

Syllabus

Democracy in America: Historical Perspectives

UNC-Charlotte, Spring 2016 (HIST 2125-001/AMST 2050-004)
and Fall 2016 (HIST 3255-001/ AMST 3050-009)

[A modified version of the Spring & Fall 2016 syllabi, with some elements from each, & with some boilerplate language removed]

Instructor: Dr. Mark Wilson, Professor, History Department Office: Garinger 226D
E-Mail: mrwilson@uncc.edu

Course Description and Goals

This course considers the history of politics and government in the United States by examining the history of American democracy in theory and practice. To what extent have American politics and government been democratic? What does the history of democracy in America suggest about the future of politics and society in the United States and the world? This course will examine the rise of parties and mass politics, machine politics and reform movements, the history of citizenship and suffrage as relates to race, ethnicity, and gender, the relationship between war and democracy, and the problem of reconciling democratic ideals with social and economic inequalities.

Students in this course will hone their advanced reading, writing, research, and communications skills, by engaging with challenging texts, writing regularly and revising in response to instructor and peer comments, and by executing a small independent research project with the guidance of the instructor.

Students in this course will also become better informed, more capable citizens. The course content demands that students enhance their knowledge of the U.S. political system and its history. It also requires students to master (and historicize and criticize) some basic common rules of parliamentary procedure, as a way of encouraging their future participation in governance and politics. Because 2016 is a presidential election year, we will be especially interested in engaging with current events, and connecting them to historical developments. Students' independent research projects provide them with an opportunity to explore their own interests and think about how to improve democracy in America for the 21st century.

Readings

Required common readings include five books, available for purchase at the University Bookstore and on library reserve, and a variety of short documents and articles, noted on the syllabus and on the course Canvas page. (Most documents and articles will be available in PDF format on Canvas.) The required books are as follows:

David Wootton, ed., *The Essential Federalist and Antifederalist Papers* (Hackett, 2003)
 Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. Gerald E. Bevan, ed. Isaac Kramnick (New York: Penguin Books, 2003)
 Henry M. Robert III et. al., *Robert's Rules of Order in Brief*, 2nd. Ed. (Perseus, 2011)
 William L. Riordan, *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall: A Series of Very Plain Talks on Very Practical Politics* (1905; New York: Signet, 1995).
 Jacob S. Hacker and Paul Pierson, *Winner-Take-All Politics: How Washington Made the Rich Richer—And Turned Its Back on the Middle Class* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011).

Exams

This course includes two in-class quizzes, and a final exam. Quizzes and exams will require you to answer questions with full paragraphs and/or short multi-paragraph essays. The final exam will cover all course content since the fall break; it will be written in a “blue book” (stapled exam notebook). Buy your blue book now, from the campus bookstore or Gray’s, so that you have it in December. Make-up quizzes/exams will be given only to students who have a valid and documented medical or activities-related excuse.

Short Research Project

Students will complete a research project, individually or in pairs or small teams. Deadlines for various stages of this project are noted in the course calendar. At least one draft must be submitted; the final product must respond to instructor and peer comments on the draft. Each individual/pair/team will offer a five-minute in-class presentation on the project, in April. The end product will be a short essay of approximately 1,500-2,000 words, or an equivalent product in another format (which could be a website, film, annotated map, etc.) We will discuss details in class.

Weight of course requirements for grading purposes:

Attendance and participation, including completion of short in-class team exercises (one point for full credit for each of the 28 regular class sessions; mere attendance with unsatisfactory exercises earn only half a point per session)	28%
In-class quiz #1	11%
In-class quiz #2	11%
Final Exam (scheduled for Dec. 15)	20%
Short research project:	
Preliminary question(s) and research plan:	2%
Revised question(s) and research plan:	3%
Full draft of essay/other product:	5%
Short in-class presentation on project:	5%
Final, revised essay/other product:	15%

Course Calendar

Session 1 Introductions, including overview of the course and discussion of varieties of democracy and our incoming assumptions about the history of democracy in the USA

Session 2 Looking Backward, and Ahead, from the 2010s

Read before class, and come prepared to discuss, on 25 Aug.:

- American Political Science Association Task Force, “American Democracy in an Age of Rising Inequality” (2004),
<http://www.apsanet.org/portals/54/Files/Task%20Force%20Reports/taskforcerreport.pdf>
- Bruce Ackerman, “Reviving Democratic Citizenship?” *Politics & Society* 41, no. 2 (June 2013): 309-17.
- Andrew Sullivan, “Democracies End When They Are Too Democratic: And Right Now, America Is a Breeding Ground for Tyranny,” *New York* magazine (2 May 2016), digital version at
<http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2016/04/america-tyranny-donald-trump.html>

