

Democracy & Equality

PHIL 830: Seminar in Democratic Theory

Spring 2014
Wednesdays, 3-5:20pm
Baker Hall 150

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This course aims to explore the connections and tensions between democracy and equality. It is loosely organized around three separate but interrelated questions: What is the basis for democratic legitimacy, and what role does equality play in justifying democracy? What constitutes political equality? And to what extent are democratic legitimacy and democratic outcomes threatened by inequality? The course will focus on accounts of democratic legitimacy as well as theoretical and empirical research regarding the effects of socio-economic inequality on cognitive and deliberative capacities and political effectiveness.

Required Texts

All required course readings will be made available electronically, but students are strongly encouraged to purchase the following compendium, which includes a good subset of democratic theory canon and in which many of the assigned readings are available:

Christiano, T. (ed). (2003). Philosophy & Democracy. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Course Requirements

Short Response Pieces – 20% - 6 short response pieces, with the lowest grade dropped. No longer than 3 double-spaced pages, the goal of the response piece is not expository but analytical. Argue for a thesis or raise an objection that you think is important and interesting. Short response pieces are due no later than 8am on the day of class, and may (will) be used during class discussion. Each student must turn in at least one response piece during each of the months Jan, Feb, Mar, and Apr.

Conference Paper & In-Class Presentation – 25% - A conference-length (~3000 words) paper which you will present in class on a week of your choosing. Papers must be distributed to all members of the group no later than 8pm the night before your presentation. Students are expected to read each other's papers and come to class ready to give constructive feedback.

Conference Paper Re-Write – 35% - A revision of your presentation paper in light of our discussion on your presentation day and my comments. All students will have at least two weeks to complete their revisions.

In-Class Participation – 20% - Please complete all readings before class come to class prepared to contribute to discussion. In particular, be prepared to explain the major theses of assigned readings, the arguments for those theses, and to critically evaluate those arguments.

Class Policies

Late short response pieces are not accepted. Late papers will be penalized half a letter grade (5 points) for every day or portion of a day that they are late. I have a zero-tolerance policy for cheating: any student found to have plagiarized on any assignment will receive a failing grade for the entire course, and all available institutional penalties will be sought.

Note:

There will be no class meeting at the regular scheduled time on Wednesday, April 16. We will make this meeting up on a date/time TBD sometime early this semester.

If you wish to request an accommodation due to a documented disability, please notify me and contact Disability Resources at access@andrew.cmu.edu or 412-268-2013 as soon as possible.

Political Authority

For students without significant background in political philosophy, it may be useful to do some background reading on the broader topic of political authority. The following are recommended resources:

Simmons, A. J. (1979). Moral Principles and Political Obligation. Princeton, Princeton University Press.

Schmidtz, D. (1990). "Justifying the State." Ethics **101**(1): 89-102.

Raz, J. (1986). The Morality of Freedom. Oxford, Clarendon Press, chs. 2-4.

Rawls, J. (1999 [1964]). Legal Obligation and the Duty of Fair Play. John Rawls: Collected Papers. S. Freeman. Cambridge, Harvard University Press.

Outline of Topics & (Tentative) Schedule of Readings

(blue text indicates theoretical/empirical work on political inequality)

Instrumental Democratic Legitimacy

1st Meeting

1. Arneson, R. (2004). Democracy is Not Intrinsically Just. Justice and Democracy: Essays for Brian Barry. K. Dowding, R. E. Goodin and C. Pateman. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

2nd Meeting

2. Dworkin, R. (2002). Sovereign Virtue. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, ch. 4. (Also available in Philosophy & Democracy. T. Christiano. Oxford, Oxford University Press: 116-137.)
3. Arneson, R. (2003). Democratic Rights at the National Level. Philosophy & Democracy. T. Christiano. Oxford, Oxford University Press: 95-115.

Additional Recommended Readings

Griffin, C. G. (2003). "Democracy as a Non-Instrumentally Just Procedure." Journal of Political Philosophy **11**(1): 111-121.

Arneson, R. (2003). "Defending the Purely Instrumental Account of Democratic Legitimacy." Journal of Political Philosophy **11**(1): 122-132.

Sen, A. (1999). "Democracy as a Universal Value." Journal of Democracy **10**(3): 3-17.

Ober, J. (2007). "Natural Capacities and Democracy as a Good-in-Itself." Philosophical Studies **132**(1): 59-73.

Intrinsic Democratic Legitimacy

3rd Meeting

4. Dahl, R. A. (1989). Democracy and its Critics. New Haven, Yale University Press, chs. 6-7.
5. Christiano, T. (1996). The Rule of the Many. Boulder, Westview Press, ch. 2.
6. Lee, S. (2001). "A Paradox of Democracy." Public Affairs Quarterly **15**(3): 261-269.

