Representation

About

Topic

It is often said that the political system characteristic of Western countries is that of a “representative democracy”. But what does it mean to live in a representative democracy, and what is it representative of? In many countries, a growing discontent concerning the political representatives who are often deemed 'disconnected' from the real needs has led to new forms of populism or/and authoritarianism. Many consider that we have reached a situation of "postdemocracy" and we are witnessing a "crisis of representation". Hence the question: who speaks in politics - on what stages and in whose name?

As a central figure in political thinking, representation has always oscillated between delegation and usurpation, and raises the issue who has a say in decision-making processes. Under what circumstances is representation legitimate and can it make justified claims to speak in the name of those it represents? To what extent can those who have delegated their mandate still control those who speak in their name? The course will delve on some central paradoxes of political agency, unfolding the various philosophical, legal and aesthetic components of the concept of representation.

Structure

The seminar will give a concise introduction to a key concept of political thinking. By combining systematic and historical perspectives, it will offer an overview of some of the most authoritative positions on the issue of what political representation means, and contrast them with contemporary debates around the "crisis of representation".

How representative is representative democracy? Are there alternative political forms and could we envison a return to a 'direct democracy' on the ancient Athenian model? Does the Web 2.0 foster new forms of political participation? How to organize institutional critique? To what extent is the model of the sovereign nation-state challenged by globalization, labor division and migration and can we think of new ways of a 'rule of the people'?

The course will take place on a bi-weekly base (a double session per week), which allows for a more concentrated atmosphere, but also implies a little more preparation beforehand.

Course Objectives and Requirements
The course aims at improving a) your **analytic skills** b) your **presentation skills** and c) your **writing skills**.

The course presupposes no special knowledge, but requires the willingness to participate in a 'contact studies' seminar form. As opposed to most 'core study' courses, contact study courses cannot be achieved through self-study at home, as they focus on how to learn and improve critical thinking, debating and writing.

**a) analytic skills**: in order to improve your reading capacities, we will focus on how to conceptually analyze complex texts. Please prepare 3 questions for each assigned texts and hand them in on a sheet of paper before class starts (not graded! the aim is to guide and structure your reading).

**b) presentation skills**: The **oral presentation** (30% of your grade) is meant as an impulse presentation (max. 15 min.). It introduces to the assigned reading, fleshes out the main concepts and contextualizes its issues. The presentation's purpose is to prepare the grounds for the successive debate. Examples (especially contemporary ones) are welcome: all presentation media can be used (including videoclips, movie sections, photos, music etc.) The presentations will then be uploaded to Studynet by the students after the session.

**c) writing skills**: the **research paper** (70% of your grade) is meant as an opportunity for 1. improving your writing skills and 2. learning how to develop a critical discourse on a self-chosen question, along lines that will be defined with the seminar leader according to the project.

The research paper can either be based on (i) the topic of the oral presentation or (ii) an issue related to a topic we touched upon during the seminar (for examples, see here). In both cases, please send a mail by **November 1st 2018** to emmanuel.alloa@unisg.ch at the latest with the title of the research paper and a halfpage long abstract with an outline of the chosen question, a basic structure of the arguments of the paper and its method as well as an elementary bibliography, on which you will received feedback. Once a clear writing program is settled with the course leader, you can start working on it. The Final paper will be due by **January 3rd 2019**.

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**25.09.2018 [Room 52-5120] Introduction**

1. General Presentation

2. Methodological Section: What is Critical Thinking?

3. The Crisis of Representation. Post-Democracy or Return to Democracy?

[Introductory Slides PPT & PDF]
25.09.2018 The Principle of Representative Democracy

- Representative Democracy as a Tool for Freedom

Assigned Reading: John Stuart MILL Considerations of Representative Government (1861) Chap. 3 & 4

Further Readings (For Further Personal Documentation or for Research Paper):

- David Brink, "Mill's Moral and Political Philosophy" in Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy 2018
- ISAIAH BERLIN [Pages on J.S. Mill] from Four_Essays_on_Liberty
- John Stuart MILL, Of the Infirmities and Dangers to which Representative Government is Liable, Considerations of Representative Government, Chap. 6
- Edmund Burke, Speech to the Electors of Bristol, 3 nov 1774

Christoph Heinimann

09.10.2018 [Room 52-7024] Greek Beginnings

- What is the Public Sphere? What is the Difference of the Public and the Private? What is the Common? What is Autarcy?

