POLS 406b: Democratizing citizen engagement, north and south

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[This is a senior undergraduate seminar held for three hours each week. In this very rough first stab at content, I'm also gesturing toward my intention to structure classes using different democratic facilitation methods.]

Week 1 | Introduction | January 8

This first class will have no advance reading. I will walk students through the syllabus and give an overview of themes of citizen participation from the standpoint of northern theory/practice (especially around deliberative democracy), and the southern cases, themes, and views articulated through the DRC.

We then will spend at least half of the class exploring some brief case studies, and articulating questions and beliefs about just democratic participation. We also will have a preliminary discussion of methodology, especially around mixing the study of theory with case studies.

- If the class is large enough, we will use 'World Café' as our group method.

Week 2 | Citizenship, participation, and accountability: views and themes from the global south (1) | January 15

This week's readings and discussion will orient us to the broad themes and claims of the DRC. I'm waiting to see if the Teaching and Learning Citizenship develops a shared, introductory module; otherwise I will use a couple of general pieces from the DRC, e.g. Gaventa's "Reclaiming citizenship in a neoliberal world" and the introduction to *Spaces for Change.*

- Group method: Open Space.

Week 3 | Citizenship, participation, and accountability: views and themes from the global south (2) | January 22

Continuing with the DRC T&L-developed opening module.

Week 4 | Deliberative democracy in the Anglo north | January 29

Simone Chambers, "Deliberative Democratic Theory," *Annual Review of Political Science* 6 (2003): 307-326.

Jürgen Habermas, "Three Normative Models of Democracy," in Seyla Benhabib, *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996): 21-30.

Involve, *Deliberative Public Engagement: Nine Principles* (London: National Consumer Council, 2008).

Deliberative Democracy Consortium, *Where is Democracy Headed? Research and Practice on Public Deliberation* (Washington: Deliberative Democracy Consortium, 2008): 31-41.

- Group method: plenary using Robert's Rules of Order.

Week 5 | Northern citizen participation through southern lenses | February 5

Andrea Cornwall, *Democratising engagement: What the UK can learn from international experience* (London: Demox, 2008).

Week 6 | Example #1: participatory budgeting | February 12

Documents from Edmonton, Alberta plans for participatory budgeting.

Vince Howe, "Participatory Budgeting for a Vibrant City," *Champions of Participation* materials.

What materials from DDC? What other materials?

Possibilities:

Baiocchi, G. (2001) 'Participation, Activism, and Politics: The Porto Alegre Experiment and Deliberative Democratic Theory', *Politics and Society*: 29(1):43-72.

Acharya, A., P. Houtzager and A. Gurza Lavalle (2004) 'Civil Society Representation in the Participatory Budget and Deliberative Councils of São Paulo, Brazil', *IDS Bulletin*, 35 (2): 40-48, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton.

Week 7 | Power in invited participatory spaces | February 26

Lynn Sanders, "Against Deliberation," *Political Theory* 25,3 (1997): 347-376.

Archon Fung, "Deliberation's Darker Side: Six Questions for Iris Marion Young and Jane Mansbridge," *National Civic Review* (Winter 2004): 47-54.

What DRC readings/cases?

Week 8 | Participation within civil society | March 5

Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the 'Postsocialist' Condition* (New York: Routledge, 1997): 69-98.

Iris Marion Young, "Civil Society and its Limits," *Inclusion and Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000):154-195

Jürgen Habermas, "Civil Society and the Political Public Sphere," *Between Facts and Norms*: 329-387.

DRC materials on citizen-generated spaces, outcomes, and articulation with state power

Week 9 | Example #2: citizen assemblies | March 12

Amy Lang's comparative work.

Michael Rabinder James, "Descriptive Representation in the BC Citizens' Assembly," in Mark E. Warren and Hilary Pearse (eds.), *Designing Deliberative Democracy: The British Columbia Citizens' Assembly* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

R. S. Ratner, "Communicative Rationality in the Citizens' Assembly and Referendum Process," in Warren and Pearse.

John Ferejohn, "Conclusion: The Citizens' Assembly Model," in Warren and Pearse.

Week 10 | Cultural diversity in democratic forums | March 19

Monique Deveaux, "A Deliberative Approach to Conflicts of Culture," *Political Theory* 31,6 (2003): 780-807.

