About the course: This Core course aims to introduce students to classic works both defending and criticizing democracy. It has two linked themes: (1) How should we characterize equality among democratic citizens, and (2) does this equality hinder or help us to produce knowledge and to make wise decisions? The course begins with a study of democratic Athens and key works of Greek political thought analyzing the equality and wisdom of democratic citizens. The course then moves into classics of modern political thought, focusing on questions of representation, deliberation, and expertise. The course concludes with examining the implications of racial and economic inequality in the United States for democratic decision-making.

Readings: Available at the Bookstore or your preferred used/online purveyor. Please buy the assigned translations and editions (it is essential that we can be literally on the same page in class).

For purchase:


**Class format:** Each week we have two 75-minute lectures and a 75-minute recitation. Recitations aim to help you understand the foundational ideas behind the texts and to enable
you to ask questions in a smaller group setting. They will also give us the chance to critically
discuss the texts and the ideas they present. You should complete each reading before the
relevant lecture; each recitation then will cover the readings in light of the lectures to have
taken place since the last recitation.

**No laptops or tablets:** Laptops, tablets, and phones are generally banned both in lecture
and in recitation, except when the material for that session is on NYU Classes. Surfing the
web or checking e-mail doesn't just affect your own ability to learn, but the experience of
those around you. Moreover, there is ample research in support of the educational benefits
of taking notes by hand. If you have a disability that prevents you from handwriting your
notes, please contact the Moses Center, and we will work with them to accommodate your
needs. (Please do not use any device to record the class, unless pre-arranged with the Moses
Center.) We may lower your grade if you violate these policies.

**Participation:** Please read the assignments carefully and be prepared to defend arguments in
class. As a means of ensuring participation and of equally distributing the burdens and
benefits of class participation, we will use the following mechanisms:

**Random questioning and Volunteering:** For reasons related to the course themes, we will
both randomly call on students and look for volunteers in lecture and recitation to discuss
the assigned texts for that class.

**Response Papers:** Each week by 5 p.m. on the day prior to your recitation, you must submit
a 500-word (maximum) response paper on that week’s reading to your recitation class site on
NYU Classes. The response paper should consist of one to two paragraphs discussing an
issue in the reading you found interesting or provocative, and explaining why.

**Your questions:** There will be some time for your questions during both recitation and
lecture, but office hours provide the best opportunity for us to answer them. You also may
send us questions by email, but we can’t guarantee quick responses in that format.

**Grading:** Your grade is based on the following:

- 1 short (500-word) paper: 5% of grade
- 3 longer (1500-word) papers, each worth 10% of grade
- In-class Midterm: 25% of grade
- In-class Final: 30% of grade
- Participation in Lecture: 5% of grade
- Participation in Recitation: 5% of grade

**Assignments:** All assignments will be handed in via NYU Classes on your Recitation
Classes page (the teaching assistants will show you where that is during your first recitation).

**Formatting:** Please name your assignments *LASTNAME* FirstInitial – *Assignment Name*.docx
(so Cocoru A – Long Paper 1.docx). Assignments should be Times New Roman 12-point
font with 1-inch margins, double-spaced, left-justified and saved as a .docx file.

**Word Count:** We will use the MS Word Count feature to determine the number of words.
Footnotes and bibliographies are not included in the count. We will not penalize papers that are 10% more or less than the word limit.

**Late Assignments:** An assignment is late when you submit it more than 10 minutes after the deadline. An assignment is penalized one grade-step (from an A to an A-) when it becomes late, and an additional letter grade for every 24 hours thereafter.

**Extensions:** If you anticipate needing an extension because of multiple simultaneous deadlines, please email your teaching assistant in advance of the deadline, and optimally even before the essay prompt is distributed. We will not grant extensions after the deadline has passed except in documented medical emergencies.

