

UC 12118 12F

CBM003 ADD/CHANGE FORM

APPROVED MAR 27 2013

Undergraduate Council  
 New Course  Course Change  
 Core Category: ~~Lang/Phil/Culture~~ Effective Fall 2014  
WID

or

Graduate/Professional Studies Council  
 New Course  Course Change  
 Effective Fall 2013

1. Department: POLS College: CLASS
2. Faculty Contact Person: JW Jackson Telephone: 3-3919 Email: jjackson5@uh.edu
3. Course Information on New/Revised course:
  - Instructional Area / Course Number / Long Course Title:  
POLS / 3343 / Democratic Theory
  - Instructional Area / Course Number / Short Course Title (30 characters max.)  
POLS / 3343 / DEMOCRATIC THEORY
  - SCH: 3.00 Level: JR CIP Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Lect Hrs: 3 Lab Hrs: 0
4. Justification for adding/changing course: To meet core curriculum requirements
5. Was the proposed/revised course previously offered as a special topics course?  Yes  No  
 If Yes, please complete:
  - Instructional Area / Course Number / Long Course Title:  
\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_
  - Course ID: \_\_\_\_\_ Effective Date (currently active row): \_\_\_\_\_
6. Authorized Degree Program(s): BA/BS
  - Does this course affect major/minor requirements in the College/Department?  Yes  No
  - Does this course affect major/minor requirements in other Colleges/Departments?  Yes  No
  - Can the course be repeated for credit?  Yes  No (if yes, include in course description)
7. Grade Option: Letter (A, B, C ...) Instruction Type: lecture ONLY (Note: Lect/Lab info. must match item 3, above.)
8. If this form involves a change to an existing course, please obtain the following information from the course inventory: Instructional Area / Course Number / Long Course Title  
POLS / 3343 / Democratic Theory
  - Course ID: 39670 Effective Date (currently active row): 20008
9. Proposed Catalog Description: (If there are no prerequisites, type in "none".)  
 Cr: 3. (3-0). Prerequisites: POLS 1336 and 1337 or equivalent, or consent of instructor. Description (30 words max.): A critical examination of the theoretical foundation for popular control of government, and empirical conditions and problems associated with such control.
10. Dean's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 10/8/12  
 Print/Type Name: Dr. Sarah Fishman

RECEIVED OCT 12 2012

## REQUEST FOR COURSES IN THE CORE CURRICULUM

Originating Department or College: Political Science

Person Making Request: Jeffrey Church

Telephone: 7-3911

Email: jchurch@unl.edu

Dean's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 9/7/12

Course Number and Title: POLS 3343 Democratic Theory

Please attach in separate documents:

Completed CBM003 Add/Change Form with Catalog Description

Syllabus

List the student learning outcomes for the course (Statements of what students will know and be able to do as a result of taking this course. See appended hints for constructing these statements):

1. Students will carefully analyze a political text so as to understand its argument, identify its major premises and conclusions, and comprehend its conditions and qualifications. The student should be able to evaluate critically this argument and assess its substantive claims and rhetorical context and strategy.
2. Students will learn to write well—at a minimum, to write grammatically and clearly. At an advanced level, the student should be able to articulate precisely and with some sophistication a political question, problem, issue, or debate and to analyze and evaluate it in a systematic way.
3. Students will discuss and debate intelligently fundamental political questions and ideas about democracy: to understand the historical roots and evolution of democracy, as well as its contemporary forms. To comprehend and assess the ethical dimensions of democratic life, our roles as citizens, and alternative political views and principles.

Component Area for which the course is being proposed (check one):

Communication

American History

Mathematics

Government/Political Science

Language, Philosophy, & Culture

Social & Behavioral Science

Creative Arts

Component Area Option WID

Life & Physical Sciences

Competency areas addressed by the course (refer to appended chart for competencies that are required and optional in each component area):

X Critical Thinking

X Communication Skills

X Empirical & Quantitative Skills

Teamwork

X Social Responsibility

X Personal Responsibility

Because we will be assessing student learning outcomes across multiple core courses, assessments assigned in your course must include assessments of the core competencies. For each competency checked above, indicated the specific course assignment(s) which, when completed by students, will provide evidence of the competency. Provide detailed information, such as copies of the paper or project assignment, copies of individual test items, etc. A single assignment may be used to provide data for multiple competencies.

#### Critical Thinking:

Students will write a paper based on seminal texts in democratic theory and the history of political thought. They are required to analyze and discuss the arguments of the texts, critically assess those arguments, and understand their rhetorical context and strategy.

#### Sample Assignment:

Choose one of the following topics below. Your essay should be 4-5 pages in length, double-spaced, 12pt Times New Roman font, with standard margins.

