

DEMOCRACY AS A WAY OF LIFE

Political Science 516: Graduate Seminar in American Political Thought

University of Washington

Autumn 2020

5 Credits

Wednesday, 1:30-4:20 p.m.

Remote Learning Version

Course Website: <https://canvas.uw.edu/courses/1401667>

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Office Hours: By appointment

DESCRIPTION

Democracy is often conceived of as a mode of government or form of rule, but both advocates and critics of democracy have just as frequently emphasized its significance as a social and cultural way of life, a manner of being in the world. Plato called democracy “the most attractive of the regimes . . . like a coat of many colors”; he also worried how democracy toppled the most basic relations of authority. Children defy their parents in a democracy, and students their teachers. Horses and donkeys wander “the streets with total freedom, noses in the air, barging into any passer-by who fails to get out of the way.”

This seminar analyzes democracy as a distinctive way of life as it arose after the American, French, and Haitian Revolutions. It begins with the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century transatlantic debates about the meaning of democratic revolution (Edmund Burke and Thomas Paine), segues to the flowering of democratic culture in the United States and its relationship to white supremacy (David Walker, Alexis de Tocqueville, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau), examines the nature of democratic education, popular sovereignty, and racial violence in mass, industrializing society (John Dewey and Ida B. Wells), and probes the connections between democracy, race, and empire in the twentieth century (W.E.B. Du Bois and Audre Lorde).

TEXTS

The books below are available at the University Book Store. The editions specified are recommended. Readings not included below will be posted on Canvas.

Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, ed. Conor Cruise O’Brien (New York: Penguin Books, 1986).

Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man*, ed. Eric Foner (New York: Penguin Books, 1985)

David Walker, *Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World*, ed. Peter P. Hinks (University Park: Penn State Press, 2000)

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. George Lawrence, ed. J.P. Mayer (New York: HarperPerennial, 2006)

Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Essential Writings*, intr. Mary Oliver (New York: Modern Library, 2000)
John Dewey, *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (New York: Free Press, 1944)
Ida B. Wells, *Southern Horrors and Other Writings: The Anti-Lynching Campaign, 1892-1900*, ed. Jacqueline Jones Royster (Boston: Bedford / St. Martin's, 2016)
W.E.B. Du Bois, *Dusk of Dawn*, intr. Kwame Anthony Appiah (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)

REQUIREMENTS FOR ENROLLED STUDENTS

1. Complete each week's reading prior to seminar.
2. Choose one week's reading and make an oral presentation on it at the start of seminar. The presentation should highlight striking themes in the work and pose a question that can serve as a jumping off point for class discussion.
3. Write one 6-to-8-page paper at the mid-point of the course, answering a prompt on the assigned readings provided by the instructor.
4. Write a 15-to-20-page research paper at the conclusion of the course. The research paper can analyze a primary text in political theory, a set of historical documents of a democratic moment or movement in modern history (e.g., newspaper accounts of the struggle against lynching, or the counter-culture of the 1950s, 60s, and 70s), or some other appropriate source in the history of democracy as a way of life. You must submit a 2-page prospectus for this paper in mid-November.

Here are a couple ideas for topics:

- a. William Apess, Native Sovereignty, and U.S. Democracy:
Readings: *On Our Own Ground: The Complete Writings of William Apess, a Pequot*, ed. Barry O'Connell (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992); Adam Dahl, "Nullifying Settler Democracy: William Apess and the Paradox of Settler Sovereignty," *Polity* 48, no. 1 (2016): 279-304.
- b. Maria Miller Stewart and Black Feminism in the Early Republic:
Readings: Maria Miller Stewart, "Religion and the Pure Principles of Morality, the Sure Foundation on Which We Must Build" (1831) and "Lecture Delivered at the Franklin Hall" (1832), in *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought*, ed. Beverly Guy-Sheftall (New York: New Press, 1995), 25-33; Christina Henderson, "Sympathetic Violence: Maria Stewart's Antebellum Vision of African American Resistance," *MELUS: Multi-Ethnic Literature of the U.S.* 38, no. 4 (2013): 52-75.

