Globalization and Democratic Theory

POLSCI 400 Selected Topics in Political Theory

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Class:
M, W 11.30am – 1pm
1401 Mason Hall

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Course Description

“Globalization” is maybe the key word of our time. First and foremost, it signifies a rapid internationalization of societies, the economy, communications, cultures, politics, and law. Among other things, it puts the democratic nation-state under various pressures. Yet while some argue that globalization generates a global economic, cultural and political system (from ‘global governance’ to ‘world government’), others identify globalization with a world in disarray, war, and economic inequality. The course will explore several questions related to the empirical and normative impact of globalization on democracy from the perspective of political theory. These include the following:

How can we make sense of, and conceptualize, globalization and democracy – is globalization homogenizing or diversifying the world? Is it facilitating new forms of public autonomy or undermining the very conditions for democratic action and freedom? Do we witness a transition from the ‘Westphalian’ international political system based on independent nation-states to a ‘post-Westphalian’ international order that is based on international and transnational interdependence and binding international law? And will liberal democracy survive the global age? How can democratic norms, rules and rights be preserved or renewed under conditions of globalization and globalized challenges? What does contemporary globalization mean for our notions of democracy, equality, justice, popular sovereignty, public autonomy, constitutionalism, republicanism, governmental authority, citizenship (which are core conceptions of democratic theory) – and for the entitlement of civil and human rights? How legitimate, in turn, are international organizations, and can they become ‘democratic’? Should post-national bodies and regimes enforce rights and compliance, or should nation-states keep their ultimate authority and power against ‘imperial’ ambitions? How do cosmopolitan norms relate to democratic claims – and who should rule or intervene in the case of human rights violations? Does politics require borders or do we need to redefine our understanding and the meaning of democracy in a complex world of demoi?

The course will mainly focus on contributions by leading contemporary political theorists who reflect on these issues (ranging from
communitarians to liberals and cosmopolitans). Special attention will be paid to institutions and forms of political globalization. In particular, we will discuss the legitimacy of the European Union and the United Nations as supra-national political bodies, but also the role of globalized public spheres and international NGOs. The purpose of the class is (a) to get familiar with contemporary democratic theorists, concepts, and controversies in relation to globalization & democracy; (b) to deepen the understanding of the impact of new political institutions, processes and challenges emerging in the ‘global age’ that point beyond the conventional nation-state framework of politics; and (c) to be able to reflect the normative relevance of globalization for constitutional democracy, sovereignty, and human rights – and their potential paradoxes.

Advisory Prerequisites

POLSCI 101 or 301 or 302. A basic understanding of concepts of political theory is necessary and helpful. A basic understanding of the European Union and the United Nations, today’s most significant supra-national political bodies, also helps. Credits 3/ULWR

Readings

Most of the assignments are collected for you in one course pack. The course pack will be available at EXCEL (located at 1117 SOUTH UNIVERSITY). This is the easiest way for you to obtain the requisite course materials, and it allows you to concentrate on your own research for your papers. Reading the assigned materials is the best way to achieve your goals. However, you are also strongly advised to attend the class sessions because there will many things that we discuss which are not part of the readings. Apart from the course pack, it is required that you purchase the following three books (which will not be part of the course pack):

- Seyla Benhabib, Another Cosmopolitanism (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006)
Summary of Course Requirements

The final grade will consist of the following:
1) First paper, 8 – 10 pages (20%)
2) Second/term paper, first draft (10%)
3) Second/term paper, 10 - 12 pages, final draft (30%)
4) Mid-term exam (20%)
5) Commentary on fellow student’s paper draft (10%)
6) Participation (10%)

Explanations of Course Requirements

Writing. By design, this is an upper level writing course, and it meets the ULWR requirement accordingly. Hence, there will be a strong emphasis on your academic writing. You will get much help exercising your writing skills in this course, by both the professor and the GSI, and you should make use of office hours and other communication resources. This communication is a key part of the learning experience. It is the GSI’s (and the professor’s) job to help you working on your writing. Not using this resource is a waste of tuition money and puts you at a disadvantage. Office hour visits before the final paper are required/obligatory.

There will be two papers that are central to this ULWR course (one 8-10 pages, the second one 10 - 12 pages). The first paper is based on an assignment, and it is a kind of a “warm-up paper”. The second/research/term paper will address a topic of your own choosing (though the topic is to be determined in discussion with the professor). Please make sure that you hand in TWO COPIES of the first draft of your second/term paper because....

....there will also be a commentary on a draft of the second/term paper by a fellow student. The draft of the paper will graded and peer-reviewed by a fellow student (the reviews will also be graded), just as you will have to review and comment on a fellow student’s paper. After making revisions, you will eventually turn in both the original draft version (along with your peer’s comments) and your revised final paper.

Exam. The mid-term exam will comprise 20 percent of the final grade. The
exam will be a one-hour exam. You will receive eight questions relating to the reading materials and lectures. You will have to pick and answer (no more than) five questions.

