

Government 262
Representation and Deliberation
Spring Semester 2007
Clark University

Jonas Clark 204
Monday and Thursday, 2:50-4:05
Professor Robert Boatright
JEF 313A; (508) 793-7632
Office Hours: Thursday 12-1; Friday 12-3
rboatright@clarku.edu

Description

Representative democracy rests upon two competing expectations - first, that elected officials faithfully represent the views of their constituents; and second, that elected officials deliberate amongst each other about policy outcomes. This course examines the tension between these two expectations - under what circumstances should representatives ignore the views of their constituents? How should they act when they conclude that their constituents do not know what is best for them? And how can they represent the views of minorities? In this class we will study different concepts of what political representation entails, how those concepts have evolved over history, and how we might use those concepts to understand contemporary political problems. We will then see how the characteristics of those involved in political discussions influences the course of these discussions. How do we measure when political deliberation has been productive? How do we ensure that all voices are represented in political deliberations? And what do we do when compromise or consensus among those doing the deliberating is elusive?

This class is divided into two segments. In the first, we will discuss contemporary political philosophers' attempts to form theories about the essential qualities of representational systems and the criteria we can use to evaluate different systems of representation. While some of these theories attempt to put legislatures and other common features of Western democracy into a broader context and explore alternatives, others look more at the "nuts and bolts" of different legislative institutions and the way we can improve our existing institutions without seeking any type of radical reform. It is my hope that by the end of this first section we will have developed a common working vocabulary through which to explore problems in representative institutions.

In the second segment of the course, we will consider contemporary theories of deliberative democracy. We will explore competing theories of what deliberation is, how it can be measured, and how it relates to the characteristics of participants. We will also evaluate normative claims about political deliberation.

I will seek wherever possible to provide applied examples of some of the theoretical issues raised here. In many instances, the authors present good applied examples themselves. As the course goes on, we will also select a portfolio of important issues that seem to recur here, and as a class we will select reading material on these issues. Because I study American politics, the issues that spring to my mind tend to be American. For those of you who have studied other countries or have studied comparative politics, insights drawn from the experience of other countries are welcome and encouraged.

This course is also part of the “Difficult Dialogues” initiative. The content of the course itself touches upon many issues of how we converse with ourselves. In addition, however, we will seek to be self-critical in evaluating our own conversations. We (that is, Chris and I) will seek to synchronize this course with the Difficult Dialogues events and symposia taking place across campus, and we will also explore ways to make our own deliberations about political ideas productive, inclusive, and respectful. To facilitate our discussions, we will also be using the “Turning Point” technology, which relies upon handheld remote devices you can use to anonymously respond to questions I ask, and your responses will be instantly tabulated and displayed on screen. Since this is a small class, we can try the software out together to see how it works and how we might use it together to enhance the class. The software gives us the ability to get accurate measurements on questions that people may feel tentative about answering in front of their classmates. While I do worry that the clickers may seem a bit gimmicky, I hope that we will be able to make good use of them, and I encourage you to give me your feedback on how we can make them a valuable part of the course.

Finally, this course fulfills the Government Department’s political theory requirement.

Readings

The following books are required for the course and are available at the bookstore:

Fishkin, James S. 1995. *The Voice of the People*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Gutmann, Amy, and Dennis Thompson. 2004. *Why Deliberative Democracy?* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Kymlicka, Will. 1995. *Multicultural Citizenship*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Pitkin, Hanna Fenichel. 1967. *The Concept of Representation*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Williams, Melissa. 1998. *Voice, Trust, and Memory*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Young, Iris Marion. 2000. *Inclusion and Democracy*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Any other readings on the syllabus will be provided as handouts or as a course packet.

Requirements and Grading

Attendance and Participation: The most important requirement for this class is your attendance and participation. In order to succeed in this course, you must attend class and you must come prepared to discuss the readings. Attendance and participation comprise 20% of your grade. Ten percent of this will be at my discretion, based on my observation of your presence and command of the material. An additional ten percent will be measured through your ability to discuss the issues you (and your classmates) are pursuing in your research paper, and to link these issues to the class.

Reaction Papers: There are four due dates for reaction papers on your syllabus. For three of these, you will write a brief (2-3 page) reaction paper discussing your thoughts on the readings. Each of these papers will be worth ten percent of your grade. I reserve the right to give specific questions or topics in class.

Discussion Paper and Discussions: You will be assigned to be a member of one of four groups of students. You will also write one longer reaction paper (approximately 5 pages) which will be designed to contrast with the papers of other members of your group. You are responsible for meeting with the members of your group so that everyone has an assigned point of view or position for this set of papers. You will post your paper on the class blackboard site by 10 PM the night before class, and you will then present your paper and engage in a discussion with your fellow group members. This project will be worth 25 percent of your grade.

Research Paper: During the course you will complete a ten to fifteen page research paper applying the theoretical material we've read to a subject of your choice. The research paper will be entirely your own work. However, I will assign you to one of four or five working groups of students who are exploring similar themes. You will therefore have to settle on a topic fairly early on, and I will expect you to be working steadily on your paper, or at least thinking about your paper, throughout the second half of the course. You and the other members of your working group will give presentations of your work together during the final two weeks of the course. The research paper will also be worth 25 percent of your grade.

