

Political Science 287/487: Theories of Political Economy
Instructor: James Johnson (jd.johnson@rochester.edu)
Fall 2017 ~ T-Th 9:40-10:55 * Harkness 210
Office Hours Tuesday 3:30-5:00 * Harkness Hall 312 (x5-0622)

“There is little discussion either of the feasibility or desirability of workplace democracy today. ... [Y]et the institution of employment, one of the most central institutions of our society, remains undemocratic.”

~ Carole Pateman (Presidential Address to APSA – 2010)

This class is an intellectual experiment prompted by an actual political-economic experiment. Several American cities, including Rochester, are exploring the use of worker cooperatives – firms that are owned and democratically controlled by the people who work in them – as part of broader community economic development initiatives. Cooperatives are proposed both as a remedy for both economic hardship and in hopes of empowering local communities politically. This experiment prompts a whole set of questions at the intersection of political theory and economics. The course explores some of those questions. Mostly I am interested in whether the expectations reformers are placing on worker coops are plausible. I am interested, too, in getting you to think about the predicament we face in the city where you spend ten months of the year as students in the College.

Grading: I do not care what grade you get in the course. By that I mean that while I would like you to do well, and hope that happens, whether you do so or not really depends on you. If you do the required work, it is very likely a good grade will follow; if not, it is almost certain that a good grade will not follow.

Please note! There is no party line in the course, meaning I do not care if you agree or disagree with me, with one another, or with any (or all?) of the readings. I care about your willingness to stick your neck out, to think critically, and to articulate *your* views clearly both orally and in writing.

Participation: The course will be run primarily the way I run graduate seminars. Given the nature of the undertaking it is imperative that students be active participants in class. That means that I expect students not only to keep up with the reading, but also to read with care and to demonstrate this in class discussions. I encourage this effort in the following way. Each day, at the start of class, I ask one student (selected at random) to initiate and help direct the discussion for that day. This will require that she or he be able to summarize and raise critical questions about the major points of the assigned readings. Each student should anticipate being asked to do this more than once during the course of the semester but, as should be clear, you will receive no forewarning of when that will be. The point of this scheme is that I expect all students to be active participants. I expect students to come to class prepared. That means that you should not only have done the assigned reading, you also should have thought about it, and have comments, criticisms, and so forth. Participation is important!

The regularity of your participation and especially your willingness to stick your neck out in seminar discussion will constitute 20% of your grade for the course.

Policy on Attendance: Given the nature of the class attendance is not optional. If you need to miss class for some reason, please let me know.

Policy on Electronic Devices: My policy on electronic devices in class (meaning any screen connected to silicon chips) is restrictive. No cell phones, laptops or tablets in class! The exception is if you have a documented learning disability that requires using a screen centered device. *This means if you have readings or notes you will need in class, get them off of your devices and onto paper.*

Written Assignments: Beyond classroom participation there are two types of written assignment for the course.

(1) Regular short (meaning 3-5 page) commentaries on the assigned reading. There will be three of these due over the course of the term. Your performance on these papers will constitute 30% of your overall course grade.

(3) A final paper on a topic related to the topics we cover in the course. I am less interested in the number of pages you submit than in the quality of the argument and evidence you bring to bear on your chosen topic. But since you will undoubtedly obsess about page lengths, think in the area of 15-20 pages. You should speak to me (in person!!!) about the subject of your paper no later than Thursday, November 12th. The paper is due December 20th. Your grade on this assignment will constitute 50% of your overall course grade.

Policy on late assignments: Except in the direst circumstances I very much frown upon late assignments. I will deduct one third of a letter grade for every day either the case study or the final paper are late. (This means if your grade would have been a B+, one day late gets you a deduction to B, two days a deduction to B-, etc.). If you anticipate a problem getting an assignment in on time (due to, say, religious holidays, travel for athletic teams, etc.) please speak to me in advance. I will make reasonable accommodation to address such difficulties.

Statement on Academic Honesty: I operate on the assumption that students are familiar with and abide by the College policies on Academic Honesty. If you are not familiar with those policies, please go to the Board on Academic Honesty web page and make yourself familiar. You can find that page here: <http://www.rochester.edu/College/honesty/>.

I will provide specific instructions for each course assignment. In any event, I take a very dim view of cheating and plagiarism. It makes me cranky. So, I will refer any and all suspected instances to the Board on Academic Honesty. The easiest way to avoid such unpleasantness is to not succumb to temptations to cheat, plagiarize, bend the rules, exploit loopholes, and so forth. As a default, if you are unsure about whether something is “allowed” ask me.

Students with Disabilities: If you have a documented disability of any sort that you believe will impact your ability to meet the expectations laid out above I encourage you to speak with me in person as early in the term as is possible. We can make reasonable accommodation regarding the assignments.