**Plagiarism:** Please familiarize yourself with the rules governing academic integrity at NYU: http://core.cas.nyu.edu/docs/CP/4321/AcademicIntegrity.pdf. Violations will be treated with utmost severity under College procedures. If you have any question about proper citations or the appropriate use of source material, please do not hesitate to contact Professor Schwartzberg or your teaching assistant.

**Exams:** You will take two open-book “blue book” exams, for which you may bring in your texts, though not your notes. Please write as clearly as you can.

**Religious holidays/medical or family emergencies:** If you anticipate being absent from lecture, recitation, or an exam because of any religious observance, please notify us in advance; please also notify us if you will have to miss class for a medical or family emergency.
Schedule of Readings and Lectures

I. Introduction

September 6: What is democracy? (No reading)

II. Athenian democracy and its critics

September 11: Athenian political institutions and collective knowledge
Josiah Ober, Classical Athenian Democracy and Democracy Today (NYU Classes)

September 13: Plato, Protagoras.
[Short paper assigned, due September 20 at 11 a.m.]

September 18: Plato, Republic, Books I-III

September 20: Plato, Republic, Books IV-VII

September 25: Plato, Republic, Books VIII-X

September 27: Aristotle, Politics (Book I.1-7; 12-13; Book II, 1-5)

October 2: Aristotle, Politics (Book III; Book IV, 1-12)

October 4: Aristophanes, Assemblywomen (NYU Classes)
[Longer paper #1 assigned, due October 16 at 11 a.m.]

October 9: Fall Break, No Class

III. Rousseau: Equality and the general will

October 11: Rousseau, Discourse on the Origin of Inequality

October 16: Rousseau, Social Contract (Books I and II.1-7)

October 18: Rousseau, Social Contract (Books III, ch.1-6, 11, 15, 18; IV, chs. 1-3)

October 23: In-class midterm

IV. Suffrage, representation, and the “tyranny of the majority”

October 25: Putney Debates (NYU Classes)
October 30: Introduction to modern representation. 
   Madison, Federalist 10 (NYU Classes).

November 1: Tocqueville, Democracy in America 
   [Vol. 1: Author’s Introduction; Part I ch. 3-4; Part II, chs. 3, 4, 5 (pp. 228-235 only), 7, 8]

November 6: Tocqueville, Democracy in America 
   (Vol. 2: Part I chs. 1, 2, 8, 9; Part II chs. 1, 2, 4, 8)

November 8: Douglass, “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” and “What the Black Man Wants” (NYU Classes)

[Longer paper #2 assigned, due 11 a.m. on November 20]

November 13: Mill, On Liberty, ch. 2; Considerations on Representative Government, ch. 3.

November 15: Mill, Considerations on Representative Government (chs. 4-6)

November 20: Harriet Taylor Mill, “Enfranchisement of Women” (NYU Classes)

November 22: Thanksgiving Break (no lecture or recitations)

V. Deliberation, aggregation, and knowledge


November 29: Friedrich Hayek, “The Use of Knowledge in Society” (NYU Classes) 
   Elinor Ostrom and Harini Nagendra, “Insights on Linking Forests, Trees, and People from the Air, On the Ground, And in the Laboratory.” (NYU Classes)

VI. Contemporary problems of democracy and knowledge

December 4: Hannah Arendt, “Truth and Politics” (NYU Classes)

[Longer paper #3 assigned, due 11 a.m. December 13]

December 6: Jan-Werner Mueller, “What Populists Say” (ch. 1 of What is Populism?) (NYU Classes)
December 11: Lani Guinier, “More Democracy” (NYU Classes)
Elizabeth Anderson, “Why Racial Integration Remains an Imperative.” (NYU Classes)
Tommie Shelby, “Integration, Inequality, and Imperatives of Justice” (please focus on pp. 268-285) (NYU Classes)

December 12: Conclusion (Designated Monday schedule)

December 13: In-class Review session (with TAs).

Mon., December 18, 10-11:50: Final exam