Additional Recommended Readings

- Dahl, R. A. (1979). Procedural Democracy. Philosophy, Politics and Society: Fifth Series. P. Laslett and J. Fishkin. New Haven, Yale University Press: 97-133.
- Brighouse, H. and M. Fleurbaey (2010). "Democracy and Proportionality." Journal of Political Philosophy **18**(2): 137-155.

Social Choice Theory

4th Meeting

7. Riker, W. (2003). Social Choice Theory and Constitutional Democracy. Philosophy & Democracy. T. Christiano. Oxford, Oxford University Press: 161-194.
8. Buchanan, J. and G. Tullock (2003). The Calculus of Consent. Philosophy & Democracy. T. Christiano. Oxford, Oxford University Press: 195-215.

Republicanism & Positive Autonomy

5th Meeting

9. Raz, J. (1986). The Morality of Freedom. Oxford, Clarendon Press, ch. 14.
10. Pettit, P. (1999). Republican Freedom and Contestatory Democratization. Democracy's Values. I. Shapiro and C. Hacker-Cordsn. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: 163-190.
11. Mani, A., S. Mullainathan, et al. (2013). "Poverty Impedes Cognitive Function." Science **341**(6149): 976-980.

Additional Recommended Readings

- Pettit, P. (1997). Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government. Oxford, Oxford University Press, chs. 2-4, 6.

Complex Procedural Equality

6th Meeting – Reasonable Acceptability

12. Beitz, C. (1989). Political Equality: An Essay in Democratic Theory. Princeton, Princeton University Press, chs. 4-5.

7th Meeting – Public Equality

13. Christiano, T. (2008). The Constitution of Equality: Democratic Authority and its Limits. Oxford, Oxford University Press, ch. 3.
14. Bartels, L. M. (2009). Economic Inequality and Political Representation. The Unsustainable American State. L. R. Jacobs and D. King. Oxford, Oxford University Press: 167-196.

Deliberative Democracy

8th Meeting

15. Elster, J. (2003). The Market and the Forum: Three Varieties of Political Theory. Philosophy & Democracy. T. Christiano. Oxford, Oxford University Press: 138-158.
16. Habermas, J. (1996). Between Facts and Norms. Cambridge, The MIT Press, Appendix 1.

Additional Recommended Readings

- Gutmann, A. and D. Thompson (2004). Why Deliberative Democracy? Princeton, Princeton University Press, ch. 1.
- Habermas, J. (1996). Between Facts and Norms. Cambridge, The MIT Press, ch. 7

9th Meeting

17. Cohen, J. (2003). Procedure and Substance in Deliberative Democracy. Philosophy & Democracy. T. Christiano. Oxford, Oxford University Press: 17-38.
18. Gutmann, A. and D. Thompson (2004). Why Deliberative Democracy? Princeton, Princeton University Press, ch. 3.

Epistemic Proceduralism & Epistemic Breakdown

10th Meeting

19. Estlund, D. (2003). Beyond Fairness and Deliberation: The Epistemic Dimension of Democratic Authority. Philosophy & Democracy. T. Christiano. Oxford, Oxford University Press: 69-91.
20. Landmore, H. (2013). Democratic Reason: Politics, Collective Intelligence, and the Rule of the Many. Princeton: Princeton University Press, chs. 5 & 7.

Democratic Equality and Inequality

11th Meeting

21. Downs, A. ([1957] 1985). An Economic Theory of Democracy. New York, Addison Wesley, chs. 11-14.
22. Excerpts from: Delli Carpini, M. X. (1999). In Search of the Informed Citizen: What Americans Know about Politics and Why it Matters. The Transformation of Civic Life. Middle Tennessee State University.

12th Meeting

23. Knight, J. and J. Johnson (1997). What Sort of Political Equality Does Deliberative Democracy Require? Deliberative Democracy: Essays on Reason and Politics. J. Bohman and W. Rehg. Cambridge, The MIT Press: 279-319.
24. Solt, F. (2008). "Economic Inequality and Democratic Political Engagement." American Journal of Political Science 52(1): 48-60.

13th Meeting

25. Bohman, J. (1997). Deliberative Democracy and Effective Social Freedom: Capabilities, Resources, and Opportunities. Deliberative Democracy: Essays on Reason and Politics. J. Bohman and W. Rehg. Cambridge, The MIT Press: 321-348.
26. Young, I. M. (1997). Difference as a Resource for Democratic Communication. Deliberative Democracy: Essays on Reason and Politics. J. Bohman and W. Rehg. Cambridge, The MIT Press: 383-406.

14th Meeting

27. Ferejohn, J. (2009). Is Inequality a Threat to Democracy? The Unsustainable American State. L. R. Jacobs and D. King. Oxford, Oxford University Press: 34-60.
28. Gilens, M. (2009). "Preference Gaps and Inequality in Representation." PS: Political Science & Politics **42**(2): 335-341.

15th Meeting

29. Christiano, T. (2008). The Constitution of Equality: Democratic Authority and its Limits. Oxford, Oxford University Press, ch. 7.