

PS 461, Fall 2019: Interdisciplinary Seminar in Political Economy, Philosophy, and Politics

(3 credit hours via 150 minutes of in-class instruction)

Tuesday/Thursday 9:30-10:45

Van Hise 399

Instructor:

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Office Hours: Monday, 9:30-11:30 am, held in Peet's Coffee in Memorial Union

I. Course Description

PS 461 is an interdisciplinary seminar focusing on current policy debates designed to incorporate concepts and approaches from philosophy, political science, and economics. In this particular iteration, the course will focus on the theme "Democracy: For and Against." The choice of theme is rooted in the fact that recent – and not so recent – developments in democracies, "western" and "non-western," have been cause of concern for observers, practitioners, and citizens. And yet few, if any, seriously question the value of democracy as a political regime. Indeed, the number of regimes that claim to be democracies (or people's democracies) has grown radically since the 16th century, and we rarely hear open arguments against democracy, per se, in international institutions, the popular press, or democratic politics. What ends does democracy serve that non-democracies don't serve? If democracy is a desirable regime, why is it desirable? Are there ways in which democracy falls short of meeting its goals? Could democratic government be made more effective by making it less democratic? These are just some of the questions we will explore through our study of a range of scholars and philosophical works.

II. Course Objectives

1. Synthesizing concepts and arguments from philosophy, politics, and economics.
2. Applying concepts and arguments from philosophy, politics, and economics.
3. Engaging in written work incorporating an array of primary and secondary sources.

III. Assignments

A. Research Paper and Components (75% of total grade)

70% of the seminar grade will consist of a research paper that is broken down into 6 graded components, listed below. Items accompanied by an exclamation point (!) require that you work

with our Writing Fellow. The paper is broken down into these components in order to ensure that each member of the seminar will be able to work closely with me (the instructor) and the writing fellow to produce a high quality paper. The paper itself is to be between **4500 and 5000 words**, which is approximately 18 to 20 pages (Times New Roman, double spaced, 12 point font).

The components of the paper follow:

1 and 2: First steps: 5 % points of the 75 % points

1. Preliminary meeting to discuss topic and bibliography

To be completed no later than September 17.

2. Preliminary research question and thesis statement

To be handed in to Professor Kapust no later than September 24.

3. Book Review/Critical Reflection: 10 % points of the 75 % points

The book review/critical reflection is to consist of a critical analysis of one scholarly book or two scholarly articles. I anticipate that the book and one or both of the articles will be the product of our discussion for the September 17 meeting. This assignment is to be between 750 and 1000 words, and is, in part, designed to enable you to more effectively complete the annotated bibliography assignment, and in part to enable you to start to write critically of scholarship to develop your own arguments. I will provide detailed instructions to you within the first two weeks of class.

You are to meet with the Writing Fellow to discuss the Book Review/Critical Reflection by or prior to Tuesday, October 1. The final version of the assignment is to be handed in to me by or prior to Tuesday, October 15.

4. Annotated Bibliography: 10 % points of the 75 % points

The annotated bibliography is to consist of **at least** 10 secondary sources for your paper. I will work with you in getting started, but you will carry out the bulk of the research independently. The document should include: 1. full citation information for each source; 2. a brief description of the source's arguments and, if relevant, data and methods; 3. selected quotations that will be incorporated into the paper itself.

The annotated bibliography is to be handed in no later than November 5.

5. Preliminary first paragraph (including thesis statement) and detailed outline: 10 % points of the 75 % points

The preliminary first paragraph and detailed outline are to be a draft topic paragraph for the paper (it is to include a clear thesis statement) and a detailed outline. The outline should feature a paragraph by paragraph plan for the paper as a whole, and should include, when known, which quotations or sources you plan to incorporate in each paragraph.

The preliminary first paragraph and detailed outline are to be handed in no later than November 12.

6. Final paper: 40 % points of the 75 % points

The final paper is the culmination of the semester's work. For now, the brief description above will suffice; I will provide detailed instructions to you within the first two weeks of class.

You are to meet with the Writing Fellow to discuss the final paper no later than Wednesday, November 27. The final version of the paper is to be handed in to me on or by Thursday, December 11. Please note: 1. In addition to a paper copy, I expect you to provide me with an electronic copy. 2. I expect each of you to submit a cover letter explaining how you have revised the paper in light of the Writing Fellow's comments.

B. Seminar Participation (20% of total grade)

Ensuring an intellectually rewarding class environment is a group activity and, as such, participation will be worth 20% of your overall grade. "A" level participation entails that you are: 1. Present nearly every class period; 2. Prepared to discuss course material; 3. Equipped with the day's readings; 4. Actively engaged in class discussion.

C. Research Poster Presentation (5% of total grade)

The last two days of the course are reserved for research presentations. These will be in the form of poster presentations. One half of the class will present their work on each day; the other half of the class will view and discuss the posters with their colleagues. The presentation and participation in these sessions are worth 5 % of the total grade.

IV. An Essential Part of Making this Class Successful: The Writing Fellows

Students in PS 461 will work with two fellows – Gracie Wallner (gwallner@wisc.edu) and Berit Thorson (bthorson4@wisc.edu) – on two of their written projects. The first of these, as noted above, is the book review/critical reflection; the second is the final paper itself. Working with the Fellows is a rare opportunity to improve your writing, and this is precisely why I have specifically chosen to develop the course around student work with them. One thing that is true, no matter how "advanced" a writer you are or what sort of writing you're doing: we can all benefit from revision, and we can all benefit from a collaborative process of learning and revising. The Fellows, as we will discuss in class, are *not* TAs; they are undergraduate students who have been selected through a very competitive process who are highly skilled in working with peers to improve their writing. Working with Fellows, as outlined in the syllabus, is mandatory for all participants. Fellows cannot give extensions for assignments.