Seyla Benhabib, "Deliberative Democracy and Multicultural Dilemmas," *The Claims of Culture: Equality and Diversity in the Global Era* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002): 105-146.

Cass Sunstein, "The Law of Group Polarization," *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 10,2 (2002): 175-195.

Vera's stuff on Quilombola communities; Alex's stuff on indigenous mobilization? **what other DRC materials?**

Week 11 | Activist challenges to deliberative democracy | March 26

Michael Walzer, "Deliberation, and What Else?" in Macedo (ed.) *Deliberative Politics: Essays on Democracy and Disagreement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999): 58-69.

Young, Activist Challenges

Nierras and Levine, Activist challenges DDC piece.

Cornwall, "Deliberating Democracy"

What other DRC materials? Theoretical materials?

Week 12 | What's ahead for citizen participation? | April 2

Archon Fung, "Recipes for Public Spheres: Eight Institutional Design Choices and their Consequences," *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 11,3 (2003): 338-367.

Peter Levine, Archon Fung, and John Gastil, "Future Directions for Democratic Deliberation," in John Gastil and Peter Levine (eds.), *The Deliberative Democracy Handbook: Strategies for Effective Civil Engagement in the 21st Century* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005): 271-288.

Andrea Cornwall, "Making Spaces, Changing Places: Situating Participation in Development," *IDS Working Paper #170* (2002), Institute for Development Studies, University of Sussex: 1-35

What other DRC materials?

Extra week that tempts me: Citizen participation as formative, or not....

Mansbridge, J. (1999) 'On the Idea that Participation makes Better Citizens', in S. Elkin and K. Soltan (eds) Citizen Competence and Democratic Institutions, University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Nancy Rosenblum, 'Logic of Congruence'

Robbins, von Lieres, and Cornwall, "Citizen participation in the post-colony," *Third World Quarterly.*

Course requirements

[[If we can network students across our courses, I will re-weight the grade toward this activity, including online participation, synthesis writing about online discussion, video creation and exchange, etc. The seminar presentation could also have a distance/online component.]]

Note: The following course requirements are subject to negotiation in our first seminar meeting. So the following assignments and weightings are **provisional**, and the authoritative course requirements will be distributed at our second meeting!

Working Papers — 35%

A short (475-500 word) working paper, reflecting on some aspect of that week's readings, is due at the beginning of each seminar. These will be worth **35%** of the final mark, and seven of them must be submitted—on time—to pass the course. You can hand in more than seven working papers if you want, in which case your best seven will count toward your final grade. (Note that I'm very serious about the word limit: if you exceed it by more than 10% on a given assignment, it'll affect grading. And please write the word count onto your working papers.)

One more detail: if you submit a working paper in Week 2 and/or Week 3, you can revise one of these based on my comments and resubmit it one week after you get it back. If the revision gets a higher grade than the original (which it should!) then the higher grade will count instead of the original one. This provides an incentive to do a working paper early in the term (so that you can see what they're about), and hopefully is a reminder of how much your work improves with careful revision.

Lateness: Working papers will only be accepted if submitted in person at the beginning of seminar (barring genuinely extenuating circumstances).

Participation — 20%

Showing up. You can't participate in seminar without actually being there. So it will be difficult for you to get a good mark for participation if you don't show up to all of the sessions. (If you are absent by pre-arrangement or for documented medical reasons, this won't count against you.)

Oh, and show up on time: it's so annoying when people wander in late. Or, for that matter, start packing up early.

Participating in seminar. Speaking in an informed way. Listening well. Building on others' contributions. Keeping things on topic. (See the checklist below for a clearer picture of expectations).

Seminar presentation—10%

Each participant will be assigned a week in which they are responsible for both posing questions to orient the seminar and serving as an expert resource as discussion proceeds.

Orienting questions:

- This presentation should be 6-8 minutes long; I'll cut you off at 10 minutes whether you're finished or not!
- The idea is to frame and present two or three questions for discussion in the seminar. These should be questions that (i) engage central points in the week's readings; (ii) are of real

philosophical interest, dealing with an important tension or ambiguity in a text, or introducing a critique of an author's position, for example; (iii) are connected to central course themes.