Come prepared also to discuss your ideas for research projects

Session 3 Overviews and Theories

Read before class, and come prepared to discuss, the following two articles, which you should be able to access via links on Moodle and/or the UNCC library catalog:

- Rogers M. Smith, “Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal, and Hartz: The Multiple Traditions in America,” *American Political Science Review* 87, no. 3 (1993): 549-66.
- Jürgen Habermas, “Three Normative Models of Democracy,” *Constellations* 1, no. 1 (2004): 1-10.

Session 4 Native American sources of US democracy and constitutionalism (?)

- Read the exchange among Philip A. Levy and other historians, on the question of Iroquois influence on US democracy and the US Constitution, in the journal *William & Mary Quarterly* 53, no. 3 (July 1996): 588-636. You will need to click on several articles, not just the one by Levy.

- Session 5 Democracy in British North America before the Revolution (?)
- Timothy H. Breen, “Who Governs: The Town Franchise in Seventeenth Century Massachusetts,” *William & Mary Quarterly* 27, no. 3 (July 1970): 460-74.
 - D. Alan Williams, “The Small Farmer in Eighteenth-Century Virginia Politics,” *Agricultural History* 43, no. 1 (Jan. 1969): 91-102
- Session 6 The Constitution: How Democratic?
- *The Articles of Confederation* (1778), available in Wooton
 - *The Constitution* (1787) and Bill of Rights (1791), available in Wooton
- Session 7 Challenging the Constitution: Antifederalists
- Read selected letters of Cato, Centinel, and Brutus, in Wooton, pp. 58-96.
- Session 8 Defending the Constitution: Madison and Hamilton
- Read Federalist essays 10, 23, 37, 39, 51, 55, 57, 62, 63, 70, 78, in Wooton
- Session 9 Review
- Review carefully all readings so far
 - In-Class Quiz on content of the course so far (17th-18th centuries)
- Session 10 Development of Democracy in the Early Republic
- Donald Ratcliffe, “The Right to Vote and the Rise of Democracy, 1787-1828,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 33, no. 2 (Summer 2013): 219-54.
- Session 11 Tocqueville on Democracy in America, I: Visions of History; Associations, Tyranny of the Majority
- Read Tocqueville, 11-26, 58-71, 102-15, 219-27, 287-322, 479-85, 489-503, 537-41, 595-609 (Vol. 1, Author’s Intro; Part 1, chapters 3-4; subsection on administrative decentralization; Part 2, chaps. 4, 7, conclusion.; Vol. II, Intro, Part 1, chapters 1-2, 11; Part 2, chapters 5-7)
- Session 12 Tocqueville on Democracy in America, II: American Culture, Society, & Family
- Read Tocqueville, 583-595, 622-635, 662-700, 712-714, 728-734, 737-750, 775-783, 803-822 (Vol. II, Part 2, chapters 1-4, 13-15; Part 3, chapters 5-12, 17, 19, 21; Part 4, chapters 1-3, 6-8).

- Session 13 Antebellum Politics and Civil War
- Kyle G. Volk, “The Perils of ‘Pure Democracy’: Minority Rights, Liquor Politics, & Popular Sovereignty in Antebellum America,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 29 (Winter 2009): 641-79.
- Session 14 Reconstruction
- U.S. Constitution, Amendments 13, 14, 15; review recent readings
 - **Due today (or earlier): preliminary question(s) and research plan—bring 3 hard copies to class**
- Session 15 New South and Disfranchisement: The Case of North Carolina in the 1890s-1900s
- Suffrage amendment to North Carolina state constitution, 1899-1900, digital version at <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-newsouth/4365>
 - Voter registration cards from early 1900s, digital version at <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-newsouth/4731>
 - James M. Beeby, “Red Shirt Violence, Election Fraud, and the Demise of the Populist Party in North Carolina’s Third Congressional District, 1900,” *North Carolina Historical Review* 85, no. 1 (Jan. 2008): 1-28.
 - In-Class Quiz #2, on the content of the course since Quiz #1 (1780s-1900)
- Session 16 Discussion of Research Projects
- **Due today: revised question(s) and research plan—bring 3 hard copies**
- Session 17 Everyday Democratic Governance?: The Case of Robert’s Rules of Order,
- Don H. Doyle, “Rules of Order: Henry Martyn Robert and the Popularization of American Parliamentary Law,” *American Quarterly* 32, no. 1 (Jan. 1980): 3-18.
 - Begin reading Henry M. Robert III et. al., *Robert’s Rules of Order in Brief*
- Session 18 Everyday Democratic Governance?: The Case of Robert’s Rules of Order, 2
- Finish reading Henry M. Robert III et. al., *Robert’s Rules of Order in Brief*, entire book; come to class prepared to practice Robert’s Rules
 - Watch YouTube videos on Robert’s Rules by United Nurses of Alberta and Oregon 4H—see links on Canvas