Midterm Paper:

Prompt distributed Wednesday, October 21; paper due Friday, October 30.

Research Paper Prospectus:

Instructions distributed Wednesday, November 4; prospectus due Friday, November 13.

Research Paper:

Due Friday, December 18

EVALUATION

Quality of weekly participation:	15%
Quality of seminar presentation:	15%
Midterm Paper:	20%
Research Paper:	50%

ADDITIONAL POLICIES

Students needing academic accommodations for a disability should contact Disability Resources for Students, 448 Schmitz Hall, V: (206) 543-8924, TTY: (206) 543-8925, uwdss@u.washington.edu. If you have a letter from DRS confirming the need for academic accommodations, please present this letter to me so that we can discuss and arrange accommodations.

CLASS SCHEDULE

* = Canvas

1. September 30: Revolution / Counter-Revolution

Read: Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), pp. 83-195.

Recommended: Conor Cruise O'Brien, "Introduction: 'The Manifesto of Counter-Revolution'" and "Edmund Burke: A Biographical Note," pp. 9-81.

2. October 7: Constituent Power

Read: Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man*, Part II (1792), pp. 149-273.

Recommended: Eric Foner, "Introduction," pp. 7-22.

3. October 14: Race, Citizenship, Judgment

Read: David Walker, *Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World*

(1829), pp. 1-82.

Melvin L. Rogers, "David Walker: Citizenship, Judgment, Freedom, and Solidarity," in *African American Political Thought: A Collected History*, ed. Melvin L. Rogers and Jack Turner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020), pp. 52-76 (Page proof).*

4. October 21: Democratizing Social Relations

Read: Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Vol. 1 (1835): Part I: Chaps. 3-5 (skip pp.70-86); Part II: Chaps. 6-9; Vol. 2 (1840): Part I: Chaps. 1-2, 8; Part II: Chaps. 1-5, 8, 13-14, 20; Part III: Chap. 5, 8-12; Part IV: 6, 8.

5. October 28: Democratizing Culture

Read: Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The American Scholar" (1837), "Divinity School Address" (1838), "Self-Reliance" (1841), "New England Reformers" (1844)
Henry David Thoreau, "Resistance to Civil Government" (1849)*
George Kateb, "Democratic Individuality and the Claims of Politics," *Political Theory* 12, no. 3 (1984): 331-360*

6. November 4: Democratizing Education I

Read: John Dewey, *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (1916), chaps. 1-8.

Wednesday, November 11: Veteran's Day

7. November 18: Democratizing Education II

Read: John Dewey, *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (1916), chaps. 11-13, 18, 22, 24-26.

8. November 25: Popular Sovereignty and Racial Violence

Read: Ida B. Wells, *Southern Horrors and Other Writings: The Anti-Lynching Campaign, 1892-1900*, ed. Jacqueline Jones Royster, pp. 45-175.

Recommended: Jacqueline Jones Royster, "Introduction: Equity and Justice for All," 1-44; Michael Gorup, "The Strange Fruit of the Tree of Liberty: Lynch Law and Popular Sovereignty in the United States," *Perspectives on Politics* 18, no. 3 (2020): 819-834.

9. December 2: Race, Labor, and Capital

Read: W.E.B. Du Bois, *Dusk of Dawn* (1940)

10. December 9: Equality, Difference, and Empire

Read: Audre Lorde, “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House” (1979), “Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference” (1980), “Grenada Revisited: An Interim Report” (1984), “Equal Opportunity” (1984)*

Jack Turner, “Audre Lorde’s Politics of Difference,” in *African American Political Thought: A Collected History*, ed. Melvin L. Rogers and Jack Turner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020), pp. 563-92 (Page proof)*

Jack Turner, “Audre Lorde’s Anti-Imperial Consciousness,” *Political Theory* Online First, September 27, 2020:
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0090591720959858>*