**Commentary/Peer Review.** The commentary accounts for 10 percent of the final grade. There are no specific guidelines or style requirements. It is expected that you carefully read the fellow student’s draft and write 1-2 pages of commentary on separate sheets of paper (typed, not hand-written). Questions of structure, organization, feasibility, clarity of argument, style, and research organization are especially important and should be addressed. Please make sure that you hand in TWO COPIES of your peer review.

**Participation.** Since the lectures & class discussions comprise an absolutely essential component of this course that will not be found in the readings, class attendance is strongly recommended; the grade for your active participation will comprise 10 percent of the final grade. In order to make participation a meaningful experience – in particular in a political theory course – you will have to do the readings before class sessions.

Hence, there will be one late mid-term in-class examination on topics discussed in the lectures and the readings of the course (20 percent of the grade) in addition to the two political theory papers and the peer review (which accounts for 10 percent of the final grade). Finally, your class participation is an important part of the class. It is required and accounts for part of the grade, namely 10 percent of the final grade. The two papers will comprise 20 percent (first paper) and 40 percent of the final grade (10 percent first draft of the second paper; 30 percent final version).

**Rules & Reasons**

- Academic integrity: Academic misconduct will result in your failing the course. It is fully your responsibility to avoid any sort of, or even the appearance of, misconduct, such as stealing someone’s intellectual property or any other form of cheating. It’s simply unfair. Hence, make sure that you cite your sources!
- If you find the readings, lectures or discussions too difficult, there is no need to complain (only) after/at the end of the course. Instead,
you should raise any question or problem that you have either during or, if you prefer, after each class session, or send me an e-mail, or drop by my office any time and discuss the question or problem. Don't miss the chance of making this a good learning experience! If you have a problem, others might have it as well, so don't hesitate to address it.

• Only half of each class session will be in form of lectures. That's why it is not enough to come to class on time (you should!), but you should also be prepared and ready to actively participate, which is strongly encouraged as part of the learning process. In class, you must treat your peers and your professor in a civil and professional manner; while a lively discussion with disagreements is most welcome, you need to tolerate different point of views.

• Participation is strongly recommended. After more than four absences, your participation grade is E. Please inform me about absences.

Grading Criteria

**Papers.** As mentioned above, the papers will be the most important element counting for your final grade. The two papers count for 20% and 30% of the final grade. Here are some of the grading guidelines for the papers:

**A/A-** The paper offers an original or interesting thesis supported by plausible and sound arguments. Its author has been thinking through the course material and demonstrates an advanced understanding of the issues at stake. The author also shows the ability to intelligently frame a problem/question that is coherently addressed in the paper, and which is supported by sound arguments and empirical evidence, in case of the final paper, by textual evidence/quotes from several different sources. In addition to that, the paper is well-structured, and writing is very good or excellent.

**B/B+** The paper offers a clear and coherent thesis which is by and large supported by plausible and sound arguments and empirical evidence. It addresses several course readings and aspects relevant to the course, and it demonstrates a solid understanding of the
issues at stake. The author frames a problem/question that is for the most part coherently addressed in the paper. It is supported by good arguments and in case of the final paper by textual evidence from more than one source. Different arguments & approaches are considered. The work is well-structured and writing is good.

B- The paper offers a thesis and supports it with arguments, but the thesis is either not coherent or not complex enough, and the arguments provided are in part incoherent or not really developed. The paper addresses course readings and aspects relevant to the course but doesn't always stay on topic. It offers basic understanding of the issues at stake. There is either no adequate framing of a problem or question, or the problem/question is insufficiently addressed in the paper. The thesis is supported by some good arguments and some or little evidence; even in case of the final paper, only one or two textual sources are used or sources are used in a weak/problematic way. Interpretations of the readings are only in part convincing, and few arguments & sources are considered. The paper is not sufficiently organized, and there are writing problems.

C/C+ The paper offers a thesis but few or no arguments supporting it. The thesis is incoherent or simplistic. The paper hardly addresses the course readings or aspects relevant to the course. It doesn't stay on topic. It lacks understanding of the issues of concern. There is no real framing of a problem. Good arguments are missing; even in the final paper, only one or no textual evidence is accurately provided. Interpretations or summaries of the readings are mostly misguided. Different arguments are hardly considered. The paper has no coherent structure, and writing is very problematic.

D+/C- The paper doesn't offer a thesis, or it doesn't offer arguments in its support. The paper hardly addresses anything relevant to the course. It seriously lacks understanding of the issues. Even in case of the final paper, there is little or no adequate textual evidence. Interpretations and summaries of the course readings are, for the most part, completely misguided. The paper lacks a coherent conception or organization. Writing is awkward.
D There is no thesis, there are no arguments, there is little or no evidence, there is no conception of writing, and no organization of the paper. Interpretations and summaries of course material are completely misguided.

