What do we need to function as citizens of a democracy: capacities of reason, imagination, or eloquence? Skills in analyzing public discourse or habits of historical memory? Is belief in God required, or particular emotional tendencies or sympathies? What kind of humanistic values, if any, can and should a democracy promote? We examine these questions on the assumption that intensive close reading (and listening, in Mozart’s case) promotes the habits of engaged reading and articulate talking and writing that are the bedrock of civic education. In lecture, assigned readings will be discussed alongside selected works of art and music. Writing assignments will encourage a mix of creative and analytical thinking. Attendance at lecture and recitation is required. In-lecture quizzes or writing exercises will be held most weeks.

Advice and information

Four things will help you get the most out of this course. 1) Read the assigned texts before lecture. 2) Stay tuned at the very end of lecture, where I’ll wrap up with advice on what to focus on for our next meeting. 3) Speak up, listen, and think in recitation. 4) Start work on papers at least five days before they’re due.

Contact Professor Connolly at joyc@nyu.edu or 212 998 8119. Office hours in Silver 903D (MAP) or 503I (Classics) Wednesday 2-4 or by appointment. Graduate recitation instructors’ office hours are posted on Blackboard.

Images shown in lecture and all readings not available in book form marked with asterisks below will be posted on Blackboard. For all other readings, secure the editions listed below (all are available at the NYU Bookstore; you can also find them online or at a local store). It is crucially important that you bring the assigned text to lecture and recitation. If you choose other translations, be aware that you will find it difficult to follow page references in lecture and recitation.

Sophocles, *Oedipus*. Trans. Ruby Blondell (Focus)
Euripides, *Bacchae*. Trans. Paul Woodruff (Focus)
Readings and topics for lecture and recitation

1. Introduction: republican founding ideals
   Sept 7    * John Adams, “Thoughts on Government” (to be distributed in lecture)
   Sept 9    * John Dewey, “The search for the Great Community,” in *The Public and Its Problems*
                (143-84); also * Jacques-Louis David’s Oath of the Horatii (1784)
   Sept 10   What civic habits should we cultivate?

2. Individual freedom
   Sept 14   * Herman Melville, “Bartleby the Scrivener” (read whole story)
   Sept 16   Melville, continued
   Sept 17   How to get the most out of a text

3. Self-knowledge
   Sept 21   Sophocles, *Oedipus* (the whole play) and * selected Greek vases
   Sept 23   Essay question distributed
   Sept 24   Ridley Scott, *Blade Runner* (selections to be shown in lecture)
   Sept 25   Constraints on self-understanding

4. Autonomy and prudential judgment
   Sept 28   * Oedipus (reread selected passages)
   Sept 30   * Oedipus (reread selected passages)
   Oct 1     Cop dramas, medical diagnosis dramas, and other popular models of public analysis
   Oct 2     Essay due (5 pages): close reading

5. Acting
   Oct 5     * Bacchae, first half
   Oct 7     * Bacchae, second half; also * Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (excerpt)
   Oct 8     Greek audiences and postmodern flashmobs, raves, and demonstrations

6. Rational deliberation
   Oct 12    Plato, *Republic* book 1
   Oct 14    *Republic* books 2 and 7; scenes from William Wellman, *The Oxbow Incident*
   Oct 15    How do we define our terms?

7. Self-government
   Oct 19    * Republic 6 and 9
   Oct 21    Essay exercise
   Oct 22    Analyzing Plato’s connection between self-government and autonomy

8. Thinking outside ourselves: the utopian imagination
   Oct 26    * Republic 3-5
   Oct 28    * Republic 10
   Oct 29    When is censorship defensible?
   Oct 29    Turn in revised, extended version of in-lecture essay (5-6 pages)
9. Shared memories
Nov 3 Vergil, *Aeneid* 1
Nov 7 *Aeneid* 2-3
Nov 8 From Rome to *Avatar*: the collective fantasies that bind us

10. Sympathy
Nov 9 *Aeneid* 4; also * Adam Smith, Theory of Moral Sentiments* (excerpt)
Essay topics distributed
Nov 11 *Aeneid* 6 and 7; * Smith, Theory* continued
Nov 12 Is melodrama good for the state?

