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| Mark Brown, Ph.D.  Department of Political Science  CSU, Sacramento  Spring 2019 | Office: Tahoe Hall 3124  Office Hours: TuTh 10:30-11:45 a.m.,  4:30-5:15 p.m., and by appointment  Office Tel.: 916-278-6430  [mark.brown@csus.edu](mailto:mark.brown@csus.edu) |

**POLS 115 Democratic Theory**

TuTh 1:30PM - 2:45PM Alpine Hall 212

**Course Description**

This course offers an introduction to questions of democratic theory and practice, emphasizing the practical contexts of philosophical debates. Although we will examine the historical background of some issues, the focus will be on current dilemmas of democracy. Our first goal is to develop a clear understanding of the conceptual logic and practical implications of such key concepts as liberty, equality, participation, representation, deliberation, and group difference. Our second goal is to enhance your ability to analyze some of the basic challenges facing democracy today, including social inequality, technological change, global capitalism, the mass media, and various forms of populism and authoritarianism.

**Learning Objectives**

The goal of the course is to improve students' ability to analyze and evaluate different ways of thinking about democracy. Students who successfully complete this course will have:

* learned about some of the key ideas and dilemmas associated with democratic theory and practice;
* learned about the value, purpose, and limits of political theory;
* improved their ability to read, discuss, and write about politics and political theory;
* improved their capacity to analyze and evaluate difficult texts in both writing and discussion.

**Required Texts**

The articles listed in the course schedule are on the course Canvas site. Please print them and bring the appropriate copy to each class. You will also need the following required text:

* Frederick G. Whelan, *Democracy in Theory and Practice.* New York: Routledge, 2019. ISBN: 9780815383529

For emergencies only, there is also one copy available on 2-hour reserve at the campus library.

**Requirements and Grading**

Attendance and participation (100 points): This course requires active engagement. I expect students to arrive on time and stay for the entire class. You may miss two classes without penalty. Additional absences, unless excused, will affect your participation grade. I will only excuse absences for serious and non-work-related reasons (e.g., doctor visit, family emergency, military duty, jury duty, religious holiday), and only with documentation. *Please do not email me about your absence*. If you want me to excuse an absence, then when you return to class, please give me a written statement with the date(s) of your absence, the reason, and documentation. *In most cases, more than six unexcused absences will result in a failing grade.* Repeated tardiness will affect your grade, but if you arrive late please enter quietly and take a seat. If you ever need to leave early, please let me know before class and sit near the door.

Much of the reading is quite difficult, so you will need to take an active approach to understanding the texts. You should read allof the assigned reading *before* the day on which it is listed in the schedule. Please also *bring at least one thoughtful question about the assigned reading to each class*. I will frequently call on students to share their questions. To accommodate diverse students, participation grades will be based on a variety of indicators, including the extent to which students: a) attend class ready to discuss the assigned reading; b) prepare thoughtful questions about the reading; c) actively participate in class discussion, group work, writing exercises, and other activities. In calculating your workload for the semester, please consider that this course requires at least six hours per week outside of class (see the Sacramento State [Credit Hour Policy](http://www.csus.edu/acaf/academic%20resources/policies%20and%20procedures/credit%20hour%20policy.html)). Please also note that I will not post lectures notes or slides online.

In-class midterm exam (200 points each) and take-home final exam (250 points): The exams will ask you to demonstrate a clear understanding of the main ideas from course readings and lectures. The midterm will cover the first half of the course; the final will cover the entire course. For the midterm you will need one blue book (any size). The midterm will be closed-book, but you may bring one single sheet of 8.5″ x 11” paper with notes on both sides, in your own handwriting. You must then submit the notes with your exam. The exams will consist of short-answer and essay questions.

Five response papers (200 points): Students will be divided into two groups (A and B) on Canvas, and each group will be assigned five weeks on which to write a 250-word response paper on the *assigned reading for the coming week* (not the past week). I encourage group members to discuss the reading, but you must write your own paper. Response papers should address at least two of the following questions:

1. What information or arguments in this week’s reading did you find most interesting and significant, and why?
2. Which aspect of this week’s reading did you find most difficult to understand?
3. What specific questions do you have about this week’s reading?

Response papers must also include *at least one direct quote with page number* from the relevant text(s) to substantiate what you say about the reading. The best response papers will show detailed and thoughtful engagement with the reading. Response papers are due on Canvas by Monday at 11:59 p.m. of the week in which we discuss the reading you write about. Response papers will be graded A to F. You may only submit response papers on your assigned weeks. Late response papers will be docked 50 percent.