E The paper shows a complete lack of understanding of the subject and of academic writing. Quotes and references are incorrect, there are significant errors in writing or in framing the paper; thesis, arguments, evidence are missing. There is no understanding of the course material and subject.

Exam. The mid-term exam in this upper level writing course will count for 20% of your final grade. It will be an in-class examination (1 hour) which will primarily focus on the reading materials and lectures but will also ask for your point of view, and arguments backing it up. Good knowledge of the reading material, carefully listening to the lectures, and thinking about the issues of concern will ensure that you receive a good grade.

Participation. You are strongly recommended to actively participate in class, to raise questions, particularly if there is anything you didn’t understand, and to make comments. There are NO stupid questions. Active participation is also an essential part of the learning experience, which is collective: In class, you have a wonderful opportunity to exercise and enhance your ability to speak in public, which is an essential part of politics, education, and citizenship. And the ability to publicly discuss issues is an important skill that needs practice – and will certainly help you in your future career within or beyond the confines of the academia.
Readings and Weekly Topics:

INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS GLOBALIZATION?

September 9: Introduction: What is Globalization? And Do We Need Democratic Theory to Deal with it?

September 14: Understanding Globalization I: Debating a Contested Concept in Historical Perspective

September 16: Understanding Globalization II: Political, Economic and Cultural Dimensions of Globalization

POLITICAL GLOBALIZATION AND (POST-)WESTPHALIA: MODELS OF GLOBAL ORDER AND DEMOCRACY

September 21: From Westphalia to Post-Westphalia? Approaches to Political Globalization and Democracy in the Global Age

September 23: Models of Global Democracy: Communitarianism, Anti-Globalization Radicalism, Liberal Internationalism, Cosmopolitanism...
GLOBALIZATION AND GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

September 28: Theorizing Global Governance

September 30: The Realist Critique of Global Governance

POLITICAL THEORY OF COSMOPOLITAN DEMOCRACY: PAST AND PRESENT CONCEPTS AND CONTROVERSIES

October 5: The Philosophical Origins of Republican Cosmopolitanism: Immanuel Kant
Readings: Immanuel Kant, “Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch [1795],” in Kant, Political Writings (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp.93-130. FIRST PAPER TOPIC TO BE HANDED OUT

October 7: NO SESSION

October 12: Advocates of Cosmopolitan Democracy I: Jürgen Habermas, the Kantian Legacy of Cosmopolitan Right and the Constitutionalization of Global Public Law

October 14: Advocates of Cosmopolitan Democracy II: David Held’s ‘Democratic Cosmopolitanism’

**October 19: Fall Study Break**

**Critical Responses:**
**Rehabilitating the Democratic Nation-State**

**October 21:** Critics of Cosmopolitan Democracy I: Robert Dahl and Democratic Realism – or: Why International Organizations Cannot be Democratic

**October 26:** Critics of Cosmopolitan Democracy II: David Miller’s Defense of National Communitarianism & “Bounded Citizenship”

**October 28:** Marxist Critics of Cosmopolitan or Post-National Democracy and Global Governance

**November 2:** Liberalism and the Limits of Cosmopolitanism: John Rawls and the “Law of Peoples”

**November 4:** Between Sovereignty and Cooperation, Realism and Cosmopolitanism: The Liberal-Internationalist Response
November 9: In-Class Examination.

GLOBALIZATION, DEMOCRACY, AND HUMAN RIGHTS

November 11: The Decline of the Nation-State and the Perplexities of Human Rights: Hannah Arendt on ‘the Right to Have Rights’

November 16: Human Rights, Democratic Norms, and Challenges of Global Politics: Michael Ignatieff and the Question of the Universality of Human Rights

November 18: Dilemmas and Limits of Liberal Human Rights Theory and the Human Rights Revolution

RECONCILING THE GLOBAL AND THE LOCAL?
CONTEMPORARY DEBATES ON REITERATIONS OF DEMOCRACY, LAW, AND JUSTICE FROM BELOW

November 23: Human Rights, Cosmopolitanism, Republicanism, and the Rule of Law

November 25: Reiterations of Cosmopolitan Democracy, Justice, and Law: Seyla Benhabib’s ‘Other’ Cosmopolitanism I
Readings: Seyla Benhabib, “The Philosophical Foundations of

**November 30: Reiterations of Cosmopolitan Democracy, Justice, and Law: Seyla Benhabib’s ‘Other’ Cosmopolitanism II**

**December 2: Cosmopolitan and Liberal-Nationalist Responses to Benhabib**

**December 7: Back to Moral and Cultural Cosmopolitanism? Appiah’s Obligations to Strangers**

**December 9: The Compatibility of Public Autonomy, Democracy, and Human Rights**

**DE MOCRATIC T H E O RY AND G LO BALIZATION: FINAL DISCUSSION**

**December 14: Concluding Discussion: The Prospects of Cosmopolitan Democracy in the Global Age**