Readings

The required reading for this course is difficult, it is diverse, and there is a lot of it. Moreover, none of the reading is presented in predigested textbook form. In both senses the reading load for this course might seem totally unreasonable! My excuse is that the problems we will be addressing are crucially important and complex. In that sense, it is imperative that you do the reading and that you do so prior to class. I have NOT ordered books (marked *) at the University Bookstore. All are readily available in used paperback versions from your preferred e-purveyor. I will make the books and other readings available on Blackboard and through reserve at the library. Many of the assigned readings are, as is clear from the syllabus, available directly on line – I have provided links where this is the case.

Western NY as a Developing Country?

Cohen, Cathy and Michael C. Dawson. 1993. "Neighborhood Poverty and African American Politics," *American Political Science Review* 87:286-302.

Kneebone, Elizabeth, Carey Nadeau, and Alan Berube. 2011. *The Re-Emergence of Concentrated Poverty: Metropolitan Trends in the 2000s*. Metropolitan Policy Program. Brookings Institution.

http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2011/11/03-poverty-kneebone-nadeau-berube/1103_poverty_kneebone_nadeau_berube.pdf

Kneebone, Elizabeth. 2014. *The Growth and Spread of Concentrated Poverty, 2000 to 2008-2012*. Policy Brief. Brookings Institution.

<http://www.brookings.edu/research/interactives/2014/concentrated-poverty#/M10420>

Doherty, Edward. 2013. *Poverty and the Concentration of Poverty in the Nine-County Greater Rochester Area*. Rochester Area Community Foundation.

<http://roc.democratandchronicle.com/assets/pdf/A22162251210.PDF>

Doherty, Edward. 2015. *Benchmarking Rochester's Poverty: A 2015 Update and Deeper Analysis of Poverty in the City of Rochester*. Rochester Area Community Foundation.

<http://www.racf.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Poverty%20Report%20Update%202015-0108.pdf>

Jargowsky, Paul. 2015. *The Architecture of Segregation: Civil Unrest, the Concentration of Poverty & Public Policy*. Century Foundation.

http://www.tcf.org/assets/downloads/Jargowsky_ArchitectureofSegregation.pdf

EdBuild. 2016. *Fault Lines – America's Most Segregating School District Boundaries*.

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/edbuild-public-data/data/fault+lines/EdBuild-Fault-Lines-2016.pdf>

Anderson, Elizabeth. 2011. "Why Racial Integration Remains an Imperative," *Poverty & Race* 20(4): 1-2,17-19.

Thinking About Political-Economic Development

* Sen, Amartya. 1999. *Development as Freedom*. Knopf.

Democracy: Publics, Problems, and Pragmatism I

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

Dewey, Jon. 1939. "Creative Democracy: The Task Before Us," in *The Political Writings* Ed. Debra Morris & Ian Shapiro. Hackett.

Democracy: Publics, Problems, and Pragmatism II

* Unger, Roberto Mangabeira. 2009. *The Left Alternative*. Verso.
http://robertounger.com/english/pdfs/left_alternative/complete_text.pdf

Knight, Jack and James Johnson. 2007. "The Priority of Democracy: A Pragmatist Approach to Political-Economic Institutions and the Burden of Justification." *American Political Science Review* 101: 47-61.

Worker Cooperatives: A Potential Partial Remedy to Pressing Problems?

Riley, David. 2015. "To Fight Poverty, City Eyes Co-op Businesses," *Democrat & Chronicle* (8 February).

<http://www.democratandchronicle.com/story/news/2015/02/08/rochester-democracycollaborative-cooperative-businesses-worker-poverty/23090949/>

Riley, David. 2016. "Mayor: Worker Coops Can Curb Poverty," *Democrat & Chronicle* (24 February).

<http://www.democratandchronicle.com/story/news/2016/02/23/mayor-lovely-warren-rochester-worker-cooperatives-can-curb-poverty-democracy-collaborative/80809332/?hootPostID=f7d6c9de8b8e03c5eec17e65e8ce9dde#>

Riley, David. 2016a. "What Can Cleveland Co-ops Teach Rochester?" *Democrat & Chronicle* (10 April). <http://www.democratandchronicle.com/story/news/2016/04/10/mayor-lovely-warren-cleveland-evergreen-cooperatives-co-ops-teach-rochester/82436948/>

Palmer, Tim. 2015. *US Worker Cooperatives: A State of the Sector*. Democracy at Work Institute. <http://institute.usworker.coop/resources/us-worker-cooperatives-state-sector>

Kerr, Camille. 2015. *A Brief Visual Guide to Understanding Employee Ownership Structures*. Democracy at Work Institute.
<http://institute.usworker.coop/sites/default/files/resources/EOStructures.pdf>

Rogers, Joel. 2013. "Using State and Local Policies," *The Good Society* 22: 91-109.

