DEMOCRATIC THEORY
POLI 7991
Dustin Howes
Tuesday 6:10-9:00pm

Professor Dustin Howes
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Office Hours in 219 Stubbs
Thursday 3:30pm-5:30pm

Course Description

This course examines some of the influential texts in democratic theory, with a slight emphasis on the relationship between freedom and violence and texts not covered by other upper level political theory courses at LSU.

The purpose of the course is to acquaint you with primary texts, which provide a jumping off point for your own ideas and research. While the complexity of some of the texts requires us to spend significant time grappling with the meaning and importance of the course materials, a high premium will be placed on creativity and the application of theory to practical problems.

Course Requirements

2 Presentations/Précis

Each week, one or two students will share their thoughts about the readings and the recommended readings for 5 to 10 minutes. Discuss things that provoked you, examine arguments that troubled you and, most importantly, raise questions that occurred to you. Along with the presentation, each presenter will write a one page précis, which encapsulates the most important themes in the book (or books) and distribute copies of the précis to all of the students in the class.

2 Papers

You will also write two papers for the course. I will distribute prompts a week before each paper is due, but you can also write on topics of your own choosing. Papers on particular thinkers should engage to some extent with the recommended reading or other secondary sources. The final paper can serve as a trial run for a journal length article.

Papers should be e-mailed to the instructor by the time and date on the syllabus. Late papers are deducted a full letter grade.
Participation
Your participation grade will be based on my sense of your overall engagement with the course materials. This includes participation in class discussion but can also include coming to office hours or questions and thoughts shared over email.

Grading Summary
- Participation: 20%
- Group Presentations and Précis: 20%
- Paper One (5 to 10 pages): 25%
- Paper Two (10 to 20 pages): 35%

Texts
- *Two Treatises of Government*. John Locke. Cambridge University Press

Course Schedule

**Week One**
August 24th

Class Introduction
Screening of Secret Ballot (105 min.)

**Week Two**
August 31st

**Plato, Apology, Crito**

Recommended:
**Week Three**  
September 7th

Plato, *Hippias Minor, Laches, Menexenus*

Recommended:  
Dana Villa, *Socratic Citizenship*

**Week Four**  
September 14th

Aristotle, *The Politics*, Books 1, 3-7

Recommended:  

**Week Five**  
September 21st

Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*  
The Table of Contents  
I: 1-10, 16-18, 24, 27, 41, 42, 45-47, 53-55, 57-58  
II: 1-3, 9-10, 13, 19, 23, 28, 32  
III: 1, 3, 4, 6-9, 13, 19-24, 26, 28-29, 40-42, 49

Recommended:  
J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*  
Hannah Pitkin, * Fortune is A Woman*

**Week Six**  
September 28th

John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*  
John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*

Recommended:  
Richard Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Politics and Locke’s Two Treatises of Government*  
Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*  
Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract*  
Wendy Brown, *Regulating Aversion: Tolerance in an Age of Identity and Empire*

**PAPER ONE DUE: October 1st at 5pm**
**Week Seven**  
October 5th

*Rousseau, The Social Contract*

Recommended:  

**Week Eight**  
October 12th

*Montesquieu, Spirit of the Laws*  
Preface, Author’s Notes, Books 1-3, 5, 6, 7 (chapters 8-17), 11, 12, 14 (1-6), 15 (1-8), 20-1 (first 3 chapters of each).

Recommended:  
Benjamin Constant, ‘On the liberty of the ancients compared with that of the moderns’  
Isaiah Berlin, *Liberty: Incorporating Four Essays on Liberty*

**Week Nine**  
October 19th

*Publius, Federalist Papers*, nos. 1, 2, 6, 9, 10, 14, 35, 49, 51, 72, 85  
*Brutus, The Letters of Brutus*, nos. 1-4 (available online)

Recommended:  

**Week Ten**  
October 26th

*Thoreau, Civil Disobedience*  
*Emerson, Self-Reliance*

Recommended:  
Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*

**Week Eleven**  
November 2nd

*Carl Schmitt, The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy*  
*Carl Schmitt, The Concept of the Political*

Recommended:  
J. Habermas, ‘On the Relation Between the Nation, the Rule of Law, and Democracy’, in *The Inclusion of the Other*
Week Twelve
November 9th

Albert Camus, *The Rebel: An Essay on Man in Revolt*
Parts I, II, III (skim) and V.

Recommended:

Week Thirteen
November 16th

Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, Lecture 8

Recommended:
John Seery, *Political Theory for Mortals*, Chapters One and Five

Week Fourteen
November 23rd

Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, Chapters 4, 7, 8 and 9.

Recommended:
Iris Marion Young, “Communication and the Other: Beyond Deliberative Democracy,” in Benhabib (ed) *Democracy and Difference*
Seyla Benhabib, “Toward a Deliberative Model of Democratic Legitimacy,” in *Democracy and Difference.*

Week Fifteen
November 30th

Final Paper Due at 5pm.