

PLS 495
Departmental Seminar
Seminar in Democracy
Fall 2005

Instructor: Earl Sheridan

Office Hours: Tuesday, Weds., Thursday 2:00-3:00; Rm 269 Leutze Hall

Texts: *Democratization, A Critical Introduction* by Jean Grugel; various reserved readings and handouts.

Course Description: In an era in which we have seen a spread of democracy throughout the world and in a era in which the spread of democracy has become a key part of American foreign policy, this course want to look closely at the concept of democracy. What is it? How has it developed over the centuries? What do its proponents and critics have to say about it? What is its future? We will ponder these and other questions pertaining to this political value which has become almost sacrosanct in American political thought.

Course Requirements: Two exams worth 100 points each, 50 pts., from a critical essay of 8 pages, 50 pts., from short writing exercises, class participation, and presentations. The points from these will be added to get a possible 300 points. This will be divided by three to get your final grade. Grading is as follows: 90-100=A; 80-89=B; 70-79= C; 60-69=D; below 60=F. There is no plus/minus grading.

Attendance: Attendance will be taken. You have **three** free absences. After that for every *unexcused* absence 5 points will be deducted from your participation grade. Excused absences will be granted for serious reasons such as illness or death in family with an official, written excuse on a case by case basis. Make-up tests will only be given with a written, acceptable excuse.

Academic Dishonesty: Neither cheating nor plagiarism will be tolerated. See the *Code of Student Life*

Course Outline

What is Democracy? Grugel – Introduction and Chapter 1; additional handout and reserve material

The Development of democracy – Athenian democracy and its proponents and critics. – Perelces Funeral Oration; excerpts from *Athens on Trial* by Roberts and *Democracy and Its Critics* by Dahl.

Development of Democracy in the Modern era -- excerpts from Dahl; articles from *How Democratic is the Constitution* by Goldwin and Schambra. Discussions of Charles Beard, Richard Hofstadter, Robert Brown, Gordon Wood and others. Jacksonian Democracy. Women, minorities and democracy in the USA. The advent of Democracy in Europe. Proponents and critics.

First Exam

Issues stemming from representative democracy – districting issues; proportional representation, the role of money in campaigns.

Technology and democracy.

Democratization – Grugel 2-11

Final Saturday, December 3rd (11:30-2:30)