Alperovitz, Gar, Ted Howard and Thad Williamson. 2010. "The Cleveland Model." *The Nation* (11 February). <http://www.thenation.com/article/cleveland-model>

Epstein, Keith. 2015. "Rebuilding the Rust Belt," *Politico Magazine* (19 February).
<http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/02/what-works-cleveland-115324.html#.VdNqZ0WPib8>

Bonanno, Jessica, Violeta Duncan, and Ted Howard. 2016. *Rochester's Market Driven Community Cooperatives Corporation: A Feasibility Analysis & Implementation Plan*. Democracy Collaborative. <http://democracycollaborative.org/content/rochester-s-market-driven-community-cooperatives-corporation-feasibility-analysis>

Institutional Mechanisms: Markets, Firms, States

* Lindblom, Charles. 2002. *The Market System*. Yale University Press.
[Available as e-book via UofR Library: <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/rochester/Doc?id=10170836>]

Albert Hirschman. 1970. *Exit, Voice & Loyalty*. Harvard University Press. [Pages 21-54; 76-105; 120-6]

Coase, Ronald. 1937. "The Nature of the Firm," *Economica* 4: 386-405.

Lazonick, William. 2014. "Profits Without Prosperity," *Harvard Business Review* (September) 46-55.

Block, Fred. 2014. "Democratizing Finance," *Politics & Society* 42: 3-28.

Nembhard, Jessica Gordon. 2013. "Community Development Credit Unions: Securing and Protecting Assets in Black Communities," *Review of Black Political Economy* 40:459-490.

Governing the Firm

* Dow, Gregory. 2003. *Governing the Firm: Workers Control in Theory & Practice*. Cambridge University Press.
[Available as e-book via UofR Library: <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/rochester/Doc?id=10070239>]

Problems of Implementation & Transition I

* Ostrom, Elinor. 1990. *Governing the Commons*. Cambridge University Press.

James Tully. 2013. "Two Ways of Realizing Justice and Democracy: Linking Amartya Sen and Elinor Ostrom," *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*. 16: 220-232.

Problems of Implementation & Transition II

Abell, Hilary. 2014. *Worker Cooperatives: Pathways to Scale*. Democracy Collaborative. <http://democracycollaborative.org/workercoops>

Bowles, Samuel and Herbert Gintis. 1993. "A Political and Economic Case for the Democratic Enterprise," *Economics & Philosophy* 9:75-100.

Elster, Jon. 1989. "From Here to There; or, If Cooperative Ownership Is So Desirable, Why are There So Few Cooperatives?" *Social Philosophy and Policy* 6: 93-111.

Fleurbaey, Marc. 2008. "Workplace Democracy as a Public Good," *Revue de Philosophie Économique* 9:110-28.

Problems of Implementation & Transition III

* Nembhard, Jessica Gordon. 2014. *Collective Courage: A History of African American Cooperative Economic Thought and Practice*. Penn State University Press.

Bachrach, Peter and Aryeh Botwinick. 1992. *Power & Empowerment*. Temple University Press. Chapters 2-3, 5-8.

Arguing Over Workplace Democracy: Philosophy & Politics

* Dahl, Robert. 1985. *A Preface to Economic Democracy*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Mayer, Robert. 2000. "Is There a Moral Right to Workplace Democracy?" *Social Theory and Practice* 26: 301-25.

Malleson, Tom. 2013. Making the Case for Workplace Democracy: Exit and Voice as Mechanisms of Freedom in Social Life," *Polity* 45:604-29.

Might Cooperatives "Improve" Workers? Does It Matter?

Mansbridge, Jane. 1999. "On The Idea That Participation Makes Better Citizens." *Citizen Competence and Democratic Institutions*. Edited by K. Soltan & S. Elkin. Penn State Press.

Greenberg, Edward. 1981. "Industrial Self-Management and Political Attitudes," *American Political Science Review* 75: 29-42.

Mellizo, Phillip, et. al. 2014. "Workplace Democracy in the Lab," *Industrial Relations Journal* 45:313-28.

Elster, Jon. 1986. "The Market and the Forum: Three Varieties of Political Theory." In *Foundations of Social Choice Theory*. Edited by J. Elster & A. Hylland. Cambridge University Press.

Chan, Joseph & David Miller. 1991. "Elster on Self-Realization in Work & Politics," *Ethics* 102:96-102.

Schedule

August

31 Introduction

September

5 Cohen-Dawson; Kneebone (2); Doherty (2)

7 EdBuild; Anderson; Jargowsky

12 *Sen

14 *Sen

19 *Dewey (2) – First Short Paper Due

21 *Dewey

26 *Unger

28 *Unger; Knight & Johnson

October

3 Riley (3); Palmer; Kerr; Rogers

5 Alperowitz; Epstein; Bonnano

10 *Fall Break - No Class*

12 *Lindblom

17 *Lindblom

19 Hirschman; Coase

24 Lazonick; Block

26 Nembhard

31*Dow (Chapters 1-7)

November

2 *Dow (Chapters 8-12) – 2nd Short Paper Due

7 *Ostrom (Chapters 1-3)

9 *Ostrom (Chapters 4-6); Tully

14 Abell; Elster; Fleurbaey; Bowles-Gintis

16 *Nembhard

21*Nembhard

23 *Thanksgiving – No Class*

28 Bachrach-Botwinick

30 *Dahl

December

5 Mayer; Malleson

7 Mansbridge; Greenberg

12 Mellizo; Elster; Chan-Miller – 3rd Short Paper Due

20 Final Paper Due