Democracy Studies

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 Minor Consent Form (https://humanities-web.s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/college-prod/s3fs-public/documents/Consent_Minor_Program.pdf) to declare their intention to pursue the minor in Democracy Studies no later than Spring Quarter of their third year. The Faculty Director of the minor will then 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 that 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>
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</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>
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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 list below is drawn from the 2021–22 catalog). On an annual basis, additional courses may be approved for inclusion in this list. A current list of course offerings will be continually updated on the Democracy Curriculum website (https://democracy.uchicago.edu/democracy-curriculum/).
### Democracy Studies

#### Classical Studies
- CLCV 23921: Thucydides and Athenian Democracy at War
- CLCV 24521: Politics and Political Space in Ancient Rome
- CLCV 27709: Caesar and his Reception

#### Critical Race and Ethnic Studies
- CRES 21748: Global Human Rights Literature

#### English Language and Literature
- ENGL 25230: Democracy and the School: Writing about Education

#### Germanic Studies
- GRMN 25421: Babylon Berlin: Politics and Culture in the Weimar Period

#### Global Studies
- GLST 20203: Caste and Race: The Politics of Radical Equality
- GLST 22600: What Is Socialism? Experiences from Eastern Europe

#### History
- HIST 20507: The Idea of Freedom in Antiquity
- HIST 22610: Paris and the French Revolution
- HIST 25300: American Revolution, 1763 to 1789
- HIST 29632: History Colloquium: The CIA and American Democracy

#### Human Rights
- HMRT 21001: Human Rights: Contemporary Issues
- HMRT 21002: Human Rights: Philosophical Foundations
- HMRT 21005: Militant Democracy and the Preventative State
- HMRT 23561: Democracy: Athens and America

#### Law, Letters, and Society
- LLSO 28050: The American Constitution
- LLSO 29030: Totalitarianism, Law and Revolution
- LLSO 29071: Great Books of the Founding Fathers: Revolution and Constitution

#### Political Science
- PLSC 10500: What Should Democracy Mean Today?
- PLSC 20817: Race, Social Movements and American Politics
- PLSC 23100: Democracy and the Information Technology Revolution
- PLSC 23313: Democracy and Equality
- PLSC 23615: Reconstructing Democracy: Tocqueville and Du Bois
- PLSC 25215: The American Presidency
- PLSC 28405: Democratic Erosion
- PLSC 28605: Challenges to Democracy
- PLSC 28701: Introduction to Political Theory
- PLSC 28765: The Politics of Authoritarian Regimes
- PLSC 28901: Introduction to Comparative Politics

#### Public Policy Studies
- PBPL 25563: Does American Democracy Need Religion?

#### Romance Languages and Literatures
- ITAL 21322: Literature and/of/Against Fascism

#### Sociology
- SOCI 20106: Political Sociology
- SOCI 20544: Democratic Backsliding

#### South Asian Languages and Civilizations
- SALC 26711: South Asia after Independence

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* Approved as "global" elective course
† Approved as "ancient" elective course
ADVISING AND GRADING

Students must consult with the Faculty Director to discuss their intention to declare a minor in Democracy Studies. If the Faculty Director accepts their proposed course of study, they must submit it to their College adviser by Spring Quarter of their third year.

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