Analyzing Democracy: Theory, Practice, Innovations
(MA course, Winter 2018)

Instructor
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Classes
Thursday 17:20 – 19:00

Office Hours
Thursday 19:00 – 20:00
Friday 11:00 – 12:00

Credits
2 credits

Course Description

Introduction
This course focuses on the ways contemporary democracies are analyzed, evaluated and innovations proposed. The course is divided into several parts. The first part concentrates on the ontological aspects – on the concepts, models and patterns of democratic regimes. The second part focuses on challenges and methodological issues. The third – on accountability and democratic performance. Part four deals with democratic citizens, their normative expectations towards democracy, their evaluations and democratic legitimacy. Last part looks at democratic innovations and prospects of democracy.

Expectations
The class will be run in a seminar-like manner, although the instructor will devote part of the time of each class to present the broader aspects of each topic. Students are expected to be present, active, and prepared for thorough discussion of the readings assigned.

Course Objectives
The aim of the course is to familiarize students with the mainstream literature on contemporary democracies. The course should enable students to comprehend the complex issues of the functioning and performance of democracies.
Learning Outcome
First, the course is supposed to make students knowledgeable about important currents in contemporary literature and discussion concerning democracy as a regime type. Second, during the course students are expected to enhance their capacity to understand and analyze political institutions, processes and political behavior taking place in contemporary democracies. Third, students will be introduced to innovations to democracy discussed and practiced around the world. Forth, the class activity, in particular students' presentations of the selected readings should train them in effective appearances in public. Finally, the final essay itself is expected to enhance students' ability to correctly choose literature, deal with methodological issues and also improve their ability to use abstract concepts in contemporary debates about the state of democracy.

Course Requirements and Assessment
(1) Active class participation, which means: intellectual presence at the class meetings - comments, questions – 10% of the grade
(2) Class presentation of a selected topic(s), selected by students and sent to the instructor and course participants no later than 24 hours before class presentation – 30%
(3) Position papers, each student is expected to prepare two position papers, which critically review selected reading from the list (topics different than the one chosen for in-class presentation); each should be no longer than 3 pages – 20%
(4) Final paper; topic of the final paper to be agreed with the instructor at least three weeks prior to its final submission – 40%

Introduction: Visions and Models

Topic 01: What is Democracy? The Concept (11 Jan 2018)

Topic 02: Variations of democracy in practice (18 Jan 2018)
Challenges, Critics, Methodological Problems

Topic 03: Challenges to democracy and its Critics (25 Jan 2018)

Topic 04: Measuring Democracy (1 Feb 2018)

Democratic Accountability, Responsiveness and Performance

Topic 05: Accountability & Responsiveness (8 Feb 2018)

Topic 06: Performance of Democracy (15 Feb 2018)

Topic 07: Democracy and Development (22 Feb 2018)
Democratic Citizens

Topic 08: European Citizens as Democrats: Theory and General Results (1 Mar 2018)


Topic 09: European Citizens as Democrats: their normative expectations, evaluations and legitimacy (8 Mar 2018)


Alternatives to Representative Democracy, Democratic Innovations & Prospects

Topic 10: Direct Democracies: Hopes and Disillusionment (15 Mar 2018)


Topic 11: Democratic Innovations (22 Mar 2018)


Additional (Recommended) readings:


Cambridge – New York: Cambridge University Press


