Program of Study

In this age of global democratic crisis, a thorough grounding in the study of self-government is essential to intellectual and civic competence. Although democracy was long a central thematic of both general education and curricular programs in the social sciences and humanities throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it gradually fell out of curricular programming toward the end of the Cold War and is oddly absent as a systematic focus today.

A minor in Democracy Studies provides students with a corrective to this erosion, providing essential knowledge, insights, methods, and critical perspectives necessary to understanding the world around us and the historical developments that have placed it in such a precarious state. Students in the minor will learn that bitter, even divisive contests over public power, representation, and inclusiveness are not recent developments, but have defined democracy since the dawn of politics. More fundamentally, they will learn that tensions between liberty and equality, political will and the rule of law, collective welfare and individual rights, cooperation and competition, produce dilemmas that must always be confronted but can rarely be fully resolved. Finally, they will learn that democracy entails more than a matter of elections or governmental structures. Democratic society extends well beyond the political arena. It is not just a governance system or a structure of power, it is a mode of social organization and cultural cohesion. It encompasses a broad set of structures, conceptions of which have evolved throughout time: political institutions; civic organizations; laws; deliberative practices; rhetorical strategies; cultural forms; collective imaginaries; moral, ethical, and spiritual codes; and more.

The minor therefore offers a broad range of courses allowing students to select cross-disciplinary electives suitable to forming a broadly conceived program of study.

Beyond its broader educational and civic value, a minor in Democratic Studies offers preparation for a range of career interests, from politics, law, and public policy to education, social work, journalism, media, and public interest advocacy. Students pursuing careers in STEM may find a minor in Democracy Studies to be useful preparation for the ethical and professional challenges awaiting them in the marketplace. A minor in Democratic Studies also provides a compelling interdisciplinary topical focus for students interested in pursuing graduate study in the social sciences and humanities.

Application to the Democracy Studies Minor

Interested students must complete the Democracy Minor Map (https://democracy.uchicago.edu/files/2022/08/Democracy-Minor-Map-220812.docx) and return it to the Program Manager (elizabethshen@uchicago.edu) to declare their intention to pursue the minor, no later than Spring Quarter of their third year. Students can also meet with Abigail in person or via Zoom for a longer meeting, should they wish. Abigail will contact the student to let them know if they have been approved, upon which the student should submit the approval to their College adviser for the latter’s approval during the quarter. Note that students may be given credit for approved courses taken before declaring the minor.

Summary of Minor Requirements

Students who wish to complete the minor in Democracy Studies will need to complete a total of five courses, including one required course, DEMS 15000 Democracy and Its Critics, and four electives (see table below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEMS 15000 Democracy and Its Critics</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four electives chosen from list of approved courses</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Units</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The required Democracy and Its Critics course provides students with an introduction to the many ways in which struggles over self-government have raised fundamental challenges within politics, culture, and society. Critically engaging the concept of democracy from multiple disciplinary perspectives, students discover how democratic questions may be tackled in a distinctive fashion using different disciplinary approaches.

Students are required to take one “global” course, which largely focuses on the democratic experience of countries outside of the United States. Students are further encouraged, but not required, to take one course on democracy in ancient times (defined as prior to 650 AD).

Qualifying courses counting as electives are indicated in the Approved Courses list below, with those qualifying as “global” marked with an asterisk * and those as “ancient” denoted with an obelus †.

