

POLSW3922: American Politics Seminar

Majority Rule and Minority Rights in American Democracy

Columbia College, Spring 2008

Professor: Raymond A. Smith

Tuesdays, 2:10-4pm

Office Hours: Tuesdays before and after class (by appointment)

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This course will examine one of the central challenges to both the theory and the practice of democracy: the reconciliation of majority rule with minority rights in a way that neither sacrifices popular sovereignty nor oppresses small or disfavored groups. This course will draw upon both “classics” of political science regarding the role of minority groups in American politics as well as upon contemporary scholarship focused largely on ethnoracial and other minority groups.

The principal requirement for this course is research paper of roughly 25-30 pages that is to draw on both primary and secondary sources. The paper should pose and answer a significant research question relevant to the topic of majority rule and minority rights in American democracy. Part of some classes will be dedicated to a research workshop, with a brief review of key issues in research and discussion of the status of class members’ research. At specified points in the semester, students will submit and discuss in class: a topic, a research question, a description of primary data sources, a partial bibliography, an outline, and a final draft.

As a seminar, the focus of each class will be a discussion of the readings and their implications and the applications of their ideas to case studies in public policy. The readings during most weeks are excerpts from longer works and as such are not particularly long but require careful reading and reflection. All students are required to complete all readings, with designated students each week taking a lead role in presenting and facilitating discussion about the readings and their implications for majority rule and minority rights. One to two page written summaries and analyses of the readings as well as answers to reading-related questions will be required each week. The final grade will be calculated on the following basis:

- attendance and general participation -- 10%;
- responses to written weekly questions and in-class presentations-- 10%;
- research paper-related assignments – 10%;
- final draft of research paper – 70%

Readings:

All of the required readings have been placed on reserve in the Columbia library. In addition, the following books are recommended for purchase at the Columbia Bookstore:

- Dahl, Robert: *A Preface to Democratic Theory*. (University of Chicago Press)
- John Higham, Ed.: *Civil Rights and Social Wrongs* (Penn State Press)
- Booth, Wayne C. , Gregory Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams, *The Craft of Research*, 2nd Ed. (University of Chicago Press)
- Arend Lijphart, *Democracies: Patterns of Majoritarian and Consensus Government in Twenty-One Countries*; New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1984
- Arthur M. Melzer, Jerry Weingerger, and M. Richard Zinman, Eds. *Multiculturalism and American Democracy*; Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1998
- Christine Sistare, Larry May, and Leslie Francis, Eds.; *Groups and Group Rights*; Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 2001

Course Schedule

The following is the anticipated course schedule, which may be subject to slight modification as the semester progresses. In addition, a limited number of readings may be added as the semester progresses.

January 22 Meeting: Introduction, Overview, and Organizational Mtg.

January 29 Meeting: Madisonian Democracy and its Critics

---Initial research paper topic due in class---

Reading for class:

The US Constitution, including the 27 Amendments

James Madison, The Federalist Papers # 10

(can be accessed at: <http://memory.loc.gov/const/fed/fedpapers.html>)

Robert Dahl, *Preface to Democratic Theory*, Chapter 1: “Madisonian Democracy”

Bernard Boxill, “Majoritarian Democracy and Cultural Minorities” (Chapter 6 in *Multiculturalism and American Democracy*; Arthur M. Melzer, Jerry Weingerger, and M. Richard Zinman, Eds.

Optional: Wayne Booth et al., *The Craft of Research*, Ch. 1-2

February 5 Meeting: Populist/Majoritarian Democracy and its Critics

-- Research paper question due in class--

Reading for class:

Robert Dahl, *Preface to Democratic Theory*, Chapter 2: “Populist Democracy”

Michael Meyerson, *Political Numeracy*, Chapter 2: “Majority Rules”

Arend Lijphart, *Democracies: Patterns of Majoritarian and Consensus Government in Twenty-One Countries*; Chapter 1: The Westminster Model of Democracy”

Optional: Wayne Booth et al., *The Craft of Research*, Ch. 3-6

February 12 Meeting: Pluralist/Polyarchal Democracy

--Statement regarding primary sources due in class –

Reading for class:

Robert Dahl, *Preface to Democratic Theory*, Chapters, 3, 4, 5

Robert Dahl, *Who Governs?: Democracy and Power in an American City* (Yale University Press, Call# JS1195.2.D2) Ch. 1, 7, 8, 12, 19, 24, 27, 28

Arend Lijphart, *Democracies*, Ch. 2: “The Consensus Model of Democracy”

Wayne Booth et al., *The Craft of Research*, Ch. 7-8

February 19 Meeting: Critics of Pluralist/Polyarchal Democracy

-- Refined research paper question due in class—

Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz, *The Second Face of Power* (article on reserve)

E.E. Schattschneider, *The Semisovereign People: A Realist’s View of Democracy in America*, Ch. 2, 3, 8

