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ext. 4118

Office Hours:

11-1 MW, 12:30-2 Th.

Winter 2002

Issues in American Democracy**a seminar**

This seminar investigates several questions at the heart of American democracy. We begin by assessing two contrasting theories of democracy, the elitist arguments of Joseph Schumpeter and the participatory advocacy of Benjamin Barber. We next examine empirical evidence concerning the distribution of power in American government. Analyses by Jeffrey Berry and Mark A. Smith help us discover which interests have disproportionate influence and why. After that, we examine a roster of reform alternatives: campaign finance reforms and initiatives and referendums that promote direct rule by the people. We finally return to the questions of representative versus participatory democracy in the arguments of Benjamin Barber and John Haskell.

A seminar is owned by its students, but ownership has its share of obligations. You will set the discussion agenda through your discharge of these obligations. Each session, one of you will write a brief "critical analysis" of the readings, responding to the questions about the assignments in the enclosed questionnaire for analyzing the logic of an assignment. I will present the first critical analysis, on Schumpeter's theories of democracy, to show you how to do it.

The remaining members of the class must write at least three discussion questions on the daily assignments. All of this must be submitted to me (preferably via e-mail) by 9 AM of the day of the relevant seminar session. Your work at this, and actual class participation, constitutes forty percent (120 points) of your seminar grade.

Sixty percent (180 points) of your seminar grade depends upon the quality of the seminar paper you write. I will help you select a topic and advise you during the paper-writing process. You will need to decide on a topic by Tuesday, January 15. An outline of your paper (three-page minimum) is due to me at my office by noon on Friday, February 23. The final draft of the paper is due to me by 3 PM on Tuesday, March 13. You have three general options concerning paper topics. Guidance on these options appears later in the syllabus.

300 total points are awarded for seminar work. 270 points (90%) earns an "A," 240 points (80%) a "B," 210 points (70%) a "C," and 180 points (60%) a "D."

The following course books are required reading. They are available in the bookstore and on closed reserve in the library. BE SURE to bring your copy of any book assigned for a particular day to class that day. If using a reserve book, also BE SURE to bring it to class for use during the seminar.

Benjamin Barber, **STRONG DEMOCRACY**

Jeffrey Berry, **THE NEW LIBERALISM**

Mark A. Smith, **AMERICAN BUSINESS AND POLITICAL POWER**

Gerald C. Luebnow, editor, **A USER'S GUIDE TO CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM**

Larry Sabato, Howard Ernst and Bruce Larson, eds., **DANGEROUS DEMOCRACY?**

John Haskell, **DIRECT DEMOCRACY OR REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT?**

Other readings on closed reserve or as handouts are noted in the following class schedule:

I. Class Introduction (January 3)

Topic A: The Debate between Elitist and Participatory Theories of Democracy

II. An Elitist Theory of Democracy (January 8)

Joseph Schumpeter, CAPITALISM, SOCIALISM AND DEMOCRACY, chapters 21-23 (on closed reserve)

III. For Participatory Democracy (January 10)

Benjamin Barber, prefaces, chapters 1 & 5

Topic B: The Logic of American Electoral Politics

IV. Current American Electoral Politics (January 15)

Steven Schier, BY INVITATION ONLY, chapters 1-2 (on closed reserve) and Schier handout

V. The 2000 Election (January 17)

James Ceaser and Andrew Busch, THE PERFECT TIE, chapters 1, 6-8 (on closed reserve)

Topic C: Interest Group Power in National Politics

VI. Postmaterialism and the Rise of Citizen Groups (January 22)

Jeffrey Berry, chapters 1-3

VII. The Power of Citizen Groups (January 24)

Jeffrey Berry, chapters 4-6

VIII. Consequences of the New Liberalism (January 29)

Jeffrey Berry, chapter 7 and methodological appendix

IX. Business Unity and Democracy (January 31)

Mark A. Smith, chapters 1-3

X. Sources of Business Power (February 5)

Mark A. Smith, chapters 4-7

XI. Business and Popular Sovereignty (February 7)

Mark A. Smith, chapters 8-9

Topic D: Spending and Participatory Reforms

XII. Perspectives on Campaign Finance Reform I (February 12)

Gerald C. Luebnow, introduction and chapters 2-5

XIII. Perspectives on Campaign Finance Reform II (February 14)

Gerald C. Luebnow, chapters 6 & 8, and Gregory Wawro, "A Panel-Probit Analysis of Campaign Contributions and Roll-Call Votes" (handout)

XIV. The Politics of Initiatives I (February 19)

Larry J. Sabato, et. al. Introduction and chapters 1-3

XV. The Politics of Initiatives II (February 21)

Larry J. Sabato, et. al., chapters 4-6

Topic E: Participatory or Representative Democracy?

XVI. The Case for Strong Democracy I (February 26)

Benjamin Barber, 131-8, chapter 7, 178-212

XVII. The Case for Strong Democracy II (February 28)

Benjamin Barber, 217-225, 233-311

XVIII. Arguments for Representative Democracy I (March 5)

John Haskell, chapters 1-3

XVII. Arguments for Representative Democracy II (March 7)

John Haskell, chapters 4-6

On Research Papers

You can pursue one of three avenues for your research papers. The final paper must be between 18 and 23 pages long, printed with one-inch margins, double-spaced, 12-point font, and parenthetical references in the text with a list of complete citations for those references at the rear of the paper.

1. The seminar frames a major debate between elitist and participatory democracy. You can make an argument for either alternative, drawing on the empirical and normative readings in the course and those you discover through additional research. Your paper could argue the superiority of one of the variants of democracy over the other, or it could do a more mixed evaluation of the two alternatives.
2. A major theme of the seminar is the impact of the Progressive reforms upon the quality of American democracy. These reforms ♦ primaries, personal voter registration, long ballots, initiatives, referendums, recalls and nonpartisan forms of government ♦ are a uniquely American creation. What effects have they had on the operations of our electoral system? Pick one or a few such reforms and study their impacts. You could examine this historically in America, or do a comparative analysis of how Progressive procedures cause our electoral system to operate differently than those of other constitutional democracies.
3. You also could use the case study method to examine interest group power in national government to test the recent accuracy of some of the findings in the Berry and Smith books. Drawing upon the Berry book, you could examine one or a few recent cases of citizen group lobbying on a major cultural, social or economic issue and determine if group effectiveness in those cases confirmed or disconfirmed Berry ♦s findings. Or, you could examine recent cases of business unity on high salience issues and see if that damaged the ability of business to prevail, as Smith asserts it should. Also, you could examine recent cases of business groups ♦ pursuit of particularistic benefits to see if they prevailed, as Smith suggests they would.