Approved Courses

The following elective courses and any of their cross-listings may be counted toward minor requirements. The current list of approved course offerings will be continually updated on the Democracy Curriculum website.
(https://democracy.uchicago.edu/democracyminor/). As of December 2022, the list includes the following elective courses and any of their cross-listings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BPRO 25900</td>
<td>Digitizing Human Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLCV 21222</td>
<td>Democratic Failure in Greece and Rome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLCV 23921</td>
<td>Thucydides and Athenian Democracy at War †</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GREEK 23922</td>
<td>Plato on Tyranny and Injustice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLCV 24521</td>
<td>Politics and Political Space in Ancient Rome ‡</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLCV 27709</td>
<td>Caesar and his Reception ‡</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 25230</td>
<td>Wealth, Democracy and the American Novel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRMN 25421</td>
<td>Babylon Berlin: Politics and Culture in the Weimar Period *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLST 20203</td>
<td>Caste and Race: The Politics of Radical Equality *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLST 22600</td>
<td>What Is Socialism? Experiences from Eastern Europe *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIST 18001</td>
<td>The United States in the Age of Total War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIST 18101</td>
<td>Democracy in America?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIST 18802</td>
<td>Performing Democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIST 20507</td>
<td>The Idea of Freedom in Antiquity †</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIST 22610</td>
<td>Paris and the French Revolution *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIST 25300</td>
<td>American Revolution, 1763 to 1789</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIST 26409</td>
<td>Revolution, Dictatorship, &amp; Violence in Modern Latin America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIST 27103</td>
<td>American Revolution in Global Context †</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIST 28301</td>
<td>Early American Political Culture, 1600-1820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIST 28301</td>
<td>Democracy: Athens and America †</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIST 28301</td>
<td>The American Constitution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LLST 25403</td>
<td>Locke and Rousseau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLSC 10500</td>
<td>What Should Democracy Mean Today?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLSC 23100</td>
<td>Democracy and the Information Technology Revolution *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLSC 23313</td>
<td>Democracy and Equality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLSC 23615</td>
<td>Reconstructing Democracy: Tocqueville and Du Bois</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLSC 24810</td>
<td>Politics of the U.S. Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLSC 25201</td>
<td>After Multiculturalism: Democratic Citizenship &amp; Indigenous Resurgence in Settler Colonial Contexts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLSC 26615</td>
<td>Democracy’s Life and Death *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLSC 26703</td>
<td>Political Parties in the United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLSC 28405</td>
<td>Democratic Erosion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PLSC 28555  The Economy of Conspiracy
PLSC 28605  Challenges to Democracy
PLSC 28701  Introduction to Political Theory, Note: This counts toward the minor in AY2022-23, as it focuses on democracy, but may not in future years
PLSC 28765  The Politics of Authoritarian Regimes
PLSC 28901  Introduction to Comparative Politics *

Public Policy Studies
PBPL 25563  Does American Democracy Need Religion?
PBPL 25910  The Health of American Democracy
PBPL 28765  The Politics of Authoritarian Regimes

Romance Languages and Literatures
ITAL 21322  Literature and/of/Against Fascism *

Religious Studies
RLST 28612  The Global Revolt Against Liberalism *

Race, Diaspora, and Indigeneity
CRES 21748  Global Human Rights Literature *
CRES 22112  African American Political Thought: Democracy's Reconstruction
CRES 27002  The Age of Emancipation

Sociology
SOCI 20106  Political Sociology
SOCI 20544  Democratic Backsliding *
SOSC 21001  Human Rights: Contemporary Issues

South Asian Languages and Civilizations
SALC 26711  South Asia after Independence *

* Approved as "global" elective course
† Approved as "ancient" elective course

**ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS**
Courses in the minor may not be double counted with a student’s major(s), other minors, or general education requirements. This prohibition against double counting holds for courses in the Democracy general education sequence (SOSC 18400-18500-18600 Democracy: Equality, Liberty, and the Dilemmas of Self-Government I-II-III), although students participating in the minor are welcome to also take that sequence. Courses for the minor must be taken for quality grades (not pass/fail). More than half of the course requirements for the minor must be met by registering for courses bearing University of Chicago course numbers.