1. Publius and Jefferson disagree about the nature of a good modern democracy, the former supporting constitutionalism, the latter popular self-government. Adjudicate their dispute within only ONE of the four areas of democratic political society: (a) the extended republic (democratic agency from top down as in Publius or bottom up as in Jefferson?), (b) the commercial republic (self-interest or virtue?), (c) restraint of government corruption (long leash or short leash?), (d) energetic function of government (ambition to counter ambition or the natural aristoi?). Feel free to narrow your focus even more (eg. Jefferson's response to Federalist 10 or Jefferson and Hamilton on executive power).
2. Tocqueville describes Jefferson as the "greatest apostle democracy has ever had." Pick one of Tocqueville's discussions (the townships, administrative decentralization, etc.) and elicit Tocqueville's argument either for or against Jefferson. Does Tocqueville support Jefferson, is he ambivalent towards his vision of democracy, or does he reject it wholly?
3. Tocqueville offers us a wealth of miscellaneous discussions about features of American democracy (the religious founding, liberty of the press, patriotism, the philosophical method of the Americans, etc). Pick one of these discussions and elicit Tocqueville's argument as to how this feature of democracy is conducive or deleterious to a good democracy. Do Tocqueville's arguments on this matter hold true today? Why or why not?
4. Tocqueville levels three serious criticisms against democracy (tyranny of the majority, individualism, and the new despotism), arguing that these problems are rooted in our excessive love of equality. He offers solutions to each of these criticisms which involve artificially bolstering our love of liberty. Pick one of Tocqueville's criticism and one solution and assess Tocqueville's success in locating the right problem and in providing an adequate solution.

#### Communication Skills:

Through the above assignment, students are required to articulate in both oral and written form complex moral and political arguments and to entertain sympathetically alternative answers to fundamental questions of democracy.

**Empirical & Quantitative Skills:**

[Click here to enter text.](#)

**Teamwork:**

[Click here to enter text.](#)

**Social Responsibility:**

Through the above essay, students will examine the historical and theoretical roots of democracy in the Western tradition of political thought. They are expected to comprehend the relation of these ideas to political practice and civic life and to assess the claims of different moral and political views, both ancient and modern. Honors sections of this course also fulfill a requirement in the interdisciplinary Phronesis program in politics and ethics.

**Personal Responsibility:**

Through the above assignment, students come to understand better their own ethical and political frameworks, the role of different principles in their decision-making and choices, and the principled reasons for alternative views.

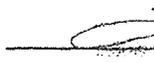
Will the syllabus vary across multiple section of the course?     Yes     No

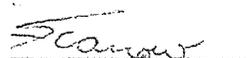
If yes, list the assignments that will be constant across sections:

Every section will require a paper of an interpretive and analytical character. As a Writing in the Disciplines course, every section will require assignments totaling at least 3000 words (including papers and exams).

Inclusion in the core is contingent upon the course being offered and taught at least once every other academic year. Courses will be reviewed for renewal every 5 years.

The department understands that instructors will be expected to provide student work and to participate in university-wide assessments of student work. This could include, but may not be limited to, designing instruments such as rubrics, and scoring work by students in this or other courses. In addition, instructors of core courses may be asked to include brief assessment activities in their course.

Dept. Signature: 



**Democratic Theory**  
POLS 3343, #30823  
Spring 2010  
McElhinney Hall 111  
TuTh 10-11:30am

Jeffrey Church  
447D Phillip G. Hoffman Hall  
Office Hours: M 2-4:30pm, or by appointment

jchurch@uh.edu  
(713)743-3914

**Course Synopsis**

Recently the United States has encountered difficulties in installing democratic institutions and spreading the democratic impulse throughout the world. Even our own democracy faces low voter turnout, political apathy, and the rule by rich elites. These difficulties force us to reconsider the basic notion of democracy and its inherent worth. In examining the writings of political philosophers both ancient and modern, we will ask, is democracy a good regime after all? What problems do democracies face again and again, and can these problems be overcome with a written constitution? Does the contemporary internet age pose new problems or new opportunities for popular self-government?

