

BRYN MAWR COLLEGE

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DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Spring 2016

Dalton Hall 100C

Office Hours: Mon. 4 – 5 pm; Tues. 2 – 4 pm

POWER OF THE PEOPLE: Democratic Theory and Practice

COURSE NARRATIVE

Can we speak coherently about the power of the people as exemplified in “democracy”? Do we know what democracy is? We often invoke “democracy” as the very ground of political legitimacy, but there is very little agreement on what democracy means, why we might desire it, or how state institutions, law, and political culture might embody it. In this seminar we will grapple with some recent and influential accounts of democratic governance and democratic movements today. Our objective will be to develop a critical vocabulary for understanding what democracy might mean, what conditions it requires, and what “best practices” citizens committed to democracy might enlist to confront political challenges such as the structural divisions that persist among class, gender, and race; persistent inequality and influence of money and corporations; and the potential for democratic, grass-roots power as a vital ingredient to democratic flourishing.

PROMISES & PRACTICES

I am committed to fostering a learning community marked by imagination, creativity, honesty, openness, earnest inquiry and playful speculation. Through the structures of reading, writing, revision, and discussion that this course offers, I also seek to help you develop certain habits of mind that I consider essential to the liberal arts: to learn to listen and to speak, to read and to write, and to think with creativity and focus. I also hope that we can collaborate and learn from one another as we bring this community of learning into being, making space for silence as well as voice, for dissent as well as agreement, for personal transformation as well as political deliberation.

Given the subject matter of this course, many of our discussions in class will involve sensitive issues. You may find some of this material upsetting. Again, my hope is that together we can foster an environment of respect and openness conducive to everyone’s full and honest participation. Whatever success or pleasure the course might occasion depends in large part on what all of us bring and contribute.

To develop the habits of mind described above as well as to bring the aspirations listed into being, this course will consist in a number of activities:

Energetic and involved discussion. We will learn democratic theory by speaking democratic theory. To learn the difficult concepts and arguments, you need to practice putting them into your own words, explaining them to others, and listening to others’ explanations. Excellent discussion requires preparation: review of previous class discussions, taking notes in advance of class meetings, and being present and alert as much as possible during every class meeting. Through our discussions you will develop the essential speaking and listening skills necessary for developing and using the theories and applications of the theories we study.

Disciplined and careful reading. This is a reading intensive course. Reading will take the form of texts listed on this syllabus as well as independent reading in the course of your research for your critical literature review. This course seeks to develop you as thoughtful, patient, imaginative, and critical readers capable of identifying multiple possible readings, examining assumptions, and ready to interpret different kinds of arguments.

Frequent and varied writing. This course begins from the premise that reading and writing are deeply intertwined; because writing cements understanding, this course asks that you write in response to all of the assigned readings. This writing will come in the form of weekly responses to prompts on Moodle, responses to peers' writing, essays, and creative engagement with course material.

I have created this course with the hopes of helping all of you develop as effective speakers and listeners, intelligent readers and writers, and critical thinkers. Yet I acknowledge that without your distinctive contributions the course would amount to very little. I welcome your suggestions and criticisms and I hope that we can make this course together into something worthwhile for each and every one of us.

ACTIVITIES & EVALUATION

Because this course seeks to develop you as a speaker and a listener, a writer and a reader, and a critical thinker, we will focus our work in several areas.

1. *Contributions to class and online discussions*

Consistent and rigorous preparation for class activities as well as quality and appropriate contributions to class discussions are the most essential part for full realizing the promises of this course. Enrolling in this course signifies your agreement to contribute to the education of your fellow students and to learn from them and your professor in turn. Contributing during class sessions provides an opportunity to practice speaking and the skills of persuasion, as well to listen to, critique, and develop the arguments and analyses of your peers. (Please see my [Contribution Rubric](#) for more specific suggestions and criteria. Your contributions will count for 20% of your final grade.)

Democracy, at least in theory, requires the energetic participation of citizens in public life. Our course will seek to practice just such participation. As part of your contributions to the class, you will become a member of a "Deme," named for the smallest units of administration in ancient Athens. Deme will be responsible for creating its own online discussions and will frequently be asked to collaborate on responses to questions during class.