- Session 19 Machine Politics and the Problem of Corruption, I
- Riordan, *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall* (1905), entire book
- Session 20 Machine Politics and the Problem of Corruption, 2
- Jane Addams, “Why the Ward Boss Rules” (1898), at <https://tiger.uic.edu/depts/hist/hull-maxwell/vicinity/nws1/documents/addams.jane/addams-boss.pdf>
- Session 21 Progressive Reforms, including Women’s Suffrage
- U.S. Constitution, Amendments 16, 17, 18, 19
 - Julia L. Mickenberg, “Suffragists and Soviets: American Feminists and the Specter of Revolutionary Russia,” *Journal of American History* 100, no. 4 (March 2014): 1021-51.
- Session 22 Wilson, WWI, and Democracy at Home and Abroad: A Centennial Retrospective
- Emily S. Rosenberg, “World War I, Wilsonianism, and Challenges to U.S. Empire,” *Diplomatic History* 38, no. 4 (September 2014): 852-63.
 - Daniel Larsen, “Abandoning Democracy: Woodrow Wilson and Promoting German Democracy, 1918-1919,” *Diplomatic History* 37, no. 3 (June 2013): 476-508.
- Session 23 Election Day, and Peer Review of Drafts in Class
- **Full drafts of research papers/projects due today. Bring 3 hard copies**
- Session 24 Reflections on the Election of 2016, and looking back on other elections
Student presentations on final projects
- Daniel T. Rodgers, “Stories, Games and Deliberative Democracy,” *Journal of American History* 88, no. 2 (September 2001): 444-54.
- Session 25 Early Cold War: New Left Critiques of US Democracy
- C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (1956), read selections on Moodle
 - Students for a Democratic Society, “Port Huron Statement” (1962), <http://www.sds-1960s.org/PortHuronStatement-draft.htm>

- Session 26 Post-WWII Civil Rights Movement & Transformations of U.S. Democracy
Student presentations on final projects
- Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” (1963)
 - Watch at least one of the following two episodes of the documentary film, *Eyes on the Prize* (Blackside Productions/American Experience, 1987): “Mississippi: Is This America? (1963-64)” and “Bridge to Freedom” (1965). You may stream these films for free, via the UNCC library catalog.
- Session 27 The Continuing Struggle over Voting Rights, Race, and One-Person, One-Vote
Student presentations on final projects
- * Ari Berman, “How the GOP Is Resegregating the South,” *The Nation* (20 Feb. 2012), digital version at <https://www.thenation.com/article/how-gop-resegregating-south/>
 - * J. Douglas Smith, “When Not All Votes Were Equal,” *The Atlantic* (26 July 2015), digital version at <http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/07/one-person-one-vote-a-history/399476/>
- Session 28 Democracy in Decline in the Later 20th Century? (I)
Student presentations on final projects
- Robert D. Putnam, “Bowling Alone: America’s Declining Social Capital,” *Journal of Democracy* 6 (1995): 65-78. Available on line at <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/DETOC/assoc/bowling.html>
 - Theda Skocpol, “Voice and Inequality: The Transformation of American Civic Democracy,” *Perspectives on Politics* 2, no. 1 (2004): 3-20.
- Session 29 Democracy in Decline in the Later 20th Century? (II)
Student presentations on final projects
- Hacker and Pierson, *Winner-Take-All Politics*, at least first half of book
- Session 30 Last Regular Class Meeting: Conclusions and Review
Student presentations on final projects
- Hacker and Pierson, *Winner-Take-All Politics*, remainder of book
 - Adam Bonica, Nolan McCarty, Keith T. Poole, and Howard Rosenthal, “Why Hasn’t Democracy Slowed Rising Inequality?” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 27, no. 3 (Summer 2013): 103-24.
- Exam Week Submit final version of research paper/product; Final Exam