

# **Political Science 2004: Survey of Western Political Thought**

Summer Semester 2011 B Term

Instructor: Prof. Horst Mewes

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Office: Ketchum 134 B. Hours: after class, or by appointment

## **COURSE THEME:**

### ***The Emergence of Democratic Ideas in Western Culture***

This semester we will study past and present political thinkers in order to understand the development of democracy in Europe and North America. Some major themes will be the differences and similarities between modern and ancient (Greek) democracy; the nature of 'popular sovereignty and its relation to representative government;' the relation between private rights and political participation in today's democracies; the relation between modern economics and democratic self-government. Hopefully, tracing the slow historical growth and emergence of democracy and its most essential elements will help us in better confronting the problems of democracy today and in the future.

## **Course OUTLINE**

### **SECTION ONE**

**Basic foundations and principles of *modern* democracy: the example of the American republic after 1776:** the relations between individual rights and government; the nature of representative government; the people's activism in society;

#### ***Readings (selected excerpts):***

1. The Declaration of Independence 1776
2. The new Constitution of 1789 (Preamble, Bill of Rights, Amendments);
3. The Federalist Papers, an explanation of that Constitution by some of its 'framers,' James Madison and Alexander Hamilton. (Federalist no. 57, 10, 51)

## **SECTION TWO**

**The main differences, and some similarities, between *ancient and modern* democracy:** the priorities between private rights and public or political rights; the greatness of political life; critique of the people's ability to govern; citizens as friends rather than enemies.

### ***Readings (selected excerpts):***

1. Benjamin Constant: The liberty of the ancients compared to that of the moderns. (available online)
2. Thucydides: Pericles' Funeral Oration (available online)
3. Plato: excerpts on Plato's critique of democracy (available online)
4. Aristotle on democracy; citizenship as a form of friendship. (available online) (specific instructions for the readings will be given in class)

## **SECTION THREE**

**Modern democracy: problems, innovations and alternatives:** individual rights and responsibilities; majority government; democracy as perfect human liberation; democracy and equality.

### ***Readings (selected excerpts):***

1. John Locke: Two Treatises of Government, second Treatise
2. J.J. Rousseau: The Social Contract
3. K Marx: The Communist Manifesto
4. A. deTocqueville: Democracy in America

## **SECTION FOUR**

**Problems of popular self-government in democracy today:** who participates and who 'rules' in today's democracy, and why?

### ***Readings (selected excerpts):***

1. Robert Dahl: How Democratic is the Constitution?
2. Sheldon Wolin on democracy and the capitalistic economic system
3. Robert Putnam: Bowling Alone (democratic participation today)
4. Theda Skocpol: Diminished Democracy ( on citizenship and political participation today.)

### **Required Reading assignments:**

**NOTE: A SEPARATE SYLLABUS WITH SPECIFIC (CHAPTERS, PAGES) READING ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE SHORTLY**

1. Hamilton, Madison: The Federalist Papers, nos. 10,57,51,
2. Benjamin Constant: Ancient liberty compared to that of the Moderns
3. Plato on Democracy: excerpts from The Republic
4. Aristotle: excerpts from The Politics and Nichomachean Ethics
5. Thucydides: The Peloponnesian Wars, Pericles's Funeral Oration
6. John Locke: excerpts from Two Treatises of Government, Second Treatise
7. J.J. Rousseau: excerpts from The Social Contract
8. K. Marx: excerpts from The Communist Manifesto
9. A. deTocqueville: excerpts from Democracy in America
10. R. Dahl: excerpts from How Democratic is the Constitution
11. S. Wolin: excerpts from Democracy Incorporated
12. Th. Skocpol: excerpts from Diminished Democracy
13. Rbt. Putnam: excerpts from Bowling Alone, on political participation

### **Semester Calendar**

#### **Week of July 5-8**

Section One: The first modern republic: the American Constitution of 1787 and democratic society and government.

(Basic concepts: republican government based on the sovereignty of the people; constitutional government; representative government; basic freedoms as natural rights.)

### **Week of July 11-15**

Section Two: Characteristics of Ancient Athenian democracy and their relevance today (Plato, Aristotle, Thucydides)

### **Week of July 18-22**

Section Three: different views of democracy in the modern age. (Locke, Rousseau, Marx, Tocqueville)

### **Midterm examination: Wednesday, July 20**

### **Week of July 25-29**

#### **Section Three continued.**

Beginning of Section Four: Problems of popular self-government in contemporary democracy. (Dahl, Wolin, Skocpol, Putnam)

### **Week of August 1-5**

Section Four continued

### **Final examination: Friday, August 5**

### **Course Requirements**

Your final grade will be determined on the basis of the following:

- a. Together, the midterm and final examinations will constitute 80% of your grade (40pts. each) The exams will consist of essay questions plus a section of multiple choice-type questions.

- b. Additionally, there will be 10 (ten) brief, *unannounced quizzes*, worth 2pts. each, for 20% of your final grade. (These quizzes will not be announced in order to control class attendance, which is required.)

**University Policies**

<http://www.colorado.edu/policies/acadinteg.html>