11. Making war and peace
Nov 16 *Aeneid* 8-11
Nov 18 *Aeneid* 12; also, * Hannah Arendt, On Revolution* (excerpt)
Nov 19 Paying attention to cruelty

12. The utopian imagination reloaded
Nov 23 Rousseau, *Social Contract* book 1
Essay draft due (at least 5 pages of an 8 page paper)
Nov 25 Thanksgiving: no lecture and no recitation on Friday

13. Shared values and religious practice
Nov 30 *Social Contract* book 2
Dec 2 *Social Contract* book 4
Dec 3 What role does belief in God play in civic “best practices”?

14. Self-determination onstage
Dec 7 * Mozart, Nozze di Figaro* (selections to be shown in lecture, libretto on Blackboard)
Dec 9 *Figaro* (selections to be shown in lecture)
Dec 10 The political nuances of romantic comedy
Revised full version of essay due

15. Dec 14 * Immanuel Kant, “Idea for a universal history”
Final examination questions distributed

Dec 23 Latest date possible to submit take-home final exam by 12 noon

Requirements
- Three papers: the first is 10% of total grade; the second, 20%; the third, 25%
- Final exam (20%, 4-5 pages) due by email to your preceptor no later than noon Dec 23
- Recitation contributions (20%): evaluates your ability to answer questions and make relevant comments, your responsiveness to other students’ comments, and performance in other exercises (e.g., generating discussion questions or short presentations)
- In-lecture exercises (5%): usually 5 minute quiz-type affairs. Any exercise demanding a bit of extra study (i.e. timelines) will be announced ahead of time. Your lowest grade will be dropped. Missed exercises count as zeroes.
General policies

If you find yourself struggling with any aspect of the course, consult Professor Connolly and/or your instructor early and often. We set aside office hours for the purpose of answering your questions, and you’re strongly encouraged to use them.

Questions before, during, and after lecture are warmly encouraged.

You must complete all components of the course. That is, you may not opt out of any papers or exams or make a practice of skipping recitation; if you do so, you risk failing the course, regardless of your grades in other components.

Recitation, also known as “precept,” is an integral element of the course: you must attend all meetings and participate actively in discussions and other exercises. Missing more than two recitations will bring down your grade. If you absent yourself from more than half the recitations, you will fail the course.

In all cases—recitations, quizzes, exams, paper deadlines—we can accept excuses of sickness only with a doctor’s note. No make-ups on quizzes or work done in recitation will be offered except in case of emergency or documented illness. Excuses appealing to other obligations (internships, other academic assignments, jobs, or job fairs) will not be accepted. It’s your responsibility to schedule other obligations at times other than lecture and recitation. Please don’t ask for exceptions.

No extensions will be granted on or after the day papers or exams are due. Extensions are generally granted only in cases of documented illness or emergency.

When emailing Professor Connolly or the teaching assistants, sign off with your full name.

Don’t use laptops, cellphones, iPhones, Blackberries etc. during lecture or recitation. Wait until class is over to answer messages: people ambling in and out of the classroom distracts everyone.

Our essay and exam questions are designed specifically for this course, and they must be answered without recourse to friends, family, print or internet sources. Don’t consult Wikipedia, essays-for-sale sites, or the like. They sidestep the point of the assignments, which is the cultivation of your own thinking in response to questions. Copying or paraphrasing or rewriting words that someone else has written is cheating. Students caught cheating will receive an F for the assignment, and if the cheating is extensive, an F for the course. According to University policy, in all cases of cheating, a letter describing the incident goes to the Dean of your school. This letter will be kept on file during your time at NYU, and if you are caught cheating a second time, you risk expulsion from the university. In short: turn in your own work.

If religious holidays prevent you from attending some lectures and/or recitations, please notify your recitation instructor at the start of the semester by email. We can’t offer make-ups for quizzes missed for this reason, but we’ll adjust the calculation so that your absence doesn’t affect your grade.