week 4 (Sept. 27; NO CLASS SEPT. 29) Popular Sovereignty

Readings:

John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* (Online Library of Liberty), chs. 9-11.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *On the Social Contract* (Online Library of Liberty), I: 1, 6-8, II: 1-4, 6, III: 4, 15.

Held, *Models of Democracy*, pp. 43-55.

Week 5 (Oct. 4-6) Liberalism & Representation

Readings:

Benjamin Constant, "The Liberty of the Ancients Compared to that of the Moderns" (Online Library of Liberty).

James Madison, *The Federalist Papers* (Online Library of Liberty), nos. 10 and 51.

Held, *Models of Democracy*, pp. 56-95.

Week 6 (Oct. 11-13) MID-TERM RECESS – No Classes

Week 7 (Oct. 18-20) Review/Midterm Exam

No readings.

Note: IN-CLASS MIDTERM EXAM OCT. 20

Week 8 (Oct. 25-27) Democratic Society

Readings:

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (University of Chicago, 2000), vol. I: Intro; 1:3-4; 2:6-7; vol. II: Notice; 2:1-5, 8; 3:17, 21; 4:6-8.

Week 10 (Nov. 1-3) Revolution & Democracy

Readings:

Karl Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Programme," *Selected Writings*, ed. David McLellan (Oxford, 2000), pp. 610-616.

Held, *Models of Democracy*, ch. 4.

Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (Penguin, 2006), ch. 6.

Week 11 (Nov. 8-10) Democratic Elitism

Readings:

Joseph Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy* (Harper, 1962), chs. 20-23.

Held, *Models of Democracy*, ch. 5.

Week 12 (Nov. 15-17) Deliberative & Radical Democracy

Readings:

Jürgen Habermas, "Three Normative Models of Democracy," *Constellations* 1:1 (1994): 1-10.

Sheldon Wolin, "Fugitive Democracy," *Constellations* 1:1 (1994): 11-25.

Jacques Rancière, "Democracy, Republic, Representation," *Constellations* 11:3 (2006): 297-307.

Held, *Models of Democracy*, pp. 209-16.

Week 13 (Nov. 22-24) Populism

Readings:

Margaret Canovan, "Trust the People! Populism and the Two Faces of Democracy," *Political Studies* 47:1 (1999): 2–16.

Jan-Werner Müller, "Parsing populism: Who is and who is not a populist these days?" *Juncture* 22:2 (2016).

Thea Riofrancos, "Democracy Without the People? What if populism is not the problem, but the solution," *n+1 online* (Feb. 7, 2017).

Week 14 (Nov. 29-Dec. 1) New Horizons

Readings:

David Graeber, "There Never Was a West – Or, Democracy Emerges from the Spaces In Between," in *Possibilities: Essays on Hierarchy, Rebellion, and Desire* (AK Press, 2007).

Yann Allard-Tremblay, "The Two Row Wampum: Decolonizing and Indigenizing Democratic Autonomy," *Polity* 54 no. 2 (2022): 225–49.

Week 15 (Dec. 6-8) Conclusion

No readings.

Note: FINAL EXAM DISTRIBUTED DEC. 8. DUE THURS. DEC. 15 VIA CLASS DROPBOX.

Course Policies

Submission of Assignments

The final exam is to be submitted as a single .doc, .docx, or .pdf file to the appropriate dropbox on the course A2L site.

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

Late Assignments

Late Avenue posts for the online discussion activity will not be considered. Late final exams will be penalized at a rate of one letter grade (10%) off the exam grade per day.

Absences, Missed Work, Illness

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF): In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”.

Courses With an On-Line Element

Some courses may use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, usernames for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Online Proctoring

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

Authenticity / Plagiarism Detection

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software.

All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

Copyright and Recording

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

Academic Integrity Statement

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Conduct Expectations

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online.**

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Course Modification

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

Extreme Circumstances

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.