

**City University of Hong Kong
Course Syllabus**

**offered by Department of Public Policy
with effect from Semester A 2020 / 2021**

Part I Course Overview

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| Course Title: | Rethinking the Value of Democracy |
| Course Code: | POL3122 |
| Course Duration: | One Semester |
| Credit Units: | 3 |
| Level: | 3 |
| Proposed Area: <i>(for GE courses only)</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Arts and Humanities <input type="checkbox"/> Study of Societies, Social and Business Organisations <input type="checkbox"/> Science and Technology |
| Medium of Instruction: | English |
| Medium of Assessment: | English |
| Prerequisites: <i>(Course Code and Title)</i> | None |
| Precursors: <i>(Course Code and Title)</i> | None |
| Equivalent Courses: <i>(Course Code and Title)</i> | None |
| Exclusive Courses: <i>(Course Code and Title)</i> | None |

Part II Course Details

1. Abstract

(A 150-word description about the course)

Democracy was denigrated as mob rule by some philosophers and aristocrats. Yet nowadays it occupies a preeminent place in the political imagination: democracy is widely regarded as essential to political legitimacy and has been serving as the rallying cry for reformist political movements across the globe. But there remain political and philosophical debates concerning the right to democracy and the value of democratic participation. This course engages students to rethink the value of democracy by exploring such topics as the challenge of meritocracy, the importance of political participation, the contributions and limits of public deliberation, and whether or not capitalism undermines democracy.

2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

(CILOs state what the student is expected to be able to do at the end of the course according to a given standard of performance.)

| No. | CILOs [#] | Weighting* (if applicable) | Discovery-enriched curriculum related learning outcomes (please tick where appropriate) | | |
|-----|---|-------------------------------|---|----|----|
| | | | A1 | A2 | A3 |
| 1. | Rethink the value of democracy and its foundations from different political and philosophical perspectives (e.g. the political meritocratic perspective and the ethical perspective). | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 2. | Critically evaluate some of the criticisms of democracy made by ancient philosophers (e.g. Plato) and contemporary scholars (e.g. Joseph Schumpeter and Richard Arneson). | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 3. | Seek to understand the possible crucial importance of democracy in the context of political disagreement and moral disagreement. | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 4. | Acquire the basic analytical skills to assess the common arguments for or against democracy in public and private political discussions. | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 5. | Students are expected to formulate their own views on a wide range of social and political issues (in particular, is democracy necessary for public policymaking?). | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | | 100% | | | |

* If weighting is assigned to CILOs, they should add up to 100%.

[#] Please specify the alignment of CILOs to the Gateway Education Programme Intended Learning outcomes (PILOs) in Section A of Annex.

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to self-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

3. Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)

(TLAs designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs.)

| TLA | Brief Description | CILO No. | | | | | Hours/week (if applicable) |
|----------------------------------|---|----------|---|---|---|---|-------------------------------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Lectures | <p>a) Acquire a basic understanding of the key concepts concerning the value of democracy.</p> <p>b) Grasp the main criticisms of democracy made by philosophers and political scientists.</p> <p>c) Understand the possible vital importance of democracy in the contemporary world.</p> | v | v | v | v | | |
| In-class discussions and debates | <p>a) Evaluate the main criticisms of democracy made by philosophers and political scientists.</p> <p>b) Gain a deeper understanding of the value and the limits of democracy.</p> <p>c) Acquire analytical skills for deliberating and debating about the value of democracy and its relations to a wide range of social and political issues.</p> | v | v | v | v | v | |
| Individual essays | <p>a) Gain a deeper understanding of democracy through patient study of the literature.</p> <p>b) Assess democracy's value carefully through writing carefully.</p> | v | v | v | v | v | |
| Test | Grasp the basic concepts needed for understanding the value of democracy. Develop a holistic view of democracy's value and limits. | v | v | v | v | v | |

4. Assessment Tasks/Activities (ATs)

(ATs are designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs.)

| Assessment Tasks/Activities | CILO No. | | | | | Weighting * | Remarks |
|--|----------|---|---|---|---|----------------|--|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | |
| Continuous Assessment: <u>100</u> % | | | | | | | |
| In-class discussion and debate | v | v | v | v | v | 20% | Students are expected to attend all lectures and participate in discussion and debate in class. From the second lecture onwards, students will be asked to respond to 1 to 2 in-class discussion questions. They are expected to discuss or debate actively. |
| Individual essays – about 3,000 words long | v | v | v | v | v | 40% | Students will write an individual essays (about 3,000 words). They are expected to demonstrate a very good understanding of the main readings and to formulate their own views. |
| Test | v | v | | v | v | 40% | At the end of term, students should show a clear understanding of the arguments for or against democracy and formulate their own views on democracy's value and limits. |
| Examination: <u>0</u> % | | | | | | | |

* The weightings should add up to 100%.