Analytical essay (250 points): Students will analyze and evaluate a key issue from the course in a 1500-word essay (5-6 pages, double-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12-point font). Throughout the semester, we will undertake various brief in-class writing exercises (e.g., paraphrase difficult passages, summarize key arguments) that will provide “raw material” for your essay. A rough draft of at least four pages is due on the date indicated for in-class peer review. The peer review will include a checklist of essential elements. If the final essay that you submit does not satisfy the checklist, I will return it to you unread, and you will have one week to submit a revised version. Essays that require resubmission will be docked one letter grade. Rough drafts will be graded pass/fail, and they will be worth six percent (15 points) of the final essay grade. After I grade your essay, you may submit a rewrite, in which case your final essay grade will be the average of the original and the rewrite. Rewrites must be submitted with the original, and they must include a detailed explanation of how you revised the essay. They must be submitted within two weeks of the day I return your essay. Late essays will be marked down one letter grade; essays more than three days late will be marked down two letter grades. Even if your essay is extremely late, you should still submit it, because you cannot pass the class without completing all the assignments.

Bonus points: Students can receive bonus points for writing reviews of the recommended articles, films, podcasts, and videos in the course schedule and on Canvas. Up to 10 bonus points per review, three reviews maximum. Reviews should be 500 words, single-spaced, and they should include one paragraph summary and one paragraph evaluation. Reviews must be submitted in class during the week the material appears in the course schedule.

Grades: For all assignments, students will receive a percentage of the total available points, according to the following scale: A+ (98-100%), A (95%), A- (92%), B+ (88%), B (85%), B- (82%), C+ (78%), C (75%), C- (72%), etc. Final course grades will be calculated as follows:

940 points or more: A

900-939 points: A-

870-899 points: B+

840-869 points: B

800-839 points: B-

770-799 points: C+

740-769 points: C

700-739 points: C-

670-699 points: D+

640-669 points: D

600-639 points: D-

600 points or less

**Wireless Devices**

Some students like to use a laptop or other wireless device to take notes during class, and some students use wireless devices to read assigned material. But in a classroom wireless devices can be extremely distracting, and studies have shown they often reduce student learning. (See Cindi May, “[A Learning Secret: Don’t Take Notes with a Laptop,](https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-learning-secret-don-t-take-notes-with-a-laptop/)” *Scientific American*, June 3, 2014.) Nonetheless, in this course *wireless devices may be used to take notes, but the wireless receiver must be turned off.* Cell phones must be turned off or set to vibrate or mute. I will ask students to put away wireless devices during class discussions or when students are working in small groups. And of course students may not use wireless devices for any activities not directly related to the course. If you require special accommodation in this regard, please let me know.

**Additional Matters**

If you have a disability and require accommodations, please let me know, and please also contact the Office of Services to Students with Disabilities, Lassen Hall 1008, 916-278-6955. For help with writing, stop by the [University Reading and Writing Center](http://www.csus.edu/writingcenter/), Calaveras Hall 128, 916-278-6356, [writingcenter@csus.edu](mailto:writingcenter@csus.edu). For low-cost personal counseling, contact the [Center for Counseling and Diagnostic Services](http://www.csus.edu/coe/ccds/index.html) at Eureka Hall 421, (916) 278-6252, [ccds@csus.edu](mailto:ccds@csus.edu). More broadly, if you are having trouble with any aspect of the course, or if you would just like to talk over the material, please stop by during my office hours or make an appointment to see me. Don't wait until the end of the semester!

No audio or video recordings are allowed in class without my permission. To protect yourself against computer crashes and lost assignments, be sure to keep an electronic or paper copy of every assignment you submit. Please also keep all your returned assignments until you receive your final course grade for the semester. If one of your assignments gets lost, for whatever reason, you are responsible for providing a copy. Students can drop the course online during the first two weeks. The last day to drop with instructor and chair approval (census date) is February 18. Withdrawals after this date are only allowed for “serious and compelling” reasons. For more information see the campus [drop policy](http://www.csus.edu/cached/acad/faq/dropping-and-withdrawing.html) and the [Add/Drop/Withdrawal Form](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwiy8cXJ5dnVAhUBU2MKHfXZCyAQFggtMAE&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.csus.edu%2Fregistrar%2Fforms%2Fupdaterecord%2Fpetitiontoadddropwithdraw.pdf&usg=AFQjCNHbr7i4m8u6Dqlh6yrAA0txX7AvQg).

Finally, please remember that plagiarism—presenting someone else's work as your own—is a serious violation of academic integrity and university policy. Plagiarism will be punished in proportion to the severity of the case, but any plagiarism is likely to result in a failing grade for the course and may lead to additional penalties, including expulsion from the University. If you are not sure what plagiarism is, please ask me or consult the [library plagiarism website.](http://csus.libguides.com/plagiarism)

**Course Schedule.** Most readings are in Whelan, *Democracy in Theory and Practice,* except forthose marked with an asterisk (\*), which are on Canvas.