Before every class meeting, a member of your Deme will post on the Moodle discussion forum in response to the readings for that class period. These posts should run between 200 – 400 words and answer the following questions for the reading:

1. What are the main conclusions of the work?
2. How is this work relevant to the theories of democracy we have been discussing?
3. Are the author's conclusions valuable and valid? Does their work rest on any biases or assumptions?

When answering these questions please also include specific reference to the readings (with references to page numbers). I will read each of your posts prior to class and then adjust the course according to your interests, questions, and connections.

Non-posting Deme members should read and comment on this post prior to each class meeting. These

postings will form the basis of our discussions and also help you to build a portfolio of notes on the major topics of democratic theory.

2. *Short writing projects*

Because writing and rewriting fosters and improves understanding and application of difficult theories and concepts, this course will require frequent writing and revision during the course of the semester. Among your writing projects will be two short essays that you will prepare during the course of the semester. The writing, revision, and rewriting of these essays will go as follows:

Complete draft due for peer revision. On the day designated on the course schedule you will bring a complete draft of your essay in response to the prompt. This draft should be around 1500 words. These essays should respond to the general question for that particular essay as listed in the syllabus. The essay should engage the readings thus far in the course, developing an argument of your own devising that speaks to issues we have discussed during the regular meetings of the seminar. We will discuss possible approaches to the general essay question during the course of the semester; I am also always happy to meet and discuss essays topics at any time. During our class session we will read one another's essays and discuss revision in small groups.

Reflection and revision. Roughly a week after the peer revision you will submit a revised draft along with a reflection on the revisions you have made. In the reflection (included at the end of the revised draft), please discuss what changes you made from your draft and why as well as what you found helpful or unhelpful about the peer revision activity. *I will only read and grade final drafts that are submitted with this reflection.*

Rewriting. After I have sent you comments on your final draft, you may choose to rewrite your essay again. Please let me know that you would like to rewrite the essay and talk to me about further changes. When you submit your rewritten essay you must also include another description of changes you made and why.

Evaluation. Please see my [Essay Rubric](#) for specific criteria and suggestions. Your essays will each count for 20% of your final grade. You must complete every short essay to receive credit for this course.

3. *Critical Literature Review*

The major writing project of this course will consist of a constructive assessment of recent work in democratic theory in which you explain and evaluate an area of the literature using the work on democracy we read and we have discussed.

Usually critical literature reviews are designed to explain the primary questions and arguments of the field, assessing its findings and pointing to new areas of inquiry. The target audience here is not just specialists but a broader audience of anyone interested in the general issue area; you should write so that an intelligent layperson could understand you. Your review should be **no more than 15 pages** (12-pt font, 1 inch margins). While reviews can vary on format, I would like you to use the following in your own reviews:

I. Introduction: This should be brief and direct. It should very concisely state what you will develop in the work that follows: the context of the area you have chosen in terms of understandings of democracy more generally; the main questions and arguments within the area you have chosen; and your own assessment of the strength of these questions and arguments as well as future directions this research might take.

II. Context: This section will discuss the context of your area in terms of the theory and practice of democracy more broadly.

III. Analysis of the Arguments: This section will take us carefully, in a step-by-step analysis, through primary questions and arguments in your area of the literature. Here you will try to give a concise yet precise account of what the conversation consists of: who are the important researchers, what are their findings and arguments, who agrees or disagrees with whom, and so forth. You may ignore or only touch on the minor or technical issues; focus on the important ones.

IV. Assessment: In this section you will display the knowledge you have accrued during the course and assess how this area contributes to our broader knowledge of democracy. In other words, in this section you will “strut your stuff” by showing your audience the depth and intelligence of your training and how this helps us better understand a particular problem in contemporary political theory and practice.

V. Conclusion: Your conclusion should clarify what you wish your reader to take from the review as well as what further questions or issues arise from the work you have done. You need not answer these questions; think of your review as further contributing to the discussion we have begun in the course and preparing all of us for better, more-informed conversation about political life in the future.

You will write, submit for review, and revise sections of the review for me and others to comment on as indicated on the syllabus. *Your final grade will take into account both work submitted over the course of the semester (its timeliness as well as its quality) and your final product.* The critical literature review will count for 40% of your final grade. You must complete the critical literature review to receive credit for this course.

TEXTS

As a condition of taking this course, you must acquire copies of the following texts. You cannot be an effective contributor to this course without having copies of all readings annotated in preparation for discussion with you for every class meeting. You may annotate your readings on your computer, but you must print and bring hard copies of the readings to every class meeting. These books are available for purchase at the bookstore. If you are having trouble acquiring these books, please let me know well in advance of our discussion.