**Required Texts**

Thucydides, *On Justice, Power, and Human Nature* (Hackett)  
Aristophanes, *The Birds and Other Plays* (Penguin)  
John Locke, *Second Treatise on Government and Letter Concerning Toleration* (Dover)  
Hamilton, Madison, Jay, *The Federalist* (Signet)  
Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (Hackett)  
Cass Sunstein, *Republic.com 2.0* (Princeton)  
Don DeLillo, *Mao II* (Penguin)

**Learning Objectives**

1. Students will carefully analyze a political text so as to understand its argument, identify its major premises and conclusions, and comprehend its conditions and qualifications. The student should be able to evaluate critically this argument and assess its substantive claims and rhetorical context and strategy.
2. Students will learn to write well—at a minimum, to write grammatically and clearly. At an advanced level, the student should be able to articulate precisely and with some sophistication a political question, problem, issue, or debate and to analyze and evaluate it in a systematic way.
3. Students will discuss and debate intelligently fundamental political questions and ideas about democracy: to understand the historical roots and evolution of democracy, as well as its contemporary forms. To comprehend and assess the ethical dimensions of democratic life, our roles as citizens, and alternative political views and principles.

**Course Format**

This course is primarily discussion based. I will lecture on some occasions to give necessary historical background, but every class will consist of a good deal of discussion. This means that you will have to read each text carefully and thoroughly. The reading assignments are all quite short, so my expectation is that you will read actively—that is, you should read and take note of what intrigues you about the text, what you find puzzling or frustrating or downright wrong. You should approach the text with the discussion questions I pose below and come to class prepared with a well thought-out answer.

Our discussion will generally have **three parts**: **first**, we will examine the argument the author is putting forth. For instance, we may ask, what are the assumptions the author brings to the table? What evidence does the author use to support his claims? **Second**, we will then assess the arguments. Is the author warranted in making this assumption? Is there a better way of looking at this problem than the author does? What kind of bias does the author possess and does this distort his thinking? **Third**, we will apply these arguments to contemporary problems and issues in our democracy. Do Plato's concerns about democracy still hold true today? How would Tocqueville respond to the recent, unprecedented government intervention during the economic crisis?

### Assignments and Grading

**Reading Journal (10% total)** You are required to keep an ongoing reading journal over the course of the semester. Each journal entry may be on any topic or question you choose related to the reading and to the overall theme of democracy. I have provided "reading questions" below to guide your thinking in case you have trouble thinking of questions on your own. Though this requirement is called a "journal," resist the urge to respond to the reading in a "touchy-feely" way. This assignment is designed to work on your ability to think critically and to make arguments, so engage with our texts thoughtfully, back up your assertions with reasons and evidence. The journal entries may be as frequent and as long as you wish, but at minimum, you should respond once a week with a one page, double-spaced entry. I will periodically ask to review the journal, and you must hand it in in its entirety at the end of the final period.

**Essays (20% each)** Two 4-5 page papers are required over the course of the term. I will distribute paper topics well in advance of the due dates. Late papers are penalized 5 points for every day they are late. Please submit these papers to the course blackboard website.

**Final Paper (30%)** In lieu of a final exam, a 6-8 page paper will be due by the end of the final period. Late final papers are penalized 5 points for every day they are late. Please submit your final paper to the blackboard website.

**Participation (20%)** Attendance is essential for success in a participation-based class such as this one. Two unexcused absences are allowed, but each additional absence will lower your grade by one letter. Additionally, it is not enough just to show up. I expect regular, high-quality participation in classroom discussion. In order to participate intelligently, it is important to read actively, to interrogate the text and to come to class with questions, concerns, and criticisms. If I think that the class is not doing the reading thoroughly enough, I reserve the right to give periodic pop quizzes which will count for 10% of your grade. Extra participation opportunity is available on the course blackboard discussion page.

### Grading Scale

A	100-94
A-	93-90
B+	89-87
B	86-84
B-	83-80
C+	79-77
C	76-74
C-	73-70
D	69-60
F	59-0

### Academic Honesty

*This class strictly adheres to the university's policy on academic honesty.* Please consult the following website for guidelines on the proper citation of sources and for avoiding plagiarism:

<http://www.class.uh.edu/wconline/plagiarism/>

### Reading Assignments and Questions

**\*Pay particularly close attention while reading the assignments highlighted in bold**

#### Introduction

- 1/19 What is democracy?  
G.W. Bush, Second Inaugural, <http://www.bartleby.com/124/pres67.html>  
Do you agree or disagree with Bush that the U.S. should "seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture?"

#### Ancient Democracy and Its Critics

- 1/21 Thucydides, *On Justice, Power, and Human Nature* (HPW), pp. 1, 15-37, **39-46**  
What do we learn about a good democratic leader from Pericles?  
1/26 Thucydides, HPW, pp. 46-58, **66-76**, 89-95 (switch to Melian dialogues)  
What does the Mytilenean debate reveal about democracy's susceptibility to political rhetoric?  
1/28 Thucydides, HPW, pp. **111-129**, 129-154  
What do we learn about a bad democratic leader from Alcibiades?  
2/2 Aristophanes, "Knights" from *The Birds and Other Plays* (K), pp. 35-59  
How is Aristophanes criticizing Athenian democracy through the character of "the people?"  
2/4 Aristophanes, K, pp. 60-89  
Is Aristophanes optimistic about Athenian democracy at the end of the play? Why or why not?  
2/9 Plato, *Republic*, book 8, pp. 1-11, **12-26**, online at course blackboard  
Do you agree with Socrates that a democratic city and democratic citizens share a common character, that of a love of freedom? Why or why not?

