POT 6007 - Seminar in Political Theory

Section: 0001

College of Sciences

School of Politics, Security, and Intl Affairs

Course Information

Term: Spring 2025
Class Meeting Days: R
Class Meeting Time: 06:00PM - 08:50PM
Class Meeting Location: HPH O305G
Modality: P
Credit Hours: 3.00

Instructor Information

Daniel Marien
Title: Senior Lecturer
Office Location: HPH 311 H
Office Hours:
Howard Philips Hall, room 311H (from 1/7/25 to 4/17/25).

Tuesdays from 2 pm to 5 pm
Thursdays from 2 pm to 6 pm.

Or by special appointments setup via email. I am flexible. Do not skip class or work to make an appointment for consultation. Appointments on weekends are possible as well. If you cannot show up at an appointment, please email me ahead of time to reschedule.
Phone: 4078232608
Email: Daniel.Marien@ucf.edu

Course Description

POT 6007 COS-POLS 3(3,0)Seminar in Political Theory: PR: Admission to a graduate degree-seeking program or C.I. An examination of analytic and normative theories of politics and society, using selected topics as a substantive focus. Occasional.

Everyone loves democracy, at least as an ill-defined ideal. Even the Chine Communist Party argues for the democratic nature of its rule. But what, exactly, is democracy and why should we value it?

Today democracy as a form of political rule is under stress. Countries recently in transition to democratic governance now reversed direction and evolve toward authoritarian governance. More established democracies are also showing signs of democratic exhaustion.

This seminar will examine the history and sources of contemporary pressures on democracy with a special (though not exclusive) attention to the United States. It will also examine a range of normative arguments about democracy. Why and how should we value democracy? Should we value democracy as the only procedure for decision-making treating people as free and equal? Or should we value democracy because it tends, on average and over time, to deliver the best decisions? Or should we value democracy because it delivers popular self-government? Or, again, should we value democracy because it “merely” channels conflict and reduces violence? Or, more pointedly, should we value democracy at all?

Student Learning Outcomes

After successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

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LO-1: At the end of this semester, students will be able to describe with a high degree of accuracy the historical evolution of conflicts in the United States about who belong to the people and on what terms.

LO-2: At the end of this semester, students will be able to describe with a high degree of accuracy the sources of pressures on democratic governance in the United States and elsewhere.

LO-3: At the end of this semester, students will be able to describe with a high degree of accuracy a broad range of normative arguments about the value and imitations of democracy.

LO-4: At the end of this semester, students will have demonstrated an effective ability to communicate in writing and orally with class participants about issues in the study of democracy.

Course Materials and Resources

These Truths: A History of the United States

The Rise and Fall of the Neoliberal Order

How Democracies Die

Against Democracy

Democracy and Its Critics

The People vs. Democracy: Why Our Freedom is in Danger and How to Save It

Contemporary Democratic Theory

Course Assessment and Grading Procedure

Assessment Overview

WHAT	WHEN	WORTH	WHY

Description	Deadlines	Full Course Points	Purpose
Before Course Perception of Democracy's condition and value	**Friday 1/10, 11:59pm** Upload a file in Webcourses.	**1**	**QUICK MONEY** To free up your financial aid and to prepare your After-Course Statement due at the end of the semester.
Bi-weekly Quizzes In Webcourses	**Wednesday Evenings**	**43**	**UNDERSTANDING** To verify mastery of assigned materials with multiple choice questions.
Part A Seminar Leadership	**Thursday Evenings**	**20**	Present reading and lead seminar discussion
Weekly Part B Discussion Posts In Yellow Dig	**Wednesday Evenings**	**35**	**EVALUATION**
After Course Perception of Democracy's	**Friday 4/25 Upload a file in Webcourses.**	**1**	**SYNTHESIS** To foster reflection on what was learned and to

condition and value			communicate this to the instructor.
TOTAL		**100**	See the Grading Scale below.

Assignment Schedule

Due Date	Assignment Name	Assignment Type	Points
1/10/25	Before Course	Assignment	1
4/23/25	PART B	Assignment	20

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage
A	94-100%
A-	90-93%
B+	87-89%
B	84-86%
B-	80-83%
C+	77-79%
C	70-76%
D	60-69%%
F	0-59%
D	64-66%
There will be no rounding up in this course.	