- Robert Dahl, *On Democracy* (Yale, 2000). [NOTE: A second edition has just come out; please buy the first edition.]
- Danielle Allen, *Talking to Strangers* (Chicago, 2006)
- Jeffrey Stout, *Blessed are the Organized* (Princeton, 2012; reprint)

POLICIES (in alphabetical order)

ACADEMIC SUPPORT: I encourage you to reach out to the Academic Support and Learning Resources Specialist to explore effective learning, studying, test-taking, note-taking and time and stress management strategies that are essential to success in this course and college life. Students can schedule a meeting with Rachel Heiser, the Academic Support and Learning Resources Specialist by calling the Dean’s Office at 610.526.5375 or emailing Rachel at rheiser@brynmawr.edu. For more information, please see this site: http://www.brynmawr.edu/deans/acad_support/learning_resources.shtml

ACCOMODATIONS: I encourage any students who think they may need accommodations in this course because of the impact of a learning difference to meet with me early in the semester. Students who attend Bryn Mawr should also contact Access Services Coordinator Deborah Alder at dalder@brynmawr.edu or 610-526-7351 as soon as possible, to verify their eligibility for reasonable accommodations. Haverford Students should contact Patty Rawlings at the Office of Disabilities Services, prawling@haverford.edu or 610-896-1290.

ATTENDANCE: *There are no excused absences from class; every class meeting is an important and unique time for learning and exchange.* If you have a good reason to miss class or come late, please tell me and I will propose a way of making up what you have missed. (If you do not have a good reason, you can tell me as well but I'm unlikely to grant you the opportunity to make it up.)

CANADAY LIBRARY: Olivia Castello, the Social Science Librarian, can help with questions about research and technology; you can reach her at ocastello@brynmawr.edu. She is extremely helpful and knowledgeable. Do not hesitate to talk with her; she has been integral to the development of this course and knows its goals and expectations.

EXTENSIONS: *If you miss a peer revision session you must still have a peer read and respond to your essay according to the distributed guidelines prior to submitting your final essay.* Essays submitted late will receive partial credit, with each day lowering the grade by 10%. That said, I understand sometimes you may for various reasons need more time revising your essay. If you foresee any conflicts (religious holidays, travel plans, etc.), come see me ASAP to discuss your options. In the event of illness or emergency, please also try to contact me ASAP.

INTEGRITY: I am committed to adhering to the standards regarding academic honesty contained in the Bryn Mawr and Haverford honor codes and the values of mutual trust, concern, and respect for oneself and for others upon which the bi-co community depends; I invite all of you to continue the conversation with me and with one another about how we can create the best intellectual community possible.

LAPTOPS: In order to facilitate open and direct discussion, laptop use should be kept to a minimum; if you are not typing your notes, your laptop should be closed or moved to the side so that it does not obstruct your view of other students. I consider inappropriate laptop use during class a violation of the Honor Code and will refer you accordingly.

PHONES: Please keep phones out of sight during class time. If you absolutely must use your phone, please step outside of class. Genuine emergencies excepted, if you are texting or using your phone during class I will count you as absent from the class.

WRITING CENTER: The Writing Center offers free appointments and experienced peer tutors who are there to help you at any stage of the writing process. The Writing Center is located in Canaday Library. You can get more information at <http://www.brynmawr.edu/writingcenter>

