Democratic Theory and Practice
GOVT 101, Spring 2018
Class meets 1:30-2:45 pm Tuesday & Thursday in ***

This syllabus is tentative & subject to change. Please refer to the course outline, announcements, and any revised syllabus on Blackboard for up-to-date information.

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Office Hours: by appointment (MWF in Arlington, TR in Fairfax)

Classmate contacts:
Name _______________________     Email ________________________
Name _______________________     Email ________________________

Course Description
The following questions will motivate us this semester:
- What is democracy?
- Why do we value democracy?
- Where (in which institutions and areas of life) do we expect democracy?
- Who/what is/are "the people"?
- How can the people rule? What would it mean for the people to rule?
- Who is a citizen? Who can participate? Why can't non-citizens vote?
- What would a democratic classroom look like?

The assignments and activities in this course will encourage students to:
- Use the word democracy carefully, aware of its multiple meanings & invoking/using those meanings deliberately.
- Develop their views on when & where democracy is appropriate.
- Critically assess claims to/attributions of democratic qualities.
- Reflect on their own opportunities (and lack thereof) for participation in spaces that matter to them.

Course Materials
This course requires no purchased materials. I will supply links to all readings on Blackboard. EVEN SO, you must bring the assigned reading to class either in print or on a device.
From the Course Catalog
Comparative exploration; topics include contemporary analysis of the meanings of liberty, equality, representation, property rights, voting rights, and civil responsibilities. Offered by Schar School of Policy & Govt. May not be repeated for credit.

Mason Core: Social/Behavioral Sciences

Learning Objectives
This course will cultivate your ability to:
1. Understand key concepts in the theory of democracy, and discuss theories of democracy critically and comparatively.
2. Clearly communicate complex ideas orally and in writing.
3. Apply theories of democracy to democratic practices in the real world.
4. Explain how individuals, groups or institutions are influenced by contextual factors.
5. Demonstrate awareness of changes in social and cultural constructs.
6. Use appropriate methods and resources to apply social and behavioral science concepts, terminology, principles and theories in the analysis of significant human issues, past or present.

Components of Final Grade
Weight allocated to each of these is TBD.

Class participation: There will be opportunities for participation in every class meeting; at least half of our class meetings will be entirely student-activity-based. Your participation is essential, so I will grade you on it!

Assignment 1: What do they mean by democracy -- Students pick one article from a selection of articles approved by instructor. What does your article mean by democracy? How do you know?

Assignment 2: Democracy in your life -- pick an institution in your life (the presidency, congress, nuclear family, extended family, church, military, workplace, your state, your county, your school district, NOT this class, but another class would work)

  o What is this institution (size, location, nature, background)?
  o Why/how is it important to you/what is its role in your life?
  o Discuss the presence/absence/sense/extent of democracy in this institution AS IT IS
  o Discuss whether democracy in any sense(s) is appropriate to this institution, and WHY
  o Consider a counterargument/objection & reply.

Presentations & discussion: "So you think you're a democracy?" – A multi-week, whole-class exercise in discussing and comparing various countries & institutions claims to be democratic. Small group presentations, followed by whole-class discussion.
Final Reflection: Democracy, Theory, Practice – Students will reflect on the motivating questions of this course. This reflection will serve as the final examination.

A Note on Reading and Arguing Generously
This course is an opportunity to practice sustained, collegial, critical engagement with texts and ideas. We will cultivate habits of generosity in our questioning of, and response to, our readings and each other. Throughout this course I will encourage you to:

- Appreciate the strange, unfamiliar aspects of a text or idea
- Disagree with, but not dismiss, perspectives other than your own
- Augment or build on the ideas of others
- Acknowledge the textual and other resources that inform your own arguments

Course Calendar

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week/Dates</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Assignments/Deadlines</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1 – Jan 23 &amp; 25</td>
<td>Democracy, theory, practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2 – Jan 30 and Feb 1</td>
<td>What is democracy?</td>
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<td>Week 3 – Feb 6 &amp; 8</td>
<td>How do people use the term democracy?</td>
<td>How does this article use the term democracy?</td>
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<td>Week 4 – Feb 13 &amp; 15</td>
<td>What is participation?</td>
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<td>Week 5 – Feb 20 &amp; 22</td>
<td>Who are The People?</td>
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<td>Week 6 – Feb 27 &amp; Mar 1</td>
<td>What should be democratic?</td>
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<td>Week 7 – March 6 &amp; 8</td>
<td>Where do you experience democracy?</td>
<td>Democracy in your life assignment due</td>
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<td>March 12-18</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
<td>Enjoy the break</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 8 – March 20 &amp; 22</td>
<td>Why do we value democracy? Should we promote it?</td>
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<td>Week 9 – March 27 &amp; 29</td>
<td>Democracy in the United States</td>
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<td>Week 10 – April 3 &amp; 5</td>
<td>&quot;So you think you’re a</td>
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### Academic Integrity

Mason is an Honor Code university; please see the Office for Academic Integrity for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely.

#### Academic Integrity in Group Work & Class Discussions

When you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else’s work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification.

#### Academic Integrity in Written Work

Three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification.

#### Plagiarism

Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving the person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes. Paraphrased
material must also be cited, using MLA or APA format. A simple listing of books or articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in the academic setting. If you have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me.

**Learning differences**

If you have a learning or physical difference that may affect your academic work, you will need to furnish appropriate documentation to the Office of Disability Services (SUB I, Rm. 4205; 993-2474; http://ods.gmu.edu). If you qualify for accommodation, the ODS staff will give you a form detailing appropriate accommodations for your instructor. In addition to providing your professors with the appropriate form, please take the initiative to discuss accommodation with them at the beginning of the semester and as needed during the term. Because of the range of learning differences, faculty members need to learn from you the most effective ways to assist you. If you have contacted the Office of Disability Services and are waiting to hear from a counselor, please tell me.

**Additional Resources**

The University has many resources available to support students beyond the classroom. These include:

- The University Writing Center offers both in-person and online writing assistance for students, including online writing guides, reference guides, and style manuals. Additionally, the Writing Center provides assistance to faculty who are interested in holding in-class writing workshops, developing effective writing assignments, or evaluating students’ writing. http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/
- Academic Advising and Transfer Center advises students who are thinking about changing majors or who need assistance with their transition to Mason from another institution. http://advising.gmu.edu/
- LGBTQ Resources provides advising, advocacy, counseling, and a safe, welcoming space. Also facilitates workshops. Located in SUB I, room 2200. https://lgbtq.gmu.edu/
- Counseling and Psychological Services. Students can take advantage of psychological services, a variety of learning services, multicultural services, and educational programs that support students’ educational goals. http://caps.gmu.edu/
- The Academic Counseling Program provides individual support to students with learning differences such as attention deficit disorder or learning disabilities. http://caps.gmu.edu/ learningservices/academiccounseling.php
- Academic Skills Workshops and individual study skills counseling provide learning experiences to improve academic skills. http://caps.gmu.edu/learningservices/workshops.php
- The Certificate in Academic Skills Program provides a structured, yet individualized program of study to develop academic skills. http://caps.gmu.edu/learningservices/skillscertificate.php
- The Tutor Referral Program maintains a roster of undergraduate and graduate students available to provide fee-for-service tutoring assistance. Learning Services staff are available to consult with faculty and staff regarding student learning needs. http://caps.gmu.edu/learningservices/tutorreferral.php
- Office of Disability Services implements and coordinates reasonable accommodations and disability-related services that afford equal access to university programs and activities. http://ods.gmu.edu/