Political Science 306
Contemporary Democratic Theory
Mondays and Wednesdays 2:45 – 4:05, Humanities 24

Required Readings
All readings will be posted on Blackboard (The SUNY Albany Webpage) after the first week.

The Project at Hand – Course Description:
The word “democracy” is a term that we use very loosely not only in political rhetoric and discussions, but also, in a more general sense whenever we want to legitimize a group’s decision-making process. Our project this semester is to consider what democracy means; whether it is a legitimate and a feasible political system of government; if we have a democracy in American and if so to what extent; and if we ought to foster democracy in our lives, in the country and in the world, and if so how.

Course Requirements:
Class Participation (10%)
Five Quizzes – (Each 3% -Total 15%)
Midterm Exam (20%)
First Paper 7-8 pages (25%)
Second Paper 9-10 pages (30%)

Office Hours:
Mondays 4:10 to 5:10 pm, Wednesdays 1:30 – 2:30 pm, or by appointment
Office Political Science Contact Office, Humanities 16

Papers:
Half a grade will be deducted for everyday (including weekends) a paper is late. Late papers should be turned in at the end of lecture or at the contact office (with the time and date stamped). If you need to turn in a paper during the weekend you can e-mail it to me, however, this is the only case where I will accept papers sent through e-mail.

Problems:
Please inform me of any problems or disabilities (i.e., learning, legal, or medical problems) that might affect your performance in class and I will try to make accommodations. Participation constitutes 10% of your grade. If you have a fear of public speaking, in lieu class participation, you can attend office hours.

Now sit back and enjoy our journey through democratic thought!
Tentative Course Outline

I – Introduction
Assessing Democracy
   Legitimacy, Effectiveness, Tradition
   Types of Rule
      - Aristotle's Politics (Non-Reading)

II - Types of Democracies
1 - Republican Democracy
   - Jean-Jacques Rousseau: from The Social Contract
2 - Liberal Democracy
   - Madison: Federalist #10 & #51*
   - Louis Hartz: from The Liberal Tradition in America*
   - Thomas Jefferson: Letters - On Natural Aristocracy* (Non-Reading)
   - J. S. Mill (Non-Reading)
3 - Elite Theory and Elite Democracy
   A - Elite Theory
      Gaetano Mosca: from The Ruling Class
      Robert Michels: from Political Parties
   B - Elite Democracy
      Joseph Schumpeter - from Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy
      C. Wright Mills – from The Power Elite*

Midterm
4 - Social Democracy
   - Herbert Croly: from The Promise of American Life*
   - T.H. Marshall; from Class, Citizenship, and Social Development
5 - Pluralism
   - Robert Dahl: from Who Governs; from Preface to Democratic Theory
6 - Deliberative Democracy
   - Joshua Cohen: Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy
   - Jürgen Habermas: The Public Sphere

III - Selected Topics
1 - Individualism versus Community
   The Virtues of Individualism
      - American Transcendentalists
   The dangers of individualism the possibilities of civic society
      - Alexis de Tocqueville: from Democracy in America
      - Robert Putnam: Bowling Alone
      - Cass R. Sunstein: from Republic.com 2.0
   Meeting 11
   Meetings 12, 13 & 14
2 - Democracy and Bureaucracy
   - Max Weber: *from Bureaucracy*; and *from Politics as a Vocation*

**First Paper Due**

3 - The Market and Democracy
   - Charles E. Lindblom: *from Politics and the Market*
   - Milton Friedman: *Capitalism and Freedom*
   - Amy Chau: *from World on Fire*

4 – Participation
   - Carole Pateman: *from Participation and Democratic Theory*
   - Walter Lippmann: *from The Phantom Public*

6 – Public Opinion and the Media
   - Walter Lippmann: *from Public Opinion*
   - Robert W. McChesney: *from Corporate Media and the Threat to Democracy*

7 – Breath and Depth of Democracy
   - Benjamin Barber: *from Strong Democracy*
   - Robert Dahl: *Workplace Democracy*
   - Students for a Democracy Society
   - Ronald Inglehart & Pippa Norris: *from The Rising Tide*

8 - Structures and Procedures
   - Robert Dahl: *from Democracy and Its Critics*
   - Shepsle & Boncheck: *from Analyzing Politics*
   - Electoral College
   - Arrow’s Paradox
   - Duvergy’s Law

9 - Democracy and the World
   - Michael Doyle: *Kant’s Perpetual Peace*
   - Larry Diamond: *Universal Democracy*
   - Francis Fukuyama – *from the End of History*

Meetings 15 & 16
Meetings 17 & 18
Meetings 19 & 20
Meetings 21 & 22
Meetings 23 & 24

* Readings that I also discuss in RPOS 307 – American Political Thought

**Important Ideas that Are Missing from the Course**

Democracies by other names, most of which overlap with the types of democracies discussed in class, are as follows:

- Popular Democracy - Representative Democracy
- Procedural Democracy - Direct Democracy
- Strong Democracy - Protective Democracy
- Developmental Democracy - Polyarchy

Other important Topics are as follows:

- Equality - Civil Rights (Political equality - Race and Gender)
- Civil Liberties (Rights) - Security
- Citizenship - Representation
- Democratic Development - The Environment
- Community - Transcendentalism
- Civil Disobedience