

Department of Political Science  
SUNY Albany  
Spring 2011

Wesley Nishiyama  
wn8492@albany.edu

**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)

Meetings 1 & 2

## 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)

Meetings 3 & 4

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\*

Meeting 5 & 6

## Midterm

Meeting 7

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

Meetings 8 & 9

6 - Deliberative Democracy  
- Joshua Cohen: *Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy*  
- Jürgen Habermas: *The Public Sphere*

Meetings 10

## 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

<p>2 - Democracy and Bureaucracy  - Max Weber: <i>from <u>Bureaucracy</u></i>; and <i>from <u>Politics as a Vocation</u></i></p>	}	Meetings 15 & 16
<p><b>First Paper Due</b></p>		
<p>3 - The Market and Democracy  - Charles E. Lindblom: <i>from <u>Politics and the Market</u></i>  - Milton Friedman: <i>Capitalism and Freedom</i>  - Amy Chau: <i>from <u>World on Fire</u></i></p>	}	Meetings 17 & 18
<p>4 – Participation  - Carole Pateman: <i>from <u>Participation and Democratic Theory</u></i>  - Walter Lippmann: <i>from <u>The Phantom Public*</u></i></p>		
<p>6 – Public Opinion and the Media  - Walter Lippmann: <i>from <u>Pubic Opinion</u></i>  - Robert W. McChesney: <i>from <u>Corporate Media and the Threat to Democracy</u></i></p>	}	Meetings 19 & 20
<p>7 –Breath and Depth of Democracy  - Benjamin Barber: <i>from <u>Strong Democracy</u></i>  - Robert Dahl: <i>Workplace Democracy</i>  - Students for a Democracy Society  - Ronald Inglehart &amp; Pippa Norris: <i>from <u>The Rising Tide</u></i></p>		
<p>8 - Structures and Procedures  - Robert Dahl: <i>from <u>Democracy and Its Critics</u></i>  - Shepsle &amp; Boncheck: <i>from <u>Analyzing Politics</u></i>  - Electoral College  - Arrow’s Paradox  - Duvergy’s Law</p>	}	Meetings 21 & 22
<p>9 - Democracy and the World  - Michael Doyle - <i>Kant's Perpetual Peace</i>  - Larry Diamond - <i>Universal Democracy</i>  - Francis Fukyama – <i>from the End of History</i></p>		
	}	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       |   |