**DEMOCRACY STUDIES COURSES**

DEMS 17908. African-American History to 1865. 100 Units.
This introductory undergraduate lecture course examines histories of people of African descent in continental North America from the colonial period to the US Civil War. relationship between slavery and republicanism in the early United States. With an interdisciplinary approach and transnational perspective, it considers the contested role of chattel slavery in the creation of US political systems, market relations, social hierarchies, and cultural productions. We will use primary sources and secondary literature to consider the possibilities and limits of archival research; contingent histories of race-making; the relationship between slavery and capitalism; the workings of domination, agency, and resistance; and black “freedom dreams” in the antebellum United States. Equivalent Course(s): HIST 17908, RDIN 17908

DEMS 20235. Contemporary Democratic Theory: Realism, Deliberative Democracy, and Agonism. 100 Units.
What is democracy? Is democracy a matter of finding consensus or regulating dissensus? How might we go about making our own society more democratic? Should we strive for more democracy or is democracy merely a means to an end? What is the relationship between democratic theory and practice? This course will consider leading attempts in contemporary democratic theory to grapple with these questions and many more. We will consider both the foundational texts of contemporary democratic theory including Hannah Arendt, Carl Schmitt, Jurgen Habermas, and Robert Dahl, and then build from those texts to see how contemporary theorists have attempted to rearticulate, redefine, redesign, and revolutionize democracy in the past 25 years. Equivalent Course(s): PLSC 20406, PLSC 30230, MAPS 30230, MAPS 20230

DEMS 21001. Human Rights: Contemporary Issues. 100 Units.
This course examines basic human rights norms and concepts and selected contemporary human rights problems from across the globe, including human rights implications of the COVID pandemic. Beginning with an overview of the present crises and significant actors on the world stage, we will then examine the political setting for the United Nations’ approval of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights in 1948. The post-World War 2 period
was a period of optimism and fertile ground for the establishment of a universal rights regime, given the defeat of fascism in Europe. International jurists wanted to establish a framework of rights that went beyond the nation-state, taking into consideration the partitions of India-Pakistan and Israel-Palestine - and the rising expectations of African-Americans in the U.S. and colonized peoples across Africa and Asia. But from the beginning, there were basic contradictions in a system of rights promulgated by representatives of nation-states that ruled colonial regimes, maintained de facto and de jure systems of racial discrimination, and imprisoned political dissidents and journalists. Cross-cutting themes of the course include the universalism of human rights, problems of impunity and accountability, notions of “exceptionalism,” and the emerging issue of the “shamelessness” of authoritarian regimes. Students will research a human rights topic of their choosing, to be presented as either a final research paper or a group presentation.

Equivalent Course(s): CHST 21001, HMRT 21001, SOSC 21001, LLSO 21001, HIST 29304, CRES 21001, LACS 21001

DEMS 21222. Democratic Failure in Greece and Rome. 100 Units.
The course will study processes of democratic erosion and collapse in classical Athens and republican Rome. Assignments: in-class presentations and a long paper.
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 20602, CLAS 31222, CLCV 21222, HIST 30602, LLSO 29722

DEMS 21403. Locke and Rousseau. 100 Units.
John Locke’s political philosophy contributed mightily to the English and American constitutions. It is still a significant force in modern debates about rights and the criteria of political legitimacy. We begin the course with Locke’s Second Treatise of Government and go on to read his important “A Letter Concerning Toleration.” Issues to be addressed include Locke’s conception of the state of nature, his explanation of the need for a political society, and his justifications of economic inequality and the right of revolution. We then turn to a very different writer, Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Rousseau has been read as defending, among other things, liberalism, totalitarianism, civic republicanism, and communism. We will read his First and Second Discourses, On the Social Contract, and parts of the short essay On the Government of Poland. Issues to be addressed include Rousseau’s account of developmental psychology, his conception of the initial political agreement, the nature of the General Will, the role of the Legislator, and what is meant by his infamous claim that citizens can be “forced to be free.” Our goal is to grasp Locke and Rousseau in their historical and intellectual contexts but also to determine what is true and vital in their views. (A)
Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 21403, FNDL 20205

