Political Theory 4314
Contemporary Democratic Theory
FALL 2012

Dr. Paul A. Labedz
Telephone: (407) 582-2227
Office Hours: TBA
Email: Paul.Labedz@ucf.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Study of democratic theories, emphasizing liberal democracy and its critics, elitist theories, participatory democracy, citizen participation, and relevance of empirical research to democratic theory.

READINGS

The following texts are assigned for this course and are available for purchase at the University of Central Florida bookstore:

Held, David. *Models of Democracy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006) 3rd edition. ISBN: 0-8047-5472-1

Dahl, Robert, Shapiro, Ian, and José Antonio Cheibub. *The Democracy Sourcebook* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2003) ISBN: 0-262-54147-5

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

- Three (3) exams (50 points each)
- Class participation (10 points)

EXAMINATIONS

Three (3) essay-style examinations will be given throughout the semester. The first exam will cover reading and lecture material from part 1 of the course (see course outline below); the second exam will cover reading and lecture material from part 2; the third exam will cover reading and lecture materials from part 3. For an overview of the subjects contained within each of the segments/parts of the course, please consult the course outline below. Each exam is worth a maximum of 50 points. The dates for the exams will be announced in class and via email.

GRADING

The overall grade for the course will be based on the student's performance on each of the above assignments. The maximum number of points a student can acquire is 160.

The grading scale is based on the following point distributions: 144-160=A, 128-143=B, 112-127=C, 96-111=D, 0-95= F.

Grades will not be based on a curve and will reflect the quality of the work submitted.

No extra credit opportunities will be available for this course.

CLASSROOM POLICIES

ATTENDANCE:

Attendance is mandatory. There will be only four **EXCUSED** absences allowed over the course of the semester. Any unexcused absences will result in five points being deducted from your final earned point total. Attendance will be taken at the start of each class period; therefore, it is important that you arrive to class on time. Should you happen to arrive late for a particular session, be sure to sign the roster after class so that you are not counted as being absent from class.

MAKE-UP EXAMS:

All students will be expected to take each of the examinations on the scheduled dates. In the event that a student has an excused absence on the date of the exams, he/she will have to take a make-up examination on a date and at a location selected by the instructor. Failure to take the make-up exam on the rescheduled date will result in a score of 0 for the examination.

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

All forms of academic dishonesty are prohibited at the University of Central Florida. Academic dishonesty in any portion of your coursework (such as plagiarism on a report or cheating on an examination) will result, at the very least, in your being assigned a failing grade for the course. If you're uncertain as to what constitutes cheating or plagiarism or if you have any other concerns related to academic dishonesty, be sure to discuss the matter with the instructor. "Better safe than sorry" is good advice in matters involving academic integrity.

EXPECTED STUDENT CONDUCT:

The University of Central Florida (UCF) is dedicated not only to the advancement of knowledge and learning but is concerned with the development of responsible personal and social conduct.

By enrolling at UCF, a student assumes the responsibility for becoming familiar with and abiding by the general rules of conduct. The primary responsibility for managing the classroom environment rests with the faculty. Students who engage in any prohibited or unlawful acts that result in disruption of a class may be directed by the faculty member to leave the class. Violation of any classroom or university rules may lead to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from UCF. Disciplinary action could include being withdrawn from class, disciplinary warning, probation, suspension, expulsion, or other appropriate and authorized actions.

COURSE OBJECTIVE & FORMAT:

The purpose of this course is to familiarize students with some of the key concepts in the study of contemporary democratic theory. The course will be organized around three central themes: the varied meanings of democracy, the theoretical approaches to understanding democracy, and the institutions and practice of modern democracy.

In general, the class will be conducted as a mixture of lecture and discussion and will provide the student with a forum to raise any questions he/she may have concerning the material covered in lectures and in the assigned readings.

COURSE OUTLINE

Here is a week-by-week list of topics, examination dates, and associated readings.

The schedule is subject to change if certain topics prove to require more or less time.

PART 1: VARIANTS OF DEMOCRACY

A. Democracy as "process"

   Readings: Held, Chapters 1-3, pp.141-157; Dahl, et al., pp. 5-12, 29-39

B. Democracy as "rights"

   Readings: Dahl, et al., pp. 123-133;

C. Democracy as "values"

   Readings: Dahl, et al., pp. 157-190

D. Democracy as "economics"

   Readings: Held, Chapter 4, pp. 172-179; Dahl, et al., 436-453

PART 2: THE THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON DEMOCRACY

A. Pluralism

   Readings: Held, pp. 158-169; Dahl, et al., pp. 118-122, 207-216, 364-371

B. Consociational Democracy

   Readings: Held, pp.158-172; Dahl, et al., pp. 142-151

C. Rational Choice Theory

   Readings: Dahl, et al., pp. 372-380; pp. 393-397

D. Participatory Democracy

   Readings: Held, pp. 209-216; Dahl et al., pp. 40-47

E. Deliberative Democracy

   Readings: Held, Chapter 9, Dahl, et al., pp. 18-28

PART 3: THE MODERN PRACTICE OF DEMOCRACY

A. The Institutions of Democracy

   Readings: Dahl, et al., pp. 191-217, Chapter 5

B. The Electoral Systems of Democracy

   Readings: Dahl, et al., Chapter 6

I hope you enjoy the class and feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

SPECIAL RULES:

In accordance with state and federal law, instructors at the University of Central Florida cannot release information relating to the academic performance of students to persons other than the staff without the student's written consent. In order for this information to be given out at request of a third party, the student must first sign a consent form to release their educational records.