

## ***Democracy in America: Politics and Vision***

**Political Science 121    Fall Term 2004    Tuesday and Thursday, 12:30-1:45**  
**Instructor: James Johnson    Office Hours: Tuesday 9:30-11:00 & By Appointment**  
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Democracy literally means “rule by the people.” This seminar in political theory will explore various questions that this basic definition raises in the context of 20th Century American politics. What can we expect of “the people”? How, indeed, do we even envision “the people?” What is the role of communication, especially modern media, in creating and sustaining “the people?” How might we think about the ways in which power and communication intersect in modern democracies?

In many respects this course is experimental. It aims to draw connections between texts and theorists that, to the best of my knowledge, have not been made before. So we will be exploring new terrain. I hope in this way to get you to see what it means to think like a political theorist!

Enrollment is restricted to freshmen - no exceptions. Grades will be based on class participation - given that this is a small seminar be prepared to talk! - and *three* short papers (meaning @ five pages each) on assigned topics that emerge from the readings and class discussion.

**Readings:** The reading load for the course is heavy both in terms of the sheer number of pages assigned and in terms of difficulty. There is no “textbook” for the course that provides pre-digested recipes or correct answers. Instead the assigned readings are meant to provoke questions and (often contentious) discussion. This means that I expect that you have done readings before class and that you come to class with questions, complaints, observations and elaborations of various sorts. I have ordered all the books (marked \*) at the University bookstore. Other papers/book chapters will be placed on reserve in the library.

### **(1) “Realism” About Democracy?**

Walter Lippman. 1927. *The Phantom Public*. Transaction.

Michael X Delli Carpini & Scott Keeter. 1996. *What Americans Know About Politics and Why it Matters*. Yale. (Chapters 2,5,6)

### **(2) Pragmatism & Democracy**

\* John Dewey. 1927. *The Public and Its Problems*. Swallow Press.

Charles Peirce. 1877. “The Fixation of Belief”

John Dewey. 1939. “Creative Democracy: The Task Before Us”

Lynn Sanders. 1999. “Democratic Politics and Survey Research,” *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 29 (2): 248-280.

### **(3) Picturing a Public in America circa 1935**

\* James Agee & Walker Evans. 1941. *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*. Houghton Mifflin.

### **(4) How a Public can Picture Itself**

- \* Douglas Crimp with Adam Rolston. 1990. *Aids Demo Graphics*. Bay Press.
- Steven Epstein. 2000. "Democracy, Expertise, and AIDS Treatment Activism." In *Science, Technology, and Democracy*, ed. Daniel Kleinman. State University of New York Press.

### **(5) Picturing Aggregates**

- \* Edward Tufte. 2001. *Visual Display of Quantitative Information*. Graphics Press.

### **(6) Media & Democratic Politics**

- \* Paul Starr. 2004. *The Creation of the Media*. Basic Books.
- \* Timothy Cook. 1998. *Governing with the News*. Chicago.
- \* Donald Kinder & Shanto Iyengar. 1987. *News that Matters*. Chicago.

### **(7) Power & Communication**

- \* Michel Foucault. 1979. *Discipline & Punish*. Pantheon.