- In posing your questions, make clear why you think they're important. Give a sense as well of how you think your question can be addressed: what the author is likely to say, or what criteria a good answer will need to meet, or elements that will likely be part of a good answer.
- Your presentation of the questions should assume that everyone in the room has read the texts carefully (don't spend any time on basic exposition), and should show that you've done the reading very carefully (so that your questions take into account relevant parts of the readings, and address a charitably construed—and therefore sophisticated—version of the texts).
- In evaluating your presentation of orienting questions, I'll look at:

  The substance of your questions: whether they show a careful engagement with the week's texts; are charitable in their treatment of authors; key into central issues in the readings; and are framed so as to open the way to substantive and interesting seminar discussion.

  The formal aspects of your presentation: whether you stick to time limits; engage people at the table (as opposed, say, to reading word for word from your notes); clearly signpost the structure of your remarks; etc.

Being an expert resource:

- Having gone over the readings with excruciating care, and having reflected assiduously in preparing your questions, you're in a position to contribute expertly to the whole seminar that day. This doesn't necessarily mean talking a lot! But I will expect you to be an active participant in that day's seminar. And if people raise questions or challenges around the readings as that day's seminar proceeds, I may refer these to you for an informed response (or at least stab!)

Final Paper — 35%

The main written assignment in the course is a 4000-6000 word essay addressing course themes, and based centrally on texts from the course syllabus. I want you to develop this final essay with conference presentation and/or publication in mind (and indeed, if your paper is really good, I'll urge you to go ahead and submit it for presentation/publication). An essay suitable for conference presentation and/or publication frames and motivates a conceptual puzzle or question, and works things through so as to advance readers' understanding of the issue. The author's voice is central: you're not simply assembling what other people have said, but using exposition and exegesis to press forward with your own investigation, to your own conclusions.

The final paper is due on Friday, April 21st by 4:00 in the main Philosophy office (HC 4-115). Late papers **will not be accepted** without a medical note, or by pre-arrangement, or in cases of serious duress (which doesn't include having lots of other assignments due, your computer breaking down, missing the bus, etc.)

I am happy to comment on outlines or drafts of the final paper, so long as these reach me by April 7.

Calculation of final grade

Grades on each assignment will be awarded out of 4.0 and a final grade point value will be calculated arithmetically using the above percentages for each assignment.

The final grade point mark will be converted to letter grades for reporting, using the university scheme (e.g. A = 4.0, A-=3.7, B+=3.3, etc.), with cutoffs for rounding up or down (and for distinguishing between A and A+) to be decided on a class-wide basis by me at the end of term.

A participation checklist (for your reference)

- ❑ I come to seminar prepared—having done the reading really carefully and reflected on it.
- ❑ I listen to all seriously presented ideas carefully, even if I don't agree. And I *seem* to be listening, too!
- ❑ I ask for clarification if something is unclear.
- ❑ I'm careful not to be perceived as attacking others for their ideas; so I criticize ideas rather than people, and do it in a measured way.
- ❑ I speak to the whole group whenever possible, rather than making things a conversation with the prof, or some other particular participant.
- ❑ I am aware of my body language, tone of voice, facial expression, and eye contact as means of communication.
- ❑ I don't hold back from voicing my opinion because I feel that I am too advanced for the class OR because I feel that everyone else in the class knows more than I do.
- ❑ I don't interrupt others while they're speaking.
- ❑ I do my part to keep discussion moving and building. I try to tie my contributions to points that have already been made, for example, and don't ignore the thread of discussion in order to say what I planned to say all along.
- ❑ I don't have private conversations during group discussions.
- ❑ I conclude my comment by summarising my main point or posing a clear question.
- ❑ I tie my contributions to class readings when appropriate, and engage charitably with those readings.
- ❑ I try to be succinct and focused in my contributions, rather than rambling on self-indulgently.
- ❑ I take seriously ideas that seem frighteningly or ludicrously radical, unfamiliar, or heretical OR that seem unduly conservative, parochial, or timid OR that come from disciplinary perspectives outside of political philosophy.
- ❑ I acknowledge that aspects of my own experience or perspective might shape my response to a particular argument in ways that are not yet fully clear to me.
- ❑ I change my mind if there seems good reason to do so.

