Programme of the Unit

The course aims at developing the analytical skills of students in relation to democratic theory and the normative analysis of public policy. In particular, it focuses on the impact the processes of change responsible for the allegedly passage from 'government' to 'governance' are having on real existing liberal democracies. The course is divided into two parts. The first part introduces the student to the use of analytical models of democracy by discussing four main ideal-types at the centre of current debates in political theory: procedural, aggregative, participatory, deliberative. The second part encourages the student to employ those analytical models to (i) analyse and assess the democratic content of new modes of governance developed in the last three decades and (ii) consider the policy innovations that could strengthen the legitimacy of liberal democracies.

Unit leader: Antonino Palumbo

CFU: 9

Course year: second

Attendance: non compulsory

Although attendance is not compulsory, the unit adopts a 'fast stream evaluation track' for those who will be attending both lectures and seminars for (no less than) 60% of the time.

(1) Standard Evaluation:
For those who cannot attend teaching, the evaluation will consist in the standard oral exam required by university regulation. The exam will be based on a 'detailed' and 'lengthy' discussion of the three texts listed below:


(2) Fast Stream Evaluation track:
(a) Two written essays: the first of 3000 words will give a maximum of 7 points; the second of 5000 words will give a maximum of 13 points (any essay handed in after the deadline will be penalised by 1 point per day).
(b) Presentation and discussion of scientific articles at seminars: together with attendance, seminar activities will give a maximum of 10 points; each student will be asked to give two presentations on a freely chosen topic for each part of the course.

NOTE
- Essays questions will be those used to introduce the weekly topics (see reading list below); As for the seminar presentations, the first essay must be on one of the topics discussed in the first part of the course, whereas the second essay has to be concerned with those discussed in the second part.
• Suspected cases of plagiarism will be assessed with a further oral examination. Those found out to have willingly used other people's works, ideas or opinions without proper acknowledgment will be referred to the university proceedings on the matter. In case of uncertainty upon what constitute plagiarism, students are invited to consult the course leader.

Final evaluation marks will range from 18/30 (pass) to 30/30 cum laude (A*); for fast stream students, the final mark will be the total sum of the scores received for each single assessment.

**Teaching timetable:** October to December. Introductory lecture Friday 3rd of October. Monday 17:00-19:00 (room 6), Tuesday 12:00-14:00 (room 6), Wednesday 10:00-12:00 (room 5). Individual tutorials need to be agreed with the course leader by email: antonino.palumbo@unipa.it

**EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE COURSE**

**Knowledge and understanding**
Ability to critically analyse values, institutions and policies pursued in liberal democratic societies. Capacity to understand and assess the normative implications of public intervention through new modes of governance.

**Application of Knowledge and understanding**
Ability to analyse and evaluate discourses, narratives and arguments employed to justify social and political change as well as the ability of public policies chosen to accomplish those objectives.

**Personal Autonomy**
Ability to apply abstract analytical categories to the study of real world cases and forms of governance; to arrive at personal and novel perspectives on public affairs and policies; to devise alternative forms of intervention.

**Communicative skills**
Ability to communicate the results of one's own research to expert and lay people alike; to support adequately personal positions, statements and perspectives; to take on board sensible and disinterested suggestions and constructive criticisms.

**Self-development**
Ability to carry out research in applied ethics, political theory and new modes of governance autonomously and professionally; to connect with others operating in similar or complementary fields; to develop a personal but open-minded approach to the analysis collective action problems in complex and pluralistic democratic societies.

**Teaching methodology and structure of the unit**
The course is structured into two parts composed of five thematic units each. A thematic unit will covered in a week of six teaching hours and is divided in: a two-hour introductory lecture by the unit leader at the beginning of the week; two seminars of two hours each held in the remaining teaching days. Seminars will be composed of two main parts: in part one, a rotating number of students will introduce the papers indicated in the reading list; in part two, everyone is required to take part in the discussion of those papers. All participants to the seminars are required to read the papers indicated beforehand. Overall, the course will last ten weeks, for a grand total of 63 teaching hours.
Schedule & table of content

Starting week
Introduction to the course: goals, programme and assessment criteria; assessment of individual abilities and background, suggestion of background reading to fill up individual gaps.

2nd week
Lecture topic: Democracy: meanings and models.

Questions for the first essay: What is democracy? What are its origins, features and lines of evolution? What is the reason for modelling democracy? Are the models employed heuristic or normative tools?

Texts for seminar's discussion:

Further bibliographic references

3rd week
Lecture topic: Procedural conceptions of democracy.

Questions for the first essay: Is democracy a procedural or a substantive notion? What are the procedures that characterise democracy as a system of government? Are these procedures related to the definition of public policies, or simply a way to select those who are called to rule? Is representative democracy true democracy?

Texts for seminar's discussion:

Further bibliographic references
Questions for the first essay: Must democratic choice be related to individual preferences? Has democracy have to maximise some social utility function? Can democracy be a coherent mechanism for social choice? Are there any similarities between political and economic markets?

Texts for seminar's discussion:


Further bibliographic references


5th week
Lecture topic: *Participatory conceptions of democracy.*

Questions for the first essay: What values is political participation supposed to engender? Is widespread political participation desirable? Is it also feasible in modern nation states? Is it possible to devise new forms of democratic participation that can bring to life the Athenian ideal? Are the
limits imputed to participatory democracy merely physical? Can these limits be overcome by information and computing technologies?

Texts for seminar's discussion:

Further bibliographic references

6th week
Lecture topic: Deliberative conceptions of democracy.

Questions for the first essay: What does deliberative democracy stands for? Isn't deliberation just the outcome of a voting procedure? What is the role of individual preferences in a deliberative context? Is deliberative democracy compatible with liberal democracy? Does deliberative democracy supports new forms of participation or technocratic solutions?

Texts for seminar's discussion:

Further bibliographic references

1st essay deadline: Sunday 16th of November 24:00

7th week
Lecture topic: Transforming democracy

Questions for the second essay: Is globalisation undermining liberal democracy or engendering it? Several thinkers claim that we are moving towards a post-democratic age, but what post-democracy actually mean? Is there a relation between the inception of a post-democratic age and the neoliberal reforms of the state? Does post-democracy foster democratisation or de-democratisation?

Texts for seminar's discussion:

Further bibliographic references

8th week
Lecture topic: Democracy and governance.

Questions for the second essay: Governance is a label used to describe several processes of change, but what is the impact those changes can have on democracy? What are the democratic visions upheld by governance theorists? Is governance supporting new forms of democratic experimentation? Or is it also contributing to the hollowing out real existing democratic institutions? What is stakeholder's democracy and what features distinguish it from liberal democracy?
Texts for seminar's discussion:


Further bibliographic references


**9th week**

Lecture topic: **Democracy and EU governance**

Questions for the second essay: Is the European Union democratic? Compare EU and member state constitutional settings and their democratic content. What does EU democratic deficit mean? Is there a real democratic deficit and where is it located? Can the EU overcame such a deficit by adopting the institutional features of its state members?

Texts for seminar's discussion:

- **Smismans, S. (2008), "New Modes of Governance and the Participatory Myth", West European Politics 31, 5, pp. 874-95.**

Further bibliographic references


10th week
Lecture topic: *Transnational democracy.*

Questions for the second essay: is transnational democracy possible? What form can assume this type of democracy: participatory, representative, aggregative, or deliberative? Is there a global civil society upon which transnational forms of democracy can be grounded? Is it plausible to expect the development of a global civil society?

Texts for seminar's discussion:

Further bibliographic references

2nd essay deadline: Sunday 21st of December 24:00