Terry Moe, *The Organization of Interests*, Introduction, Ch. 1, 2

February 26 Meeting: Electoral Reforms to Enhance Minority Influence

--- Annotated partial bibliography of secondary sources due in class---

Reading for class:

Smith, Raymond A., *The American Anomaly*, Ch. 8, 9

David Ian Lublin, “Race, Representation, and Redistricting” (Chapter 5 of *Classifying by Race*; Paul E. Peterson, Ed.; Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995)

Robert Richie and Steven Hill, “The Case for Proportional Representation” (Excerpted from *Whose Vote Counts?*; Boston: Beacon Press, 2001)

Lani Guanier, “The Representation of Minority Interests” (Chapter 2 of *Classifying by Race*; Paul E. Peterson, Ed.; Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995)

Optional: Wayne Booth et al., *The Craft of Research*, Ch. 9-11

March 4 Meeting: Public Policy and the Status of Minorities

--Revised statement regarding primary sources due in class --

Lawrence D. Bobo, "The Color Line, the Dilemma, and the Dream: Race Relations in America at the Close of the Twentieth Century" in *Civil Rights and Social Wrongs*.

Erwin Chemerinsky, "Making Sense of the Affirmative Action Debate" in *Civil Rights and Social Wrongs*.

Orlando Patterson, *The Ordeal of Integration*, Ch. 1, 5

Douglas S. Massey, "Residential Segregation and Persistent Urban Poverty" in *Civil Rights and Social Wrongs*.

March 11 Meeting: A Constitutional Convention

--One-page outlines of paper arguments due in class; be prepared to discuss --

Reading for class:

Arend Lijphart, "Constitutional Design for Divided Societies" *Journal of Democracy*, Vol 15 #2, April 1, 2004

March 18 – Spring Break; NO MEETING

March 25 Meeting: Minority Self-Empowerment, Part I: Ethnoracial Minorities

Reading for class:

John Higham, "A Historical Perspective on the Civil Rights Movement" and Lawrence H. Fuchs, "The Changing Meaning of Civil Rights" in *Civil Rights and Social Wrongs* in *Civil Rights and Social Wrongs*.

Louis DeSipio, "Myths and Realities: Latino Ideology, Partisanship, and Policy Preferences" (Chapter 2 of *Counting on the Latino Vote: Latinos as a New Electorate*, University Press of Virginia, 1996)

Yen Le Espiritu, "Coming Together: The Asian-American Movement" (Chapter 2 of *Asian American Panethnicity: Bridging Institutions and Identities*; Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992)

Wayne Booth et al., *The Craft of Research*, Ch. 14-16

April 1 Meeting: Minority Self-Empowerment, Part II: “New” Minorities

Required Reading:

John D’Emilio, “Cycles of Change, Questions of Strategy: The Gay and Lesbian Movement after Fifty Years” (Chapter 2 of *The Politics of Gay Rights*, Craig Rimmerman, Kenneth D. Wald, and Clyde Wilcox, Eds.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000)

Joseph P. Shapiro, “Introduction: You Just Don’t Understand” and “Tiny Tims, Supercrips, and the End of Pity” (Chapters 1 and 2 of *No Pity: People with Disabilities Forging a New Civil Rights Movement*; New York: Times Books, 1994)

Riki Ann Wilchins, “Why this Book” and “Why Identity Politics Really, Really Sucks” (Chapters 2 and 10 of *Read My Lips: Sexual Subversion and the End of Gender*; Ithaca, New York: Firebrand Books, 1997)

Optional: Wayne Booth et al., *The Craft of Research*, Ch. 12-13

April 8 Meeting: The Future of Minorities in American Democracy

Required Readings:

Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, “New Racism,” Chapter 18 of *White Out: The Continuing Significance of Racism*. Ashley W. Doane and Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, Eds. (New York: Routledge, 2001)

Bert Archer, *The End of Gay (and the death of heterosexuality)*, Part I, pgs. 22-60. (London: Fusion Press)

David Hollinger, “Towards a Postethnic Perspective” (Chapter 5 of *Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995)

April 14 Meeting: The Multiculturalism Paradigm and its Critics

Required Readings:

James Ceaser, “Multiculturalism and American Liberal Democracy” (Chapter 9 of *Multiculturalism and American Democracy*; Arthur M. Melzer, Jerry Weingerger, and M. Richard Zinman, Eds. (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1998)

Stanley Fish, "Boutique Multiculturalism," (Chapter 4 of *Multiculturalism and American Democracy*; Arthur M. Melzer, Jerry Weingerger, and M. Richard Zinman, Eds. (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1998)

Arthur Schlesinger, "Foreword" and "Epilogue" in *The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society*, Revised and Enlarged Version (WW Norton & Co., 1998)

Walter Benn Michaels, *The Trouble with Diversity: How We Learned to Love Identity and Ignore Inequality*," Chapter 3 (Fusion Press, 2003)

April 22 Meeting: Student research paper final presentations begin
****Hard copy of all research papers due in class (not just presenters)****

April 29 Meeting: Student research paper final presentations conclude