Writing working papers

[The following is adapted from a blurb I use in my undergraduate courses, where I also assign working papers. You don't need to follow the below directions, but if you're unsure of what I'm looking for they'll give you a pretty clear idea. And it wouldn't actually **hurt** to follow them....]

Why I believe in working papers

The challenge of writing a working paper is to state and defend an interesting critical idea in only two pages. This is tough. In a paper of eight or twelve or twenty pages you can meander around some, engage in a bit of gratuitous exposition, and get away with some vagueness in one part of the paper so long as you clear it up in another. Given a 500 word limit, though, you have to cut right to the chase: state a critical thesis, succinctly lay out the relevant parts of the reading in question, and support your critical thesis in a way that might persuade an intelligent rival.

I put you through this exercise—not once but seven or more times—because I've found it to be an unrivalled exercise for honing skills in analysis and writing. If you can learn to write good working papers (and the course is designed so that you can give yourself some practice before any given paper has to count toward your grade), your longer papers will become leaner, meaner, and much, much better. So please read the following pointers, but also be sure to allow for a learning curve in writing these; write some early enough in the term that you can do a few for practice before they start counting towards your mark.

To write a good working paper....

Take a position on an interesting question from the week's reading

A good working paper takes up an interesting question related to the reading. This means first, that it's something that intelligent people could disagree on; if you can't imagine smart people disagreeing on the answer to the question, you're arguing for the obvious—which is uninteresting. Second, an interesting question is one where something important hinges on the answer—where different answers would have big implications for the theory, or for policy, or for something else that matters.

Decide where you stand on the question—this is the position that you will be arguing for in your paper. It's your thesis. Make sure that you state it clearly, hopefully in the opening lines of the paper. This way the reader knows what you're going to show.

Engage critically with the week's reading

Your working paper should do something interesting with the argument from the readings (rather than, say, taking some isolated part of the reading as a jumping off point for a two-page statement of your philosophy of life, or views about cognitive science, or whatever). So make sure that you succinctly lay out the aspect(s) of the reading's argument that are relevant to the question you're exploring.

Make sure to leave space, though, for your own critical perspective: your critical argument should take up at least half of the paper.

Structure your argument

So you lay out an interesting question, state your thesis, and lay out the relevant aspects of the article. Now you need to argue for your thesis—giving an intelligent rival or an undecided bystander reasons to take your side.

Most often, the reading itself will define one of the two positions you're considering on your interesting question. Either you want to argue against some aspect of the reading, or you want to defend some aspect of the reading against an interesting criticism. Either way, make sure that you're getting the reading right, and that both of the positions you're considering are ones that a smart person could take.

Given that you only have 500 words for the paper, you probably want to lay out just one or two clear reasons for your position. What reasons could you give that would convince someone to accept your thesis?

Consider objections

John Stuart Mill said, "He who knows only his own side of the argument, understands but little of that." You need to be able to anticipate (and write out) the kind of conversation you would have with someone who disagreed with the direction of your argument. Writing objections and responses is a bit like making a clear, step-by-step map of your thinking, and the thinking of the person who is responding to you. What would puzzle a reader? How might they object to your argument?

So when you lay out a reason for your position, one of the most powerful things you can then do is to entertain an objection—what would a smart person who disagreed say back to you? Mention this("a possible criticism of my position is that…"), then show why your argument can survive this objection.

Be succinct

You can do all of the things I've mentioned in 500 words. Really. But only if you establish a clear focus, get straight to the point, and cut out all fluff.

You should be able to look at every sentence of your paper, even every **word** of your paper, and say what it's doing to further your argument. You'll want to avoid flowery introductions and conclusions, overly complex sentences, and long-winded examples. You'll also have to limit yourself to just one or two main points, even if there's tons more that you'd love to say. The most common mistake that good writers make on these papers is trying to do too much—squeezing in three or four or five points where they should have focused on just one or two.

Be clear

Please please please write as clearly as possible. Avoid jargon, long words, and convoluted sentences. Don't try to sound sophisticated or 'philosophical': convey what you have to say as explicitly and unambiguously as you can. One way to test the clarity of your sentences is to read them aloud: if a friend or brother or sister or parent were listening, could they follow easily? If not, consider being more succinct and to the point. Keep sentences and paragraphs relatively short.

And feel free to write in the first person; it saves words and improves clarity.