Letter Grade	Percentage

DETAILED SCHEDULE

Updates may adjust the schedule below. Updates would be stated in the description of the new module (Part A in Webcourses).

Introduction One Week

Week 1: Meeting on Thursday 1/9

No Deadlines

Presentation of course goals and means.

Quiz Period 1 Two Weeks

Week 2: Meeting on Thursday 1/16

Deadline:
Part B Posts: Wednesday 1/15 at 11:58 pm in Yellowdig.

Read:
Lepore, *These Truths: A History of the U.S.*, Intro ch. 1-2 **Seminar Leader: Simon**

What is Democracy?
Selections in Files Under Assigned Readings:

Ball et al, ch. 2 **Seminar leader: Wael Benali**

Mettler and Liberman, Four Threats: The Recurring Crises of American Democracy, Intro + ch. 1 **Seminar Leader: Hailey**

Tilly, Democracy,
ch. 1 Seminar Leader: **Joe**
Ch. 2. **Seminar Leader: Sumbo**

Week 3: Meeting on Thursday 1/23

Deadlines Wednesday 1/22
Quiz at 11:58 pm in Webcourses.
Part B Posts at 11:58 pm in Yellowdig.

Read:

Lepore ch. 3-4.

Levitsky and Ziblatt, How Democracies Die

Quiz Period 2 Two Weeks

Week 4: Meeting on Thursday 1/30

Deadlines Wednesday 1/29
Quiz: 1/29 at 11:58 pm in Webcourses.
Part B Posts: 1/29 at 11:58 pm in Yellowdig.

Read:

Lepore ch. 5-6.

Brennan, *Against Democracy*, selected chapters.

Chambers, *Contemporary Democratic Theory*, ch. 1.

Week 5: Meeting on Thursday 2/6

Deadlines
Quiz: Wed. 2/5 at 11:58 pm in Webcourses.
Part B Posts: Wed. 2/5 at 11:58 pm in Yellowdig.

Read:

Lepore ch. 7-8
Dahl, first third of the book.
Chambers ch. 2.

Quiz Period 3 Two Weeks

Week 6: Meeting on Thursday 2/13

Deadlines
Part B Posts: Wednesday 2/12 at 11:58 pm in Yellowdig.

Read:

Lepore ch. 9-10.
Dahl, second third of the book.
Chambers ch. 3.

Week 7: Meeting on Thursday 2/20

Deadlines Wednesday 2/19
Quiz Wednesday 2/19 at 11:58 pm in Webcourses.
Part B Posts: Wednesday 2/19 at 11:58 pm in Yellowdig.

Read:

Lepore ch. 11-12
Dahl, last third of the book.
Chambers ch. 4.

Quiz Period 4 Two Weeks

Week 8: Meeting on Thursday 2/27

Part B Posts: Wednesday 2/26 at 11:58 pm in Yellowdig.

Read:

Gerstle, *The Rise and Fall of the Neoliberal Order*, Intro, ch. 1-2.
Chambers ch. 5.

Week 9: Meeting on Thursday 3/6

Deadlines Wednesday 3/5
Quiz at 11:58 pm in Webcourses.
Part B Posts at 11:58 pm in Yellowdig.

Read:

Gerstle, ch. 3-4.
Chambers ch. 6.

Quiz Period 5 Two Weeks interrupted by spring break

Week 10: Meeting on Thursday 3/13

Deadlines
Quiz Wed. 3/12 at 11:58 pm in Webcourses.
Part B Posts: Wed. 3/12 at 11:58 pm in Packback.

Read:

Gerstle, ch. 5-6.

Chambers ch. 7.

Week 11: Spring Break

No meetings

Week 12: Meeting on Thursday 3/27

Deadlines Wednesday 3/26
Quiz at 11:58 pm in Webcourses.
Part B Posts at 11:58 pm in Yellowdig.

Read:
Gerstle, ch. 7-8.
Mounk, *The People vs Democracy*, Intro, ch. 1-2.
Chambers ch. 8.

Quiz Period 6 Two Weeks

Week 13: Meeting on Thursday 4/3:

Deadlines Wednesday 4/2
Part B Posts at 11:58 pm in Yellowdig

Read:
Mounk, ch. 3-4.
Chambers ch. 9.

Week 14: Meeting on Thursday 4/10:

Deadlines Wednesday 4/9
Quiz at 11:58 pm in Webcourses.
Part B Posts at 11:58 pm in Yellowdig

Read:

Mounk, ch. 5-6.
Chambers ch. 10.