100%

5. Assessment Rubrics

| Assessment task | Criterion | Excellent (A+, A, A-) | Good (B+, B, B-) | Fair (C+, C, C-) | Marginal (D) | Failure (F) |
|--|--|--|---|---|---|---|
| 1. In-class discussion and debate | Attendance (to take part in the discussion); understanding of the lecture; willingness to discuss/debate. | 0-1 absence; Excellent understanding of democracy's value and limits. Excellent critical reasoning skills and communication skills. | 2 absences; Fairly good understanding of democracy's value and limits. Fairly good critical reasoning skills and communication skills. | 3 absences; Rudimentary understanding of democracy's value and limits. Rudimentary critical reasoning skills and communication skills. | 4 absences; Weak understanding of democracy's value and limits. Weak critical reasoning skills and communication skills. | 5 absences or more; Very poor understanding of democracy's value and limits. Very poor critical reasoning skills and communication skills. |
| 2. Individual essay | Understanding of the readings; originality of ideas; clarity and organization of ideas. | Great familiarity with the relevant readings, and excellent critical reasoning skills. | Satisfactory familiarity with the relevant readings, and fairly good critical reasoning skills. | Basic familiarity with the relevant readings, and basic critical reasoning skills. | Poor understanding of the relevant readings, and weak critical reasoning skills. | Absence, or: not familiar with the relevant readings, and very poor critical reasoning skills. |
| 3. Test | Understanding of the lectures; understanding of the readings; originality of ideas; clarity and organization of ideas. | Excellent understanding of democracy's value and limits. Excellent critical reasoning skills, writing skills, and communication skills. | Fairly good understanding of democracy's value and limits. Fairly good critical reasoning skills, writing skills, and communication skills. | Rudimentary understanding of democracy's value and limits. Rudimentary critical reasoning skills, writing skills, and communication skills. | Weak understanding of democracy's value and limits. Weak critical reasoning skills, writing skills, and communication skills. | Absence, or very poor understanding of democracy's value and limits. Very poor critical reasoning skills, writing skills, and communication skills. |

Part III Other Information (more details can be provided separately in the teaching plan)

1. Keyword Syllabus

(An indication of the key topics of the course.)

Democracy. Meritocracy. Virtue. Knowledge. Participation. Voting. Plato. Mill. Rousseau. Schumpeter. Legitimacy. Authority. Equality. Justice. Respect. Rights. Intrinsic vs. instrumental value. Political disagreement. Moral disagreement. Public deliberation. Deliberative democracy. Capitalism.

2. Reading List

2.1 Compulsory Readings

(Compulsory readings can include books, book chapters, or journal/magazine articles. There are also collections of e-books, e-journals available from the CityU Library.)

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|----|--|
| 1. | Plato. <i>Republic</i> , Book VI. |
| 2. | Robert Dahl (1991). <i>Democracy and Its Critics</i> . New Haven: Yale University Press. |
| 3. | Joseph Schumpeter (2003). <i>Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy</i> . Routledge, Chapters XXI and XXII. |

2.2 Additional Readings

(Additional references for students to learn to expand their knowledge about the subject.)

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| 1. | Thomas Christiano (2008). <i>The Constitution of Equality: Democratic Authority and Its Limits</i> . Oxford University Press. |
| 2. | Thomas Christiano and John Christman (2009) (Eds). <i>Contemporary Debates in Political Philosophy</i> . Oxford: Blackwell. |
| 3. | David Harvey (2008). "The Right to the City," <i>New Left Review</i> 53: 23–40. |
| 4. | Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson (2004). <i>Why Deliberative Democracy?</i> Princeton University Press. |
| 5. | Daniel A. Bell et al. (2013) (Eds). <i>The East Asian Challenge for Democracy: Political Meritocracy in Comparative Perspective</i> . New York: Cambridge University Press. |