#### The Modern Defense of Democracy

##### *Popular Sovereignty*

- 2/11 John Locke, *Second Treatise on Government* (ST), chapters 2, 3, 4, 8 (pp. 44-45 only), 9, 10  
How would Locke respond to the ancient criticism of democratic rule?

##### *Constitutionalism*

- 2/16 Locke, ST, chapters 11, 12  
Why is a constitutional government necessary, according to Locke? What are its benefits?  
2/18 Locke, ST, chapters 14, 19  
What are the problems of a constitutional government, and how can these problems be overcome?

**\*\*\*\*\*Paper 1 due Monday 2/22 by 5pm\*\*\*\*\***

#### Modern Democracy Model 1: Constitutional Democracy

##### *The Nature and Character of the New Republicanism*

- 2/23 The Federalist (F), #1, 9, **10**, 14  
How does a modern republic differ from an ancient one? Why is it better, according to Publius?  
2/25 Locke, ST chapter 5, F #6

How does a “commercial republic” change the character of a political regime? Is commerce good for democracy?

*The Nature and Function of the New Constitution*

3/2 F #23, 37, 39, 51

Explain this paradox: in restraining government—that is, in allowing ambition “to counteract ambition” (#51)—a democratic constitution can function better than an unrestricted government.

3/4 F #62-63, 68, 70-72, 78

Pick either the U.S. Senate or the Presidency and assess Publius’ democratic design of these institutions—do they perform the functions they are supposed to? Are they democratic enough?

### Modern Democracy Model 2: Participatory Democracy

3/9 Thomas Jefferson, Declaration of Independence (pp. 15-16), Letters pp. 1-8 (letters to Madison, Adams), online at course blackboard

Assess Jefferson’s critique of the Constitutional Model of Democracy.

3/11 Jefferson, Letters pp. 8-15 (letters to Tyler, Kercheval)

How does Jefferson’s model of democracy differ from the Constitutional Model?

### 3/16, 3/18: Spring Break

### The Problems and Possibilities of Modern Democracy

3/23 Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (DA), pp. 1-15, 15-40, 41-44

If democracy is springing up all around Tocqueville, why does he need to write this book? That is, what is Tocqueville’s aim in writing this book?

3/25 Tocqueville, DA, pp. 44-50, 50-62, 62-73

Why is the New England township so important for democracy, for Tocqueville?

3/30 Tocqueville, DA, pp. 73-102, 102-117, 117-146

Assess Tocqueville’s claim that tyranny of the majority is a problem for democracies.

4/1 Tocqueville, DA, pp. 164-170, 170-178, 178-200

How does Tocqueville’s portrait of the democratic man compare to Plato’s?

4/6 Tocqueville, DA, pp. 201-239, 239-268

Why is individualism a problem for democratic countries, for Tocqueville? Do you agree?

4/8 Tocqueville, DA, pp. 268-281, 281-297, 297-319

Assess Tocqueville’s claim that a new despotism is democracy’s greatest danger.

\*\*\*\*\*Paper 2 due Monday 4/12 by 5pm\*\*\*\*\*

### Democracy in the Global Era

4/13 Jeffrey A. Winters and Benjamin I. Page, “Oligarchy in the United States?”, online at course blackboard

Cass Sunstein, *Republic.com 2.0* (R), Preface, chapter 1

How would Winters and Page respond to Tocqueville’s assessment of the problems of American democracy?

4/15 Sunstein, R, chapters 2-4

What is Sunstein’s problem with the internet? Do you agree or disagree?

4/20 Sunstein, R, chapters 5-7

Can the internet make us better citizens?

4/22 Sunstein, R, chapters 8-10

Evaluate one of Sunstein’s proposals for overcoming the difficulties he enumerates.

4/27 Don DeLillo, *Mao II* (M), pp. 3-103

What are the problems democracy faces in a globalized world, according to Dehillo? What are the causes of these problems, do you think?

4/29 Dehillo, M, pp. 107-241

Does the novel offer a potential path for a better democratic life? Why or why not?

5/4 \*Make-up day for classes cancelled by the University\*

**\*\*\*\*\*Final Paper due Thursday, May 13 by 2pm (the end of the final exam period)\*\*\*\*\***