Quiz Period 7 Two Weeks

Week 15: Meeting on Thursday 4/17:

Deadline: Wednesday 4/16

Part B Post in Yellowdig.

Read:

Mounk, ch. 7-8.

Chambers ch. 11.

Week 16: Meeting on Thursday 4/24 (Exam Period)

Deadline: Wednesday 4/23

Quiz

Part B

Mounk, ch. 9 and Conclusion

Chambers ch. 12.

Deadline: Tuesday 4/30

After Course Perception of Democracy Friday 4/2 11:58 pm in Webcourses.

Policies for Course Grade

Makeup Work Policy

Per university policy, you are allowed to submit make-up work (or an equivalent, alternate assignment) for university-sponsored events, religious observances, or legal obligations (such as jury duty). If this participation conflicts with your course assignments, I will offer a reasonable opportunity for you to complete missed assignments and/or exams. The make-up assignment and grading scale will be equivalent to the missed assignment and its grading scale. Please contact me ahead of time to notify me of upcoming needs.

Cannot make the deadline for other reasons than those listed above? Contact the instructor with an explanation **and** a request for a specific deadline extension. I cannot accept open-ended extension requests. Note also that my flexibility on deadlines diminishes with the approach of the end of the semester. **I cannot accept Part A posts in my email. They must be submitted in Webcourses. An extension allows you to submit your Part A post in Webcourses and nowhere else.**

NOTE regarding Part B: I cannot give extensions in Part B. Yellowdig is a platform for exchange between participants. There is no point in joining a conversation that happened last week, after other participants have already moved on to another topic. If you have a major impediment hindering you from completing your tasks in Yellowdig (such as surgery, illness, accident, bereavement, etc.), you need to email me with an explanation and documentation. The best I can do for you then is to not count that missing Part B submission in the computation of your final course grade. Such exemptions will be limited to a maximum of two modules. Note also that Yellowdig has a built-in opportunity to catch up on missed submissions or week performance. For more detail, see the Guide for Posting in Part B.

Missed/Late Assignments

See above.

Attendance

Course Accessibility

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing access and inclusion for all persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities who need access to course content due to course design limitations should contact the professor as soon as possible. Students should also connect with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) (Ferrell Commons 185, sas@ucf.edu, phone 407-823-2371). For students connected with SAS, a Course Accessibility Letter may be created and sent to professors, which informs faculty of potential course access and accommodations that might be necessary and reasonable. Determining reasonable access and accommodations requires consideration of the course design, course learning objectives and the individual academic and course barriers experienced by the student. Further conversation with SAS, faculty and the student may be warranted to ensure an accessible course experience.

Academic Integrity

Students should familiarize themselves with UCF's Code of Conduct at Student Conduct and Integrity Office. According to Section 1, "Academic Misconduct," students are prohibited from engaging in:

a. Academic misconduct is defined as any submitted work or behavior that obstructs the instructor of record's ability to accurately assess the student's understanding or completion of the course materials or degree requirements (e.g., assignment, quiz, and/or exam). Examples of academic misconduct include but are not limited to: plagiarism, unauthorized assistance to complete an academic exercise; unauthorized communication with others during an examination, course assignment, or project; falsifying or misrepresenting academic work; providing misleading information to create a personal advantage to complete course/degree requirements; or multiple submission(s) of academic work without permission of the instructor of record.

b. Any student who knowingly helps another violate academic behavior standards is also in violation of the standards.

c. Commercial Use of Academic Material. Selling of course material to another person and/or uploading course material to a third-party vendor without authorization or without the express written permission of the University and the instructor of record. Course materials include but are not limited to class notes, the instructor of record's

slide deck, tests, quizzes, labs, instruction sheets, homework, study guides, and handouts.

d. Soliciting assistance with academic coursework and/or degree requirements. The solicitation of assistance with an assignment, lab, quiz, test, paper, etc., without authorization of the instructor of record or designee is prohibited. This includes but is not limited to asking for answers to a quiz, trading answers, or offering to pay another to complete an assignment. It is considered Academic Misconduct to solicit assistance with academic coursework and/or degree requirements, even if the solicitation did not yield actual assistance (for example, if there was no response to the solicitation).