DEMS 22100. Politics and Policy. 100 Units.
This course has two fundamental aims. The first is to introduce students to a set of analytical tools and concepts for understanding how political institutions generate public policy. The second is to apply these tools in examining the major institutions of democracy in the United States. Note(s): Public Policy 22100-22200-22300 may be taken in any order.
Equivalent Course(s): PBPL 22100

DEMS 24700. Organizing Coalitions for Change: Growing Power and Social Movements. 100 Units.
Coalitions are building blocks of social movements, often bringing people together across race, class, faith and ethnicity to build the power required to make social change. Coalitions address local, state, national, and international politics, public and private sector matters. They are employed successfully, or not, from the far left to the far right. They vary widely, engaging people from very grassroots and local communities to civic, faith, labor, business, and political leadership. At times spontaneously precipitated, at times methodically built, effective coalitions can change the fundamental relationships in our society, change society and challenge what we know or think we know. This course will examine the conceptual models of diverse coalitions formed to impact social, legal, and political structures. We will explore the strengths and limitations of coalitions, and their impact upon low-income and oppressed communities. We will study recent examples to stop public housing displacement, end police misconduct, halt deportations, and seek fair tax reform. We will explore the role of coalitions in changing political machines. Too, we will investigate the use and impact of coalitions in building relations between racial, religious and ethnic groups. As part of class exercises, students will “create” coalitions to address an identified need for social change.
Equivalent Course(s): SSAD 64700, CHST 24700

DEMS 24901. Religion and Human Rights. 100 Units.
Religion played a crucial, but often overlooked, role in the development of post-World War II conceptions of human rights, providing principles and ideas that continue to influence contemporary human rights debates in the fields of law, public policy, and international relations. This no-prior-knowledge-necessary course explores the complex, sometimes fraught, relationship between religion and human rights from World War II to the present. We will begin by juxtaposing the role religious ideas played in the drafting of core post-war human rights documents (e.g. the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, etc.) with the decision by drafters to omit direct references to the divine or the beliefs of specific religious communities. Using case study analysis and close reading of primary religious texts, scholarly commentary, and historical accounts, we will examine the ways in which individuals and groups from multiple religious (and non-religious) traditions both apply and push back against existing human rights norms. Throughout the course we will discuss the role religion might play in debates surrounding emerging, but still contentious, conceptions of human rights. This includes: universal healthcare, LGBTQIA+ rights, ever more
complex manifestations of religious freedom, as well as whether human rights as conceived of in the mid-20th Century can be reconciled with decolonial and post-colonial perspectives.
Equivalent Course(s): HMRT 24901, GLST 24902, RLST 24901, GNSE 24903

DEMS 25563. Does American Democracy Need Religion? 100 Units.
In the United States, we find ourselves living as part of a democracy. But that simple fact doesn’t necessarily make us fans of democracy by default. In fact, it leaves many questions unanswered: Is democracy a good thing? If so, why and on what grounds? Why should you or I value democracy and its ideals (e.g., equality, liberty, fraternity)? If we do, what (if anything) grounds our devotion to this shared political tradition? And does, can, or should religion have a role to play? In this course, we will explore American democracy as a normative tradition and its relationship to various religious traditions in American society. Through examining key interpreters of American democracy such as Danielle Allen, Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King, Jr., Cornel West, Joshua Abraham Heschel, and Amanda Gorman, we will approach the question of how religion and democracy relate to one another. We’ll investigate the relative independence of democracy and religion, focusing on philosophers and poets who emphasize American democracy as tradition in its own right. We will also consider “Civil Religion in America,” through the work of sociologists and historians who suggest the dependence of the democratic on religion or something like it. Finally, we’ll question the relative interdependence of American democracy and religious traditions by turning to claims of influential religious and political leaders and activists. No prerequisite knowledge required.
Equivalent Course(s): CRES 25563, PBPL 25563, AMER 25563, RLST 25563

