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:

Outline of Topics & (Tentative) Schedule of Readings
(blue text indicates theoretical/empirical work on political inequality)

Instrumental Democratic Legitimacy
1st Meeting

2nd Meeting

Additional Recommended Readings
**Intrinsic Democratic Legitimacy**

3rd Meeting


Additional Recommended Readings


**Social Choice Theory**

4th Meeting


**Republicanism & Positive Autonomy**

5th Meeting


Additional Recommended Readings


**Complex Procedural Equality**

6th Meeting – Reasonable Acceptability


7th Meeting – Public Equality

Deliberative Democracy

8th Meeting

Additional Recommended Readings

9th Meeting

Epistemic Proceduralism & Epistemic Breakdown
10th Meeting

Democratic Equality and Inequality
11th Meeting

12th Meeting
13th Meeting

14th Meeting

15th Meeting