SCHEDULE

<u>Week</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>To be prepared before class:</u>
W, 1/20	Possibilities and Problems with Democracy	“Democracy” in <i>Keywords</i> and <i>New Keywords</i>
M, 1/25	Democracies Ancient and Modern Democracy in Ancient Athens	Ober, “What the Ancient Greeks Can Teach Us About Democracy” Optional: Pericles’ Funeral Oration & Plato’s <i>Republic</i>
W, 1/27	Democracy and Democratization	Robert Dahl, <i>On Democracy</i> , pp. 1 – 32 Sheldon Wolin, “Fugitive Democracy” (Moodle)
M, 2/1	Dahl on Democracy: What and Why?	Robert Dahl, <i>On Democracy</i> , pp. 35 – 80 Sheldon Wolin, “Norm and Form” (Moodle)
W, 2/3	Comparing democracies	Robert Dahl, <i>On Democracy</i> , pp. 83 – 141 Jon Elster, “Accountability in Athenian Politics” (Moodle)
M, 2/8	Omnibus Session 1: What is a democracy? Reminder: Groups meet on their own during class time, reading papers aloud to one another.	Complete draft posted on Moodle by 10 am on Monday 2/8 Revised draft and reflection on omnibus due (posted on Moodle) by 8 pm Friday 2/12
W, 2/10	Investigating Democracy: Library session on creating an annotated bibliography	Read Annotated Bibliography Assignment & Create an Annotated Bibliography Entry for Fung, “Democratic Theory and Political Science” Optional: Engeldinger, “Bibliographic Instruction and Critical Thinking” NOTE: Meet in Canaday 315
M, 2/15	Race and American Democracy: Danielle Allen’s <i>Talking to Strangers</i> Democracy and Distrust	Danielle Allen, <i>Talking to Strangers</i> , Chs. 1 – 2
W, 2/17	Democracy and Distrust	Allen, <i>Talking to Strangers</i> , Chs. 3 - 4

M, 2/22	Democracy and Friendship	Allen, <i>Talking to Strangers</i> , Chs. 9 - 11
W, 2/24	Research Check-in: Annotated Bibliography	NOTE: Meeting in Canaday 315 Bring at least five entries from your own research and be ready to share these. Choose your two best with which to work during our class meeting.
M, 2/29	Time to work on Annotated Bibliographies	Joel and Olivia will be available to discuss your work
W, 3/2	Wrap up of first half and remaining questions TBD NOTE: Arlene Saxonhouse Lecture on Thursday, March 3 at 7:30. Attendance required. SPRING BREAK: March 4 – 13	*Annotated Bibliography with at least ten good sources due by 8 pm Friday, March 4.
M, 3/14	Deliberative Democracy	David Held, <i>Models of Democracy</i> , Ch. 9 David Mathews, <i>For Communities to Work</i>
W, 3/16		Seyla Benhabib, "Towards a Deliberative Model of Democratic Life" Jane Mansbridge, "Everyday Talk in the Deliberative System" NOTE: Jeffrey Stout Lecture at Haverford College, at 4:30 pm. Attendance required.
M, 3/21	Critics of Deliberation	James Bohman, "The Coming of Age of Deliberative Democracy" Archon Fung, "Deliberation's Dark Side"
W, 3/23		Lynn Sanders, "Against Deliberation" Iris Marion Young, "Activist Challenges to Deliberative Democracy"

M, 3/28	Deliberative Practice	Martin Carcasson and Leah Sprain, "Deliberative Inquiry: Re-conceptualizing Deliberation"
W, 3/30	Omnibus Session 2: Does deliberative democracy work – why or why not?	Complete draft posted on Moodle by 10 am on Monday 4/11 Revised draft and reflection on omnibus due (posted on Moodle) by 8 pm Friday 4/15
M, 4/4	Participatory Democracy: Theoretical Concerns and Practical Innovations	Albert Dzur, "Four Theses on Participatory Democracy" Carole Pateman, "Participatory Democracy Revisited"
W, 4/6		Archon Fung, "Varieties of Participation in Complex Governance" Archon Fung and Mark Warren, "Vitalizing Democracy Through Participation" Gianpaolo Baiocchi, "Participation, Activism and Politics" Boaventura de Sousa Santos, "Two Democracies, Two Legalities"
M, 4/11	Critical Literature Review Check-In	Complete outline of critical review by 8 pm, Sunday, April 10 No class. Meet with Olivia Castello or Joel to discuss your progress.
W, 4/13	Economic Citizenship	"Democratic Imperatives," pp. 51 – 70 Dahl, <i>On Democracy</i> , pp. 166 – 188
M, 4/18		Gar Alperovitz, "The Cleveland Model" J.K. Gibson-Graham, "Enabling Ethical Economies" Nicholas Iuviene et al., "Sustainable Economic Democracy"
W, 4/20	Radical Democracy: Broad-Based Organizing	Jeffrey Stout, <i>Blessed Are the Organized</i> , pp. 1 – 69
M, 4/25		Stout, <i>Blessed Are the Organized</i> , TBD

W, 4/27 **Conclusion and Future Inquiries**

Reading TBD

NOTE: Final draft of critical literature review due by end of finals period.