

Deliberative Democracy in Theory and Practice

EPE-337a TH 1:30-3:20

Michael Neblo

Office Hours: W 2-4:30 or By Appointment

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Course Description

We will critically engage the most important trend in democratic philosophy over the last twenty years, namely theories that focus on public deliberation as the key feature of a democratic polity. The course will focus on four related questions: 1) what theoretical role does public deliberation play in grounding the legitimacy of democratic politics? 2) what is required of the citizens and institutions in a democracy in order to approximate the normative standards set out in deliberative democratic theory? 3) to what extent are these standards met in contemporary American political practice? 4) are there any plausible and desirable reforms that we might make to our political practices that would bring them into closer alignment with the normative standards of deliberative theory?

Books (Available at the Yale Co-op)

(Required)

James Bohman & William Rehg (eds.), Deliberative Democracy: Essays on Reason and Politics.

James Fishkin, The Voice of the People: Public Opinion and Democracy.

Stephen Elkin & Karol Soltan (eds.), Citizen Competence and Democratic Institutions.

Bent Flyvbjerg, Rationality & Power: Democracy in Practice.

Jürgen Habermas, The Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory.

Benjamin Page, Who Deliberates?

Course Packet [Available on reserve and at the first class meeting.]

(Recommended: Places to start for your term papers.)

Joseph Bessette, The Mild Voice of Reason. [First real empirical study on DD — US Senate.]

Richard Blaug, Democracy: Real and Ideal. [Calls for radical institutional reforms via Habermas]

James Bohman, Public Deliberation. [Takes on complexity and pluralism in a quasi-empirical way.]

Simone Chambers, Reasonable Democracy. [Clear articulation and defense of Habermas.]

Copp, Hampton and Roemer (eds.), The Idea of Democracy. [Some classics in a For and Against format.]

Jon Elster (ed.), Deliberative Democracy. [Mostly skeptical comments by empirically informed folks.]

Ferejohn and Kuklinski (eds.), Information and Democratic Processes. [Technical, but valuable, studies.]

Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, Democracy and Disagreement. [Major theory w/ practical examples.]

Jürgen Habermas, Between Facts and Norms. [Habermas's key book—long, difficult, great.]

George Klosko, Democratic Procedures and Liberal Consensus. [Rawls and opinion polls.]

Arthur Lupia and Matt McCubbins, The Democratic Dilemma. [Rational choice and experiments.]

Markus and Hansen (eds.), Reconsidering the Democratic Public. [Theorists and soc. scientists mix it up.]

McCombs and Reynolds (eds.), The Poll with a Human Face. [More info on Fishkin's project.]

Michael Neblo, Thinking Through Democracy. [What I really think about some of our topics.]

William Riker, Liberalism Against Populism. [Classic social choice critique of democratic ambitions.]

Shapiro & Hacker-Cordon (eds.), Democracy's Edges. [Cutting edge essays on a range of topics.]

Shapiro & Hacker-Cordon (eds.), Democracy's Value. [More cutting edge essays on a range of topics.]

John Uhr, Deliberative Democracy in Australia. [Extended case study of institutional reform down under.]

Requirements

This is an intensive seminar, so the primary requirement is to read and discuss each week's material analytically and creatively. There will not be an overwhelming number of pages assigned each week, however, most of the material is very dense and requires close reading. To help organize and facilitate discussion you will be required to e-mail me a short (1 to 2 pages) note on a theme, argument or passage in the readings that particularly puzzles or intrigues you. This will be due each week on the day preceding class. In addition, once during the term you will be required to prepare a somewhat longer (4 to 5 pages) and more formal set of comments and present them in class. Finally, you will write a term paper (15 to 20 pages) on a topic chosen by you and approved by me.

Schedule

- Week 1: 9/7 *Introduction*
- Week 2: 9/14 *Deliberation and the Normative Foundations of Democracy*
Bohman & Rehg: Intro., Chapters 1, 3, 4
CP: Manin, "On Legitimacy and Political Deliberation"
- Week 3: 9/21 *Habermas's Discourse Theory*
Bohman & Rehg: Chapter 2
Habermas: Intro., Chapters 9, 10
CP: Habermas, "Civil Society and the Political Public Sphere"
- Week 4: 9/28 *Habermas versus Rawls*
Rehg & Bohman, Chapters 6, 7, 13
Habermas, Chapters 2, 3
CP: Rawls, "Reply to Habermas"
- Week 5: 10/5 *Practical Challenges to Deliberative Democracy I: Social Choice Theory*
CP: Fearon, "Deliberation as Discussion"
CP: Hardin, "Public Choice Versus Democracy"
CP: Neblo, "Making Social Choice Theory Safe for Democracy"
CP: Christiano, "Social Choice and Democracy"
CP: Austen-Smith, "Modeling Deliberative Democracy"
- Week 6: 10/12 *Practical Challenges to Deliberative Democracy II: Complexity and Citizen Competence*
Elkin and Soltan: Intro., Chapters 3, 5, 6, 15, 16
CP: Somin, "Voter Ignorance and the Democratic Ideal"
- Week 7: 10/19 *Practical Challenges to Deliberative Democracy III: Pluralism*
Rehg and Bohman, Chapter 12
Habermas, Chapter 8
CP: Sanders, "Against Deliberation"
CP: Stokes, "Pathologies of Deliberation"
CP: Przeworski, "Deliberation and Ideological Domination"
- Week 8: 10/26 *Practical Challenges to Deliberative Democracy IV: Power*
Flyvbjerg, (The whole book.)
- Week 9: 11/2 *Practical Challenges to Deliberative Democracy V: Motivation*

CP: Kinder, "Individualism Reconsidered"
CP: Bobo, "Race and Beliefs About Affirmative Action"
CP: Sniderman, "The Politics of Race"
CP: Neblo, "Three-Fifths a Racist"

Week 10: 11/9 *Deliberation in Practice I: Citizens*
Fishkin, (The whole book.)
CP: Ackerman and Fishkin, "Deliberation Day"
CP: Neblo, "Deliberate Actions"

Week 11: 11/16 *Deliberation in Practice II: Government Officials*
CP: Uhr, "The Ends of Representation Case Study: Mandate Wars"
CP: Uhr, "The Means of Legislation Case Study: Mabo Compared"
CP: Uhr, "Accountability Case Study: Sports-Rorts Affair"
CP: Besette, "Deliberation and the Law-Making Process"

Week 12: 11/23 Break

Week 13: 11/30 *Deliberation in Practice III: The Media*
Page, (The whole book.)

Week 14: 12/7 *Deliberation in Practice IV: Us*
Background materials on an issue to be decided on by the class.

Week 15: 12/14 Final Papers Due