[Intro Slides The Birth of Democracy PPT PDF]


Valentina BIANCIARDI

09.10.2018 The Beginnings of Democracy. Lessons from Athens

OXFORD DEBATE "Was Ancient Greek Democracy a Direct Democracy?"

Group 1 "Yes" (If your family name is A-J)
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<th>23.10.2018</th>
<th>Collective Autonomy. Giving Oneself a Rule</th>
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<td>Intro Slides [PPT PDF]</td>
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<td>- What is the &quot;volonté générale&quot;?</td>
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<td><strong>Assigned Reading 1:</strong> Jean-Jacques ROUSSEAU <em>The Social Contract</em>, trans. S. Dunn, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002 (please read only the chapters I.5-1.8 &amp; II.1-II.6)</td>
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| Jean-Jacques ROUSSEAU Du contrat social ou Principes de droit politique (1762) chap. I.5-1.8-II.1-II.6 |

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<td>Alex ZAKARAS, <em>Lot and Democratic Representation</em>, <em>Constellations</em> 3.1 (2010)</td>
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<td>Equality By Lot (Online Resource)</td>
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| Philippe GUETTINGER |

| Thomas HOBBES *Leviathan* (Complete) |
Reading 2: Quentin SKINNER Hobbes on Representation (2005)

[On Hobbes' Leviathan in general] Oliver DiSLICH

[On Quentin Skinner's Article on Hobbes] Simon TOERNMALM

20.11.2018

Special Guest Prof. Petar BOJANIC (Belgrade)

"On Representation in Hobbes"


04.12.2018 People's Sovereignty, Institution, Deliberation; Democracy's Procedures

- Is Democracy a Form of Government or is it a Procedure?


David PLOTKE "Representation is Democracy" in: Constellations vol. 4 no. 1 (1997)

Jürgen HABERMAS, "On the internal relation between the rule of law and democracy", in The Inclusion of the Other

J. Habermas, Between Facts and Norms, Appendix I "Popular sovereignty as procedure"


Representation against Democracy. Rancière on the Presidential Election in France


[On Habermas] Luca CAZZANELLI

[On Rancière] Amir BUKHARI BENZ

[On Castoriadis] LI Yinqiu
04.12.2018  Direct Democracy. Switzerland as a Case Study

Special Guest Prof. Antoine CHOLLET (Lausanne) "Direct vs. representative democracy? Some lessons from Switzerland"

Assigned Reading Benjamin Barber, "Participation and Swiss Democracy", Government and Opposition, 1988, p. 31-50.

Yanick DLABEK

Further Readings

Rudolf Braun, Demokratie und Revolten, Chronos, 2018.

18.12.2018  Speaking for Those Who Can't Speak. The Sartre/Foucault-Deleuze Debate

Do we Need Engaged Intellectuals? The Trap of Advocacy
What is the Specific Intellectual?

Assigned Reading 1: Jean-Paul Sartre Preface to Frantz Fanon's The Wretched of the Earth [1961], trans. R. Philcox ; introductions by Jean-Paul Sartre and Homi K. Bhabha, New York: Grove Press, 2004, p. xliii-1xii


[On Sartre] Nora Walker

18.12.2018  Can the Subaltern Speak? Representation in a Postcolonial Perspective


Can the subaltern speak?: reflections on the history of an idea, eds. Rosalind Morris, New York: Columbia University Press, 2010

Regarding the Research Paper

Potential Topics (with first reference works) can be:

- Questioning the Delegation Hypothesis. Do the People Pre-Exist their Representatives?

Näsström, S. "Representative Democracy as Tautology. Ankersmit and Lefort on Representation".
Hannah Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation*

- **The Ruler’s Two Bodies. Is Political Representation still Dependent on a Theological Model?**
  Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King’s Two Bodies*, Princeton (New Jersey), Princeton University Press, 1957

- **Post-Democracy. Is Parliamentary Democracy Representative of the People?**
  Pierre Rosanvallon, *Counter-Democracy. Politics in an Age of Distrust*,
  Colin Crouch, *Post-Democracy*

- **Are Elections Bad for Democracy? On Equality by Lot**

- **Procedural Democracy. Outlines and Outcomes of Jürgen Habermas' Normative Theory**

- **Normative Theory and its Discontents. Chantal Mouffe and Jacques Rancière's Critique of Habermas**

- **Between Advocacy and Patronizing Attitude. The Debate about the Engaged Intellectual (Sartre, Foucault, Deleuze & Spivak)**

- **Does Democracy Need Authority? Hannah Arendt’s Concept of Authority**
  Hannah Arendt, “What is Authority?” (1954)