

**DEMOCRATIC THEORY**  
***(PRELIMINARY – SUBJECT TO CHANGE)***  
**Fall 2018**

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**Lecture:** Mon 12:30-1:20, Tues 1:30-2:20\*  
**Classroom:** BSB 117  
**Office Hours:** Tues 11:30-1:30  
**Office:** KTH 537

\* Note that the class may occasionally also meet on Thursday, 12:30-1:20 in BSB-117 as announced in advance in class, by email, and on the course Avenue page.

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## **Course Description**

Today just about everyone agrees that democracy is the best form of government, 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 in 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, but even more, what it can and should be.

## **Course Objectives**

This course is designed to provide students with an understanding of a political range of crucial concepts and themes from throughout the history of western democratic theory; to enhance students’ ability to read carefully and critically complex theoretical texts; and to further develop the capacity to formulate an understanding of the concepts and themes of these theories in a rigorous and systematic fashion. The course’s written assignments aim, first, to practice the ability not only to understand particular texts and arguments but to deal with them in a comparative, critical, and synthetic way and, second, to engage critically, rigorously, and respectfully with the ideas and arguments both of these texts and of one’s 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 online.

## **Class Format and Expectations**

There are two hours of lectures each week. Regular attendance and careful preparation for the lectures are essential. Although there will be some time in the lecture periods to raise and discuss issues, online discussion provides the main opportunity for 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.

## **Course Evaluation – Overview**

1. Attendance and participation – 10%
2. Online discussion – 35%
3. Mid-term, Oct. 23 – 20%

4. Cumulative take-home final exam, due Dec. 11 – 35%

## **Course Evaluation – Details**

### **Attendance and participation (10%)**

Attendance will be taken by sign-up sheet during class. Every unexcused absence after the second will result in a 1% penalty on your overall grade.

Constructive participation in class discussion will be rewarded (up to 3% of the total grade). Owing to the size of the class, lack of participation will not be penalized.

### **Online discussion – Avenue to Learn posts (35%)**

You are responsible for posting TWELVE times: at least three comments/questions and three replies before the midterm (Oct. 23) and three of each after the midterm but before the end of classes (Dec. 4). Each 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 online discussion as a whole. Late posts will not be counted – start early!

### **Mid-term (20%), in class October 23**

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 (35%), December 11**

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 Tuesday, December 11 via the class's Avenue to Learn dropbox.

## **Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings**

### **Week 1 (September 4)**

#### **Introduction**

Readings:

Held, *Models of Democracy*, Introduction.

### **Week 2 (September 10 and 11)**

#### **Ancient Democracy**

Readings:

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

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*, pp. 1-28.

### **Week 3 (September 17 and 18)**

#### **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 (September 24 and 25)**

#### **Popular Sovereignty**

Readings:

John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, (Online Library of Liberty), chs. 7-11.

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

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

### **Week 5 (October 1 and 2)**

#### **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 (October 8 and 9)**

**MID-TERM RECESS – No Classes**

**Week 7 (October 15 and 16)**

**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 8 (October 22 and 23)**

**October 22 - Review**

Readings: None

**October 23 – Mid-term (in class)**

Readings: None

**Week 9 (October 29 and 30)**

**Democratic Elitism**

Readings:

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

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

**Week 10 (November 5 and 6)**

**Revolution & Democracy**

Readings:

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

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

**Week 11 (November 12 and 13)**

**Participation & Deliberation**

Readings:

Carole Pateman, *Participation and Democratic Theory* (Cambridge, 1976), ch. 2.

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

Held, *Models of Democracy*, pp. 209-16, ch. 9.

## **Week 12 (November 19 and 20)**

### **Radical Democracy**

Readings:

Held, *Models of Democracy*, ch. 10.

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

Jacques Rancière, "Democracy, Republic, Representation," *Constellations* 13:3 (2006): 297-307.

## **Week 13 (November 26 and 27)**

### **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).

## **Week 14 (December 3 and 4)**

### **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).

## **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 Avenue site.

### **Grades**

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

<b>MARK</b>	<b>GRADE</b>
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-

<b>MARK</b>	<b>GRADE</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**

Attendance will be taken by sign-up sheet during class. Every unexcused absence after the second will result in a 1% penalty on your overall grade, up to a maximum of 10% (the entire Attendance & Participation grade).

### **Avenue to Learn**

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names 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 this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

### **Turnitin.com**

In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal plagiarism. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically to Turnitin.com and in hard copy so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work to Turnitin.com must still submit a copy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, etc.). For more information please refer to the [Turnitin.com Policy](#).

### **University Policies**

#### **Academic Integrity Statement**

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behavior in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

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 behavior 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.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

### **Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities**

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca). For further information, consult McMaster University’s Policy for [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#).

### **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.