

Rethinking the Value of Democracy

Course Outline

Time: H 2:30pm-5:15pm

Location: UCC C4

Course description (newly written):

Democracy was denigrated as mob rule by some philosophers and aristocrats. Yet nowadays it occupies a preeminent place in the political imagination: it is widely regarded as essential to political legitimacy and has been serving as the rallying cry for political movements across the globe. However, there remain political and philosophical debates regarding the right to democracy and the importance of political participation. This course engages students to *rethink* the value of democracy through exploring such topics as the value of political participation, the relationship between moral equality and democracy, the contributions and limits of public deliberation, and people's moral and intellectual character.

Course overview (as shown on CUSIS)

The course examines selected topics in political philosophy. The specific content of the course varies from semester to semester. Offerings with different subtitles can be taken up for credit, up to a maximum of two times.

Advisory to Majors: to be taken in year 2 or above.

Learning outcomes (as shown on CUSIS)

1. Understand the key concepts, major issues, and prominent positions in the selected topics of the course.
2. Critically discuss and evaluate the major issues and positions in the topics.
3. Demonstrate familiarity with the primary/secondary source texts.
4. Demonstrate skills in argumentative discussion and in writing about issues in political philosophy.
5. Demonstrate ability to articulate and defend one's own philosophical theses with clarity.

Topics (mainly): the value of political participation, the relationship between moral equality and democracy, the contributions and limits of public deliberation, whether or not capitalism undermines democracy, and the justification of liberal toleration.

Assessment scheme (tentative):		
1. In-class discussion	See below*.	25% (i.e., 25 marks)
2. Term-end essay	3000-4000 words in English or 6000-8000 words in Chinese. Details will be given in due course.	30%

3. Term-end test	Closed books and notes, but study questions will be distributed in advance for your <i>careful</i> preparation. To be held in the classroom. Further instructions will be given in due course.	45%
4. Reading group (not compulsory)	A list of topics and readings will be given in the first meeting.	Up to 3 additional (bonus) marks may be rewarded.

***In-class discussion (25%)**

a) In-class written response (only 4 sentences each time) for discussion: 20%

- **From Lectures 3 to the last lecture:**
 - This is a good way of honing your writing skills. It also helps you share your ideas with the lecturer and your classmates.
 - Each student **in class** will be asked to write a very short response—within the space of 4 sentences, in Chinese or English—to a question.
- **Grading:** Your response slips will be read by the lecturer carefully, but will not be returned. Each of your response will receive either B or A.
- **Note:** Do not help any other student to write her or his response.

b) Interaction with fellow classmates and the lecturer: 5%

- c) **About arriving late (關於遲到):** If you arrive late for **10 minutes**, please join us next time. Classroom isn't café or KTV room with people coming in at any time. :-). However, if you have to be late or absent for a justifiable reason, please email me **in advance** (flmang@cuhk.edu.hk).

Grade Descriptor

Please refer to: http://phil.arts.cuhk.edu.hk/~phidept/UG/Grade_descriptors.pdf

Recommended learning resources

Robert Dahl (1989). *Democracy and Its Critics*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Amartya Sen (2001). *Development as Freedom*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.

Remark: Course schedule and a more detailed course outline will be distributed in the first meeting.

Details of course website: Blackboard

Contact details for teacher(s) or TA(s)

Teacher	
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TA	
Name:	
Office location:	
Telephone:	
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Academic honesty and plagiarism

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>

With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. For group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign the declaration.

For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the receipt will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.