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Democracy, Power and Citizenship

Modular value: 20 credits
Duration: Term 2
Teaching: Two hour seminar

Lecturer: **Richard North (/staff/profiles/government-society/north-richard.aspx)**

The aim of the course is to introduce students to theoretical and practical perspectives on democracy and to facilitate a critical understanding of the strengths and weakness of different approaches to the understanding of those ideas.

The course is split into two parts: Part 1 deals with normative approaches to the idea of democracy and part 2 examines recent social, political and ethical issues arising in relation the practice of democracy and the exercise of power by the state.

Part 1 addresses two general questions: 1. What is democracy? 2. Why is it to be preferred to alternative forms of governance? In addressing those questions we discuss and evaluate: different models of democracy (including participatory, representative and deliberative democracy); the moral arguments for democracy; economic, political and educational arguments for democracy; and various criticisms of democracy in theory and practice.

Part 2 addresses a series of social, political and ethical questions that are raised by democracy. Here the aim is to apply some of the theoretical approaches covered in the first part of the course to the kinds of issues that face democratic societies. Key questions include:

- Can institutional changes promote democracy? (for example, changes in voting systems the de-centralization of power, etc)
- Does the practice of democracy marginalize or exclude some groups in society (for example, women and ethnic minorities)? What can be done to prevent this?
- Is bureaucracy a threat to democracy?
- Do new technologies, such as the internet, facilitate or hinder democracy?
- Is democracy a moral requirement for all states? How should democracies respond to non-democratic states?
- Do global corporations undermine democracy? Should global institutions be democratic?

On completion of the course students will be able to:

- Show understanding of the core concepts and principles associated with the idea of democracy and demonstrate awareness of their critical strengths and weaknesses
- Show detailed knowledge of a range of historical and contemporary arguments concerning democracy as a moral ideal and a form of government
- Apply arguments and principles from ethics and political theory to a range of questions about democracy, governance and the state

Assessment

- Term Two 1 x 5000 word essay 100%

You may be interested in these modules:

- 20 credits - **Multiculturalsim and Religious Conflict (/postgraduate/courses/taught/govsoc/modules/multiculturalsim-religious-conflict.aspx)**

You may be interested in these degrees:

- **Political Science (with specialist pathways) (/postgraduate/courses/taught/govsoc/political-science.aspx)**
- **Political Science (British Politics and the State) (/postgraduate/courses/taught/govsoc/political-science-british-politics-state.aspx)**
- **Political Theory (/postgraduate/courses/taught/govsoc/political-theory.aspx)**
- **Social and Political Theory (/postgraduate/courses/taught/govsoc/social-political-theory.aspx)**
- **International Relations (Gender) (/postgraduate/courses/taught/govsoc/international-relations-gender.aspx)**
- **International Relations (with specialist pathways) (/postgraduate/courses/taught/govsoc/international-relations.aspx)**

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