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| Jan. 22  Jan. 24 | | **1: Introduction**  Course overview.  [Leonard Cohen, "Democracy"](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DU-RuR-qO4Y)  \* Robert Dahl, *On Democracy* (1998), pp. 1-21.  \* Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, “[This Is How Democracies Die,](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/commentisfree/2018/jan/21/this-is-how-democracies-die)” The Guardian, January 21, 2018.  \* Sean Illing, “[Why the death of democracy may be overhyped,](https://www.vox.com/2018/7/2/17500564/is-democracy-dying-trump-treisman-interview)” *Vox*, July 2, 2018. |
| Jan. 29  Jan. 31 | | **2: What Is Democracy?**  Whelan, Chap. 1, “Introduction,” pp. 1-22  \* Benjamin Isakhan, “Introduction: The Complex and Contested History of Democracy,” in *The Edinburgh Companion to the History of Democracy*, ed. Benjamin Isakhan and Stephen Stockwell. Edinburgh University Press, 2012.  Amartya Sen*, "*Democracy and Its Global Roots*:* Why Democratization Is Not the Same as Westernization," *New Republic* 6 (2003): 28–35 |
| Feb. 5  Feb. 7 | | **3: The Value of Democracy**  Whelan, Chap. 2., “Democratic Principles,” pp. 27-63.  Whelan, Chap. 3, “Democracy and Other Values,” pp. 68-94. |
| Feb. 12  Feb. 14 | | **4: Voting**  Whelan, Chap. 4, “The Right to Vote,” pp. 98-125.  Whelan, Chap. 5, “Issues in Democratic Voting,” pp. 130-166. |
| Feb. 19  Feb. 21 | | **5: Participation**  Whelan, Chap. 7, “Participation and Democracy,” pp. 217-245.  Whelan, Chap. 8, “Direct and Formative Democracy,” pp. 251-278. |
| Feb. 26  Feb. 28 | | **6: Deliberation**  Whelan, Chap. 9, “Communication and Deliberation,” pp. 285-332.  \* Lynn M. Sanders, “Against Deliberation,” *Political Theory* 25:3 (1997). |
| Mar. 5  Mar. 7 | | **7: Representation**  Whelan, Chap. 10, “Accountability and Representation,” pp. 343-381.  Whelan, Chap. 11, “The Representation of Interests,” pp. 389-404. |
| Mar. 12  Mar. 14 | | **8: Representation Rethought**  \* O’Neill, John. 2001. “Representing People, Representing Nature, Representing the World.” *Environment and Planning C* 19 (4): 483-500.  \* Leo Hickman, “[The lawyer who defends animals,](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/mar/05/lawyer-who-defends-animals)” *The Guardian,* March 5, 2010.  MIDTERM EXAM |
| *Spring Break* | | |
| Mar. 26  Mar. 28 | **9: Constitutions and Institutions**  Whelan, Chap. 12, “Constitutionalism,” pp. 407-434.  Whelan, Chap. 13, “Forms of Democratic Government,” pp. 441-459. | |
| Apr. 2  Apr. 4 | **10: Publicity, Transparency, and Time**  Whelan, Chap. 16, “Additional Principles of Democratic Governance,” pp. 543-575.  ESSAY DRAFT DUE FOR IN-CLASS PEER REVIEW | |
| Apr. 9  Apr. 11 | **11: Populism and Democracy**  FINAL ESSAY DUE IN CLASS  Jan-Werner Müller, “[Trump, Erdoğan, Farage: The Attractions of Populism for Politicians, the Dangers for Democracy,](https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/sep/02/trump-erdogan-farage-the-attractions-of-populism-for-politicians-the-dangers-for-democracy)” *The Guardian*, September 2, 2016.  Agnes Heller, “[What Happened to Hungary,](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/16/opinion/politics/what-happened-to-hungary.html?rref=collection%2Fspotlightcollection%2Fworld-review-the-state-of-democracy-2018)” *The New York Times*, September 16, 2018.  Peter C. Baker, “[‘We the People’: The Battle to Define Populism,](https://www.theguardian.com/news/2019/jan/10/we-the-people-the-battle-to-define-populism)” *The Guardian,* January 10, 2019. | |
| Apr. 16  Apr. 18 | **12: Capitalism and Democracy**  \* Robert Dahl, "Why Market-Capitalism Favors Democracy," and "Why Market-Capitalism Harms Democracy," in *On Democracy* (1998), 166-179.  \* Tom Malleson, “Economic Democracy: The Left’s Big Idea for the 21st Century?” *New Political Science* 35:1 (2013): 84-108. | |
| Apr. 23  Apr. 25 | **13: Immigration and Democracy**  \* Sarah Song, “Political Theories of Migration,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 21 (2018): 385–402.  Reading TBA | |
| Apr. 30  May 2 | **14: Social Media and Democracy**  \* Joshua A. Tucker, Yannis Theocharis, Margaret E. Roberts, and Pablo Barberá et. al. "From Liberation to Turmoil: Social Media and Democracy." *Journal of Democracy* 28, no. 4 (2017): 46-59.  \* Malcolm Gladwell, “Small Change: Why the Revolution Will Not be Tweeted,” [*The New Yorker*,](http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/10/04/101004fa_fact_gladwell?currentPage=all) October 4, 2010.  \* Yascha Mounk, “[Can Liberal Democracy Survive Social Media?](https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2018/04/30/can-liberal-democracy-survive-social-media/)” *The New York Review of Books,* April 30, 2018. | |
| May 7  May 9 | **15: Democracy’s Future**  **Reading TBA**  **Course review** | |
|  | FINAL TAKE-HOME EXAM DUE ON CANVAS WED, MAY 15, 11:59 PM | |