Course description

This course investigates democratic theory in the context of the global transformation of social and political life. It asks how we might begin to reimagine and reconceptualize democracy and democratic theory in the global era, in terms of both democratizing aspects of political and social life beyond the nation-state, and reassessing the claims and ties of citizenship, political institutions and actions within nation-states. Can democratic theory be content with democratizing international and transnational organizations, or with developing forms of democratic political action oriented toward a global rather than national civil society? As globalization reorients social and political space and time, crucial questions arise for democratic theory. Additionally, the transnational mobility of people(s), raises questions of cultural difference in a democracy and otherness – what is the meaning of the ‘foreigner’ or non-member of a democratic community – that globalization presents.

The first four weeks of the course introduce traditions of democratic theory and challenges posed to democracy by globalization. Next we turn to two theoretical proposals for transnational and global democracy: cosmopolitan or post-national democracy, and global civil society. The third part of the course concerns issues of transnational identity and cultural difference.

Classes will be divided between interrogations of common readings and discussions of specific, controversial issues. The latter will be organized around weekly thought papers by students in class. Specific topics for the papers are listed on the course schedule. Throughout the semester, students will also work in teams on web pages that explore related policy or theoretical issues (such as the controversies over religious clothing and symbols in French schools, global warming and democracy, or the effects of the acceleration of social life on democracy).

Readings

The following books should be purchased from the College Store or Kraftees:

- John Keane, *Global Civil Society?* (Cambridge)

Additional readings will be on reserve. Required readings are marked in the schedule below with *. They should be completed prior to the class for which they are listed in the course schedule. Class lectures will also be posted to the course website (www.oswego.edu/~rosow/343)

Requirements

1. **Weekly Papers** (50% of grade). You must do a minimum of five weekly papers. The topics are listed on the course schedule below (there are eight topics from which you must choose at
least five, including the first paper (for February 1), which all students must write). These are thought papers, designed to make you think about issues before class, and to take a position, provisionally, on an issue. They should be written after you complete the assigned readings for the week, and they should comment on those readings. I do not expect comprehensive analyses of the topics. The papers will provide a basis for class discussion. Each week I will request volunteers to present their papers in class for extra credit toward their class participation grade. You may use additional sources, although you are required to. If you do, they must be cited fully and correctly.

The papers should be 4-5 pages each, typed/word-processed, approximately 250-300 words per page. The must be submitted to me via email as Microsoft Word or Rich Text Format (rtf) attachments no later than 5:00PM the Monday before the class for which they are due. I will then post them to the course website on Monday evening. They will then be available to the Tuesday class and to your colleagues at Huron University in London. I will post papers anonymously if you prefer (you must inform me of your preference).

You may do additional papers for extra credit. If you do additional papers, I will drop the lower grades, taking into account only your top five grades.

2. Web site. (20% of grade) Students will work in teams of no more than three to develop a website, or the equivalent, on a specific policy or theoretical issue that poses challenges to democracy in the context of globalization. The purpose is to follow a particular issue, to inform other students about it, and to interpret it implications for contemporary democracy. Every two weeks you will add assets to your site. Those of you who are unable to actually publish your site can send the assets (the text, images and links) to me.

Essentially websites consist of three types of assets: text, images, and links.

Text. The text can be descriptions of the issue (your site should include at a minimum a summary description of the issue and its relation to global democracy), summaries of current developments, discussions of controversies, etc....

Images. You can use images from news stories, art, or any sources you think appropriate. They can be used to clarify points, provoke thought about your issue, or to set a mood.

Links. These can be links to current news stories, to the websites of relevant organizations, to useful sources of information, etc....

3. Exams (30% of grade). There will be two exams, one on March 1 and a take-home final due anytime during exam week.


All students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss assigned readings and having submitted your papers via email for posting on the course website. Grades can be raised up to a full grade for high quality participation. They can also be lowered up to a full grade for more than 2 unexcused absences, for failure to come to class prepared, or for failure to turn in papers on time.
All assignments must be completed satisfactorily in order to pass the course!! Review the college policy on plagiarism. Any plagiarism in this course will be rewarded with a failing grade for the course!

Schedule

1/25  Introduction
2/1   Historical traditions of democratic thought

Readings:

Bernard Crick, A Very Short Introduction to Democracy

Paper 1: Rank the following in terms of their importance to democracy, as you understand it. Then write a brief essay explaining your rankings.

representation  active citizen participation
equality       free press
interest group formation  individual freedom
impartial judiciary

Note that many of these concepts, especially representation, equality, freedom and participation, are contestable (i.e. they can have different meanings depending on context and the perspective of the analysis). Therefore, you will need to make clear what you mean by them.

2/8   Hegemonic democracy

Readings:

John Dunn, 'Democratic theory,' in Western political theory in the face of the future, pp. 1-27.
Benjamin Barber, Fear's Empire. War, Terrorism, and Democracy, Part Two, pp. 163-238.

Paper: Do you think the democratization of Iraq will succeed? The Middle East in general?

2/15 Democracy and the global economy/discussion of inequality

Readings:

Manfred Steger, Globalism The New Market Ideology (Rowman & Littlefield)

Paper: Does global inequality threaten democracy?

2/22 Global media and democracy/

Readings:


**Paper:** (Choose one)

a) How does the Internet support or undermine (or both) democracy?

b) Can Disney promote democracy? (i.e. Does the globalization of popular culture encourage or discourage democracy?)

**3/1 Exam**

**3/8 Cosmopolitan or 'post-national' democracy**

**Readings:**

- David Held, 'The transformation of political community: rethinking democracy in the context of globalization.' In Ian Shapiro & Casiano Hacker-Cordón, *Democracy's Edges* pp. 84-111.

**Paper:** Are human rights democratic?

**3/15 Vacation!!**

**3/22 Global Civil Society**

**Readings:**

- John Keane, *Global Civil Society?* (Cambridge)

**3/29 Discussion of Keane continued.**

**Paper:** Is democratic community possible without the nation-state? Can the 'demos' ("the people") be constituted other than on a national basis?

**4/5 Rethinking democracy and cultural difference**

**Readings:**


**Paper:** How do the particularities of history and culture affect democracy? Some subsidiary questions you might think about (although you need not address them specifically in your essay) are: Are there universal elements to democracy that are significant regardless of cultural difference?

**4/12 Democratic identity and the 'foreigners'**

**Readings:**

**Paper**: (choose one)
a. Are **all** citizens to some degree and in some respects ‘foreigners’ even within their own state? If so, what are the implications for democracy in the context of globalization? 
b. Think about the idea of friendship in the context of the population movements and cultural flows of globalization. Friendship describes particular forms of intimacy, that is, relations of closeness, caring, and depth of feeling for another (among other characteristics). It also describes one possible moral and subjective basis for obligations toward others. Is friendship important to democratic citizenship (Aristotle, for example, believed that a particular form of friendship was important to democratic citizenship)?

**4/19** Deliberative democratic theory and cultural difference

**Readings:**
- Benhabib, finish.

**Paper:** Can those people living outside of the borders of a democratic state, but who are nevertheless significantly affected by that state’s policies, be represented in it? Is such representation necessary? Is representation adequate to account democratically for their interests?

**4/26 & 5/3 – Presentations of websites**