Responses to Academic Dishonesty, Plagiarism, or Cheating

Students should also familiarize themselves with the procedures for academic misconduct in UCF's student handbook, *The Golden Rule*. UCF faculty members have a responsibility for students' education and the value of a UCF degree, and so seek to prevent unethical behavior and respond to academic misconduct when necessary. Penalties for violating rules, policies, and instructions within this course can range from a zero on the exercise to an "F" letter grade in the course. In addition, an Academic Misconduct report could be filed with the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity, which could lead to disciplinary warning, disciplinary probation, or deferred suspension or separation from the University through suspension, dismissal, or expulsion with the addition of a "Z" designation on one's transcript.

Being found in violation of academic conduct standards could result in a student having to disclose such behavior on a graduate school application, being removed from a leadership position within a student organization, the recipient of scholarships, participation in University activities such as study abroad, internships, etc.

Let's avoid all of this by demonstrating values of honesty, trust, and integrity. No grade is worth compromising your integrity and moving your moral compass. Stay true to doing the right thing: take the zero, not a shortcut.

Marien's Addition to UCF Academic Integrity Policy

- ***Marien's addition to UCF academic integrity policy:***

    - the listing of works cited but not materially used in a post or essay also constitutes a breach of academic honesty. It misrepresents the depth of research done.

- The use of outside sources without proper citations is a breach of academic integrity.
- The use of AI to compose a post is strictly forbidden. I want you to develop your own abilities and voice as an author. Copying and pasting AI generated text will not accomplish that.

Title IX

Title IX prohibits sex discrimination, including sexual misconduct, sexual violence, sexual harassment, and retaliation. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find resources available to support the victim, including confidential resources and information concerning reporting options at Let's Be Clear and UCF Cares.

For more information on diversity and inclusion, Title IX, accessibility, or UCF's complaint processes contact:

- Title IX – OIE – Office of Institutional Equity & askanadvocate@ucf.edu
- Disability Accommodation – Student Accessibility Services – Student Accessibility Services & sas@ucf.edu
- Access and Community Engagement (including the Ginsberg Center for Inclusion and Community Engagement, Military and Veteran Student Success, and HSI Initiatives)
- UCF Compliance and Ethics Office – Compliance, Ethics, and Risk Office & complianceandethics@ucf.edu
- The Ombuds Office is a safe place to discuss concerns.

Reporting an Incident or Issue

If you believe you have experienced abusive or discriminatory behavior by any faculty or staff member, contact the Office of Institutional Equity online or at 407-823-1336. You can also choose to report using the UCF Integrity Line and can report anonymously or as

yourself at 1-855-877-6049 or using the online form. UCF cares about you and takes every report seriously. For more information see the Reporting an Incident or Issue Webpage.

Deployed Active-Duty Military Students

Students who are deployed active duty military and/or National Guard personnel and require accommodation should contact their instructors as soon as possible after the semester begins and/or after they receive notification of deployment to make related arrangements.

Campus Safety

At UCF Public Safety and Police, safety is the top priority. Emergencies on campus are rare, but if one should arise, it's important to be familiar with some basic safety and security concepts.

- In an emergency, always dial 911.
- Every UCF classroom has an **Emergency Procedure Guide** posted on a wall near the door, which will show you how to respond to a variety of situations. This guide can also be found online here.
- In the event of an active threat, remember **AVOID, DENY, DEFEND**. Choose the best course of action and act immediately. Watch the video here to learn more.
    - **AVOID**. Pay attention to your surroundings and have an exit plan. Get as much distance and as many barriers between you and the threat as quickly as possible.
    - **DENY.** When avoiding is difficult or impossible, deny the threat access to you and your space. Lockdown by creating barriers, turning the lights off and remaining quiet and out of sight. Make sure your cell phone is silenced, but do not turn it off.
    - **DEFEND.** When you are unable to put distance between yourself and the threat, be prepared to protect yourself. Commit to your actions, be aggressive and do not fight fairly. Do whatever it takes to survive.

- For emergencies on campus, UCF will utilize the UCF Alert system. All UCF students, faculty and staff are automatically enrolled to receive these email and text alerts, however, it's a good idea to frequently ensure your contact information is up to date.

Financial Aid Accountability

All instructors/faculty are required to document students' academic activity at the beginning of each course. In order to document that you began this course, please complete this activity by the end of the first week of classes or as soon as possible after adding the course. Failure to do so may result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid.

Class Schedule

Week	Topic
1	
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