DEMS 25808. Roman Law. 100 Units.
The course will treat several problems arising in the historical development of Roman law: the history of procedure; the rise and accommodation of multiple sources of law, including the emperor; the dispersal of the Roman community from the environs of Rome to the wider Mediterranean world; and developments in the law of persons. We will discuss problems like the relationship between religion and law from the archaic city to the Christian empire, and between the law of Rome and the legal systems of its subject communities.
Equivalent Course(s): CLCV 25808, LLLO 21212, HIST 31004, HIST 21004, CLAS 35808, SIGN 26017

DEMS 25910. The Health of American Democracy. 100 Units.
We often hear that American democracy is broken. The voters are uninformed, irrational, polarized, and hyper-partisan. The elected officials are likewise partisan, polarized, and corrupt. Bad actors rig the system and subvert the will of the public. Media outlets are biased and misinformation abounds on social media. In this class, we’ll investigate each of these claims and discuss their implications for the health of democracy in the modern U.S. There are no explicit prerequisites, but experience with quantitative and mathematical reasoning is strongly recommended.
Equivalent Course(s): PLSC 25911, PBPL 25910

DEMS 26409. Revolution, Dictatorship, & Violence in Modern Latin America. 100 Units.
This course will examine the role played by Marxist revolutions, revolutionary movements, and the right-wing dictatorships that have opposed them in shaping Latin American societies and political cultures since the end of World War II. Themes examined will include the relationship among Marxism, revolution, and nation building; the importance of charismatic leaders and icons; the popular authenticity and social content of Latin American revolutions; the role of foreign influences and interventions; the links between revolution and dictatorship; and the lasting legacies of political violence and military rule. Countries examined will include Guatemala, Cuba, Chile, Argentina, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Peru, Venezuela, Bolivia, and Mexico. Assignments: Weekly reading, a midterm exam or paper, a final paper, participation in discussion, and weekly responses or quizzes.
Instructor(s): B. Fischer Terms Offered: Winter
Note(s): Some background in Latin American studies or Cold War history useful.
Equivalent Course(s): HMRT 26409, HIST 36409, LACS 26409, HIST 26409, CLAS 26409, CLCV 27709

DEMS 27709. Caesar and his Reception. 100 Units.
Julius Caesar is a captivating figure in the Western political and literary imaginary. Consummate general, admired stylist, lover of Cleopatra, winner of the civil war against Pompey, and dictator for life, Caesar seems to have it all until his assassination by some of his closest friends. Did he have the ambition to control the state from the beginning or did he react in response to provocation? Did he have a just cause for waging civil war? Was he a figure of consummate cruelty or did he do atrocious things to forward a progressive political agenda? How are we to interpret his vaunted clemency? To address these questions, we will read Julius Caesar’s extant works and examine the rich variety of representations of this charismatic figure in imperial Greek and Roman literature (Appian, Plutarch, Suetonius, Lucan) and beyond (Shakespeare’s Julius Caesar, Handel’s Giulio Cesare, Richard Nelson’s 2008 play, Conversations in Tusculum).
Equivalent Course(s): CLAS 37709, CLCV 27709

DEMS 28050. The American Constitution. 100 Units.
This is a survey of the main themes of the American Constitution-popular sovereignty, separation of powers, federalism, and rights—and of the basic techniques of constitutional interpretation. The course introduces the history and doctrines of American constitutional law primarily through the analysis of cases.
Equivalent Course(s): LLLO 28050
DEMS 29000. The American Culture Wars. 100 Units.
Should we tear down statues of Confederate soldiers? Should religious institutions be exempt from public health regulations? How (if at all) should we regulate abortion? These questions are only the latest battlefields in the “culture wars,” the long-running conversation—or, more often, shouting match—about how Americans ought to live. This seminar will explore how Americans have wrestled with questions of morality and national identity since the country’s founding. Two questions will drive our discussion. First, why do certain issues become the subject of fierce cultural conflict? Second, do these conflicts enrich or undermine American democracy?
Equivalent Course(s): GNSE 29000, HIST 27715, RLST 29000, AMER 29000, CRES 27000