Be charitable

Before you agree or disagree with someone's ideas—whether they belong to the author of a reading or to an imagined critic of the reading—you have to make clear the structure of their argument (or rather, that part of their argument that is relevant to your own). *I cannot emphasize this strongly enough*: you have to

engage carefully with the arguments of authors whose work you use. It is unpersuasive merely to state their conclusions and to agree or dissent on independent grounds.

The scholars whose work we read in this course are not fools: if your argument depicts them as such, you probably aren't reading with adequate care. This isn't to say that you should agree with them; rather, it's to suggest that you should disagree with the fairest possible representation of their views. If your attribution of a view to an author is likely to be controversial, offer textual evidence for your interpretation.

Strong feelings about the subject at hand should motivate you to argue all the more carefully. Sweeping claims and overblown rhetoric weaken your paper: **avoid them.**

There's no need to go beyond the course readings

The goal of a working paper is to help you develop and demonstrate skills in interpreting philosophical texts (i.e. those assigned), constructing an argument, anticipating objections, and conveying your ideas clearly and succinctly. If you do choose to go beyond the readings in researching your paper, be very sure to credit your sources, and don't let other sources draw you away from demonstrating the skills just outlined.

Use quotations and citations sparingly

You don't have space in a two-page paper for many quotes from the text; a lot of good working papers don't include any quotes at all.

If you're saying something about an author's argument that's likely to be puzzling or controversial, do be sure to give a page reference so that your reader can see whether they agree with your interpretation—do this by just putting the page number in brackets like this. [99]

Only quote the text (writing it out word for word) when you plan to make special use of a passage, or think your interpretation of the passage is likely to be especially controversial. When you quote the text, give a page reference in brackets like this. [99]

Use gender-neutral language

There is now a commitment in the North American philosophy profession to the non-sexist use of language: you should reflect this in your use of pronouns. Use 'he' and 'man' when you want to refer to males, or to be true to the sexist language of a text — these terms can no longer be assumed to denote the entire human race. For discussion of the issue and for advice on usage, see the American Philosophical Association guidelines on the non-sexist use of language, which are on the web at: http://www.apa.udel.edu/apa/publications/texts/nonsexist.html

Give yourself time to revise

Spend time editing successive drafts of your assignment, making your argument as succinct and organized as possible. Be sure to proof-read your final draft: missing words, misspellings, and poor syntax all serve to undermine the reader's confidence in the thoughtfulness of your argument.

Format the paper properly

- Your paper must be **double-spaced**, with 1" margins on all sides, and at least an 11-point font.
- Your paper must include a word-count (you can just write it on).
- Your paper must be stapled.
- Your paper must have your name on it!

- Always keep your own copy of assignments.

Keep to the word limit

Remember: you only have 500 words. While I'll excuse your going slightly over (you can get away with 510 or 520), papers that are substantially over length will be penalized.

Avoid plagiarism like the plague

Plagiarism means representing someone else's ideas or words as your own: it can take the form of straightforward copying, paraphrasing, using another's ideas or structure of argument without attribution, sloppy citing or footnoting, and so on. Just to give a few examples:

- It is plagiarism if you copy something word-for-word without clearly indicating that these are someone else's words and citing the source.
- It is plagiarism if you paraphrase someone else's writing — rearranging or changing their words, but keeping some of the structure and ideas — without clearly indicating that these are someone else's ideas and citing the source.
- It is probably plagiarism if the details of the ideas you express in an assignment aren't yours and you don't let on whose they are.

The University of Alberta's Code of Student Behavior (Section 43.3) puts it like this: "No student shall submit the words, ideas, images, or data of another person as his or her own in any academic writing, essay, thesis, research project or assignment in a course or program of study." Penalties for plagiarism include failure in the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, and expulsion.

You have the responsibility to understand what constitutes plagiarism and to avoid it in all its forms. I want you to appreciate that plagiarism, gross or subtle, will not be tolerated in this course. If you are unsure about whether a particular use of sources, manner of footnoting, form of collaboration, etc., might constitute plagiarism, I will gladly talk it over.

"The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at www.ualberta.ca/secretariat/appeals.htm) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University." [GFC 29 Sept 2003]

[Policy about course outlines can be found in Section 23.4(2) of the University Calendar.]