Summary: Class Requirements and Percent Contribution to Final Grade:

Requirement	Percent Contribution to Grade	Objective
Class participation and attendance	20%	Engagement with material
Reaction Papers	10% each (total of 30%)	Understanding of and ability to think critically about material
Discussion Paper and Discussion	25%	Ability to apply material in practice
Research Paper	25%	Ability to apply material to political events

A Note on Web Resources:

In all of my classes, I like to provide you with a list of good web sources for contemporary material, or simply places to go if you're confused about the reading. Unfortunately, for this particular course there aren't many sites that will be of general use to the class or will explain concepts you're having a tough time with. Some of the authors we're reading here do maintain fairly good websites, however, and deliberation is a juicy enough topic these days that there are several good sites on deliberation. Some places of interest include:

Will Kymlicka's website, <http://post.queensu.ca/~kymlicka/>: Has links to a regular newsletter he distributes on "democracy and diversity," plus several of his working papers.

Clark's Difficult Dialogues website: www.clarku.edu/difficultdialogues: This page explains what's going on at Clark this semester with the Difficult Dialogues program, and also provides links to similar programs elsewhere.

Deliberative Democracy Consortium, <http://www.deliberative-democracy.net/>: Washington based consortium of several nonprofit groups and academic organizations devoted to publicizing research and practice in deliberative democracy.

Civic Practices Network, www.cpn.org: Deliberative democracy group based out of Brandeis University.

Center for Deliberative Democracy, <http://cdd.stanford.edu/>: Deliberative polling center based at Stanford University, headed by James Fishkin.

America Speaks, www.americaspeaks.org: Nonprofit deliberative democracy group, oversees several interesting experiments on deliberation on contemporary political issues.

Academic Honesty

Finally, as you should be aware by now, the work you do in this course must be entirely your own. To be sure we all have the same understanding of academic integrity as it pertains to this course, here is what the Academic Advising *Blue Book* (p. 22) has to say on the subject:

Academic integrity is highly valued at Clark. Research, scholarship and teaching are possible only in an environment characterized by honesty and mutual trust. Academic integrity requires that your work be your own. Because of the damage that violations of academic integrity do to the intellectual climate of the University, they must be treated with the utmost seriousness and appropriate sanctions must be imposed. The maintenance of high standards of academic integrity is the concern of every member of the University community.

Plagiarism refers to the presentation of someone else's work as one's own, without proper citation of references and sources, whether or not the work has been previously published. Submitting work obtained from a professional term paper writer or company is plagiarism. Claims of ignorance about the rules of attribution, or of unintentional error are not a defense against a finding of plagiarism.

Suspected plagiarism cases will be referred to the Dean's office. If you are in doubt about whether you have provided adequate citation or used others' work properly (particularly regarding sources drawn from the web), please talk with me before handing your paper in!

Schedule

- Note: I have deliberately left far more time at the end of the course than we are likely to need. I reserve the right to expand our treatment of any of these books, and to push back deadlines accordingly, depending on how fast we move through the material. I also reserve the right to chop material depending on how quickly we are going.

January 18: Introduction to the Course

I. Political Representation

January 22, 25, and 29: Representation as a Philosophical Concept

Pitkin, Hanna Fenichel. 1967. *The Concept of Representation*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

February 1, 5, and 8: The Qualities of Representation: How do we want our voices to be heard?

Williams, Melissa. 1998. *Voice, Trust, and Memory*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

➤ *Reaction Paper #1, Discussion #1 Due February 8*

February 12, 15, and 19: Representation and Difference

Young, Iris Marion. 2000. *Inclusion and Democracy*. New York: Oxford University Press.

February 22 and 26: March 1: Representation and Difference

Kymlicka, Will. 1995. *Multicultural Citizenship*. New York: Oxford University Press.

➤ *Reaction Paper #2, Discussion #2 Due March 1*

Monday, March 5 and Thursday, March 8: No Class – Spring Break

March 12: Representation, Difference, and Privacy

Phillips, Anne. 1995. “Dealing With Difference: A Politics of Ideas, or a Politics of Presence?” In *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*, ed. Seyla Benhabib. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, pp. 139-152.

Cohen, Jean. 1995. “Democracy, Difference, and the Right of Privacy.” In *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*, ed. Seyla Benhabib. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, pp. 187-217.

II. Deliberation

March 15:

Mansbridge, Jane. 1980. *Beyond Adversary Democracy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Ch. 1-3.

March 19, 22, and 26:

Gutmann, Amy, and Dennis Thompson. 2004. *Why Deliberative Democracy?* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

➤ *Reaction Paper #3, Discussion #3 Due March 26*

March 29: The Nexus Between Representation and Deliberation

Benhabib, Seyla. 1995. "Towards a Deliberative Model of Democratic Legitimacy." In *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*, ed. Seyla Benhabib. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, pp. 67-94.

Cohen, Joshua. 1995. "Procedure and Substance in Deliberative Democracy." In *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*, ed. Seyla Benhabib. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, pp. 95-119.

> *Research Paper Proposal Due*

April 2 and 5: Rational Choice Theories of Deliberation; Critics of Deliberation

Stokes, Susan. 1998. "Pathologies of Deliberation." In *Deliberative Democracy*, ed. Jon Elster. New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 123-139.

Przeworski, Adam. 1998. "Deliberation and Ideological Domination." In *Deliberative Democracy*, ed. Jon Elster. New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 140-160.

Gargarella, Roberto. 1998. "Full Representation, Deliberation, and Impartiality." In *Deliberative Democracy*, ed. Jon Elster. New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 260-280.

Sanders, Lynn. 1997. "Against Deliberation." *Political Theory* 25: 347-376.

➤ *Reaction Paper #4, Discussion #4 Due April 5*

April 9 and 12: Deliberative Polling

Fishkin, James S. 1995. *The Voice of the People*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

April 16 and 19

Student Presentations

April 23 and 26

Student Presentations

April 30

Course Wrap-up

May x:

Research Papers Due