V. Grading

Grades will be assigned based on the following scale:

A ≥ 93.5	AB = 87.5-93.4	B = 82.5-87.4	BC = 77.5-82.4
	C = 69.5-77.4	D = 60-69.4	F ≤ 59.9

VI. Materials

I have ordered three books for this class; all other readings are available online in formats indicated below by the days we'll be covering them.

1. *Plato: Five Dialogues: Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Meno, Phaedo* (Hackett, 2002)
2. Frankfurt, *On Inequality* (Princeton, 2015)
3. Wolff, *In Defense of Anarchism* (UC Press, 1998)
4. Achen and Bartels, *Democracy for Realists*
5. Cohen, *Why not Socialism?*
6. Brennan, *Why not Capitalism?*

VII. Class Expectations

You can expect me, as your instructor, to come to class prepared, to be available for assistance during office hours or by mutually convenient appointment, to answer email correspondence in a reasonable amount of time (**provided your email uses proper punctuation, grammar, spelling, appellation, and is signed**), to provide feedback on your performance, to hand back written work in a reasonable amount of time, and to provide clear instructions and guidelines.

I expect you, as students, to come to class prepared and on time (which involves bringing the assigned materials to class), to be attentive and respectful in class, to check your university-registered email regularly, to read and understand the syllabus and other course guidelines, in addition to adhering to all university policies and policies stated in the syllabus. Because this class is a seminar, please refrain from using laptops, tablets, or similar devices. The exception to this is if you are using an electronic reader or if you require accommodations.

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated, and will be dealt with severely. For information on academic honesty, see <http://students.wisc.edu/doso/acadintegrity.html>.

This syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations may occur.

VIII. Schedule of Readings and Discussion

Thursday, September 5: Course introduction; no reading

Unit 1: Democracy and Collective Judgment

Tuesday, September 10: Plato, *Apology*

Thursday, September 12: Landmore, “Deliberation, Cognitive Diversity, and Democratic Inclusiveness” (<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11229-012-0062-6>) *

Tuesday, September 17: Machiavelli, *Discourses* (Book I, Chapters IV, V, VII, XXIX, XLVII, LVIII) (available via: <https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/machiavelli-the-historical-political-and-diplomaticwritings-vol-2>)

Thursday, September 19: Achen and Bartels, Chapter 2: “The Elusive Mandate”

Preliminary meeting deadline.

Unit 2: Democracy and Civic Character

Tuesday, September 24: Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* II.7 (reading starts here:

https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/2735#lf1593-01_footnote_nt1019_ref)

Preliminary research question and thesis deadline.

Thursday, September 26: Mill, *On Representative Government* Chapter III (reading starts here:

https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/234#lf0223-19_label_096)

Tuesday, October 1: Thoreau, *Civil Disobedience* (available via:

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper2/thoreau/civil.html>)

Book Review/Critical Reflection Writing Fellow meeting deadline.

Thursday, October 3: Abraham Lincoln, “Lyceum Address” (available via:

<http://www.abrahamlincolnonline.org/lincoln/speeches/lyceum.htm>) **Unit**

3: Democracy and Accountability

Tuesday, October 8: Selected *Federalist Papers* (readings available here:

<https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/carey-the-federalist-gideon-ed>; read 46, 52-54, 57, 62-63)

Thursday, October 10: Achen and Bartels, Chapter 5: “Blind Retrospection”

Tuesday, October 15: McCormick, “Contain the Wealthy and Patrol the Magistrates” (available

via: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/american-political-science-review/article/containthe-wealthy-and-patrol-the-magistrates-restoring-elite-accountability-to-populargovernment/6DB14A09C01E8230CCB11507D7A7E769>) **Book Review/Critical**

Reflection deadline.

Thursday, October 17: Somin, “Voter Ignorance and the Democratic Ideal” (available via:

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/08913819808443511>)

Unit 4: Democracy and Liberty

Tuesday, October 22: Spinoza, *Political Treatise* (chapters II, V, XI) (reading available via: <https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/spinoza-the-chief-works-of-benedict-de-spinoza-vol-1>)

Thursday, October 24: Rousseau, selections from *Social Contract* (reading available here: <https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/rousseau-the-social-contract-and-discourses>; selections TBA)

Tuesday, October 29: Wolff, *In Defense of Anarchism*, Part I

Thursday, October 31: Wolff, *In Defense of Anarchism*, Part II

Unit 5: Democracy and Equality

Tuesday, November 5: Frankfurt, *On Inequality* * **Annotated bibliography deadline**

Thursday, November 7: Anderson, “What is the Point of Equality?” (available via: <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/pdf/10.1086/233897>)

Tuesday, November 12: Anderson, cont’d
Preliminary first paragraph and outline deadline.

Thursday, November 14: Cohen, *Why not Socialism?*

Tuesday, November 19: Brennan, *Why not Capitalism?*

Thursday, November 21: Cohen and Brennan, cont’d

Tuesday, November 26: Extra Day

Thursday, November 28: Thanksgiving

Tuesday, December 3: Extra Day

Thursday, December 5: Presentations

Tuesday, December 10: Presentations