

Proposal to the University Curriculum Committee
Freshman Inquiry Course

I. Cover Sheet

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| Course title | <u>“On Democracy: The History of an Idea”</u> |
| Date first offered | <u>Fall 2005</u> |
| Sections per year | <u>3-5</u> |
| Statement of theme/topical area | This course will trace the development of the idea of “Democracy” in history, culture, art, economics and political institutions at various times and locations, with particular attention to the past two hundred years. |

Signatures of participating faculty:

Ann Marie Fallon
 Name (typed) Signature Date

Charles White
 Name (typed) Signature Date

Chris Carey
 Name (typed) Signature Date

 Name (typed) Signature Date

 Name (typed) Signature Date

 Name (typed) Signature Date

Contact Faculty:

Ann Marie Fallon UNST 503-735-4186 (home) amfallon@pdx.edu
 Name Mail Code Telephone (work, home) Email

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II. Course Narrative

A. Statement of theme/topical area (no more than 200 words):

On Democracy: The History of an Idea

"(Democracy) is a great word, whose history, I suppose, remains unwritten because that history has yet to be enacted."

Walt Whitman, American poet.

In January 2005, the world was riveted by images of Iraqis lining up to cast votes in a free election. Their actions were accompanied by many commentaries on the power of democracy. But what is democracy? Why does the idea have such power to move us? This course will trace the idea of "Democracy" in history, culture, art, economics and political institutions at various times and locations.

We will begin with the idea as conceived among the elite of Athens, and follow its many and varied transformations in Europe, Latin America, Africa and Asia. We will end the course with the present moment in Iraq, Palestine and the United States. Throughout the year we will ask: How has the idea of democracy changed over time and in different locations? How do 'democratic' principles impact the development of new ideas, in science, economics and the arts? Can democratic principles be applied to life in the University? What has the idea of democracy meant to different people at different points in time? What is the relationship between the U.S. and contemporary ideas of democracy? Throughout we will ask if Democracy is an organizing principle that enables new ideas and freedoms? Is democracy what Thomas Jefferson called, the tyranny of the majority? Or might Gandhi have been correct in calling it "the finest thing in the world"? Students should come away from the class with a better understanding not only of the history of democracy, but of their own roles as individuals in a modern-day democratic society.

B. Learning objectives specific to this theme:

- 1.) Students will be able to articulate a comprehensive definition of democracy.
- 2.) Students will understand and articulate relationships between political organization and cultural production.
- 3.) Students will be able to discuss the development of different of democracy in at least three distinct geographical and historical places.

- 4.) Students will be able to discuss and analyze representations of “democracies” in statistical charts, works of art, political accounts and philosophical treatises.
- 5.) Students will develop a personal strategy for thinking about their own individual responsibilities within a modern day democracy.
- 6.) Students will understand the interplay between economics and the evolution of democratic practice.

C. Assessment of student learning (specific to theme):

Assessment of both theme-specific and University Studies goals-based learning will be accomplished through graded written work, oral presentations, web pages, attendance, and participation, some exams and quizzes. Over the course of the year, grades will be based on 20% contributory participation; 40% written work; 20% alternative representations, including art work, statistical graphing, web pages and power point; 20% oral presentations.

D. Description of methods to ensure coherence of theme across participating faculty:

The “On Democracy” team will meet for a concentrated period in the summer and weekly throughout the academic year to discuss course implementation, pedagogic strategies and our own changing ideas about democracy based on reading in our own fields and exploring one another’s work.

E. Interdisciplinarity of theme:

All of us come to the team with past experience teaching freshman inquiry, with a particular emphasis on community based learning strategies. Chris Carey has a background in law and rhetoric, Ann Marie Fallon is a literary critic and writer with emphasis on postcolonial and feminist theory, Charles White is a political scientist with a background in comparative political development, particularly in Latin American.

F. Relation of course to other University Studies offerings (cohesion, ties to future learning):

While not specifically connected to a sophomore/junior cluster, “On Democracy” would provide an introduction for students interested in American studies, Latin American Studies, African Studies, Renaissance Studies and European Studies.

G. How this theme will address the University Studies Goals:

Our projects strive to encompass multiple goals. This list is not exhaustive, but offers primary examples of assignments directed to particular goals.

| University Studies Goal | Representative Assignments | Assessment Plan |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| Communication: Writing | Journals Research essay, part I completed winter quarter; part II with cbl component completed spring quarter. | Student/faculty generated rubrics; review of journals and drafts leading towards final research project. |
| Graphics | Students will use SPSS, excel and PowerPoint to illustrate their “Women and Democracy” Project. They will compare women’s voting and legislative representation in three different geographically and culturally distinct nations. | Graphics will be assessed during Powerpoint presentations in class. Assessments will be done by peers and by faculty. |
| Oral Communication | Students will do oral reports, as individuals and as part of groups at least once each quarter as they present project findings. | Student and faculty response sheet, filled out during presentations. |
| Numeracy | Polling project. Students will be comfortable with basic statistics and the use of SPSS for recording a multi-section poll. | Students will be assessed on their ability to generate and explain multiple representations of their statistical data. |
| Visual Communication | Mapping Democracy Project, a cartographic representation of multiple emergent democracies and related cultural production. | These poster projects will be included in the UNST undergraduate conference in the spring. Assessment will be based on readability of maps as well as comprehensiveness of representations. |
| Group process | Students will experiment with multiple “democratization” processes in groups in class and mentor session. We will then engage in a ‘metadiscussion’ about these processes. | Students will evaluate the success of their strategies in end of quarter response essays generated as part of their portfolios. |

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| Computer Literacy | The course encourages students to make use of email, blogs, web pages, PowerPoint, Word, excel and SPSS. | The final electronic portfolios will be assessed for students ability to use the required software. |
| Inquiry and Critical Thinking | <p>Students will evaluate multiple frames for understanding different approaches to democracy through philosophic and artistic short responses.</p> <p>Constitutional Convention Students will convene a constitutional convention for their own 'democracy'.</p> | Faculty will assess students ability to create an argument through essay writing and oral presentations. |
| Diversity and Human Experience | Diversity of perspective is a central tenet of this course. We will explore individual and community responses to the idea of democracy in very distinct geographical and historical periods (20 th century postcolonial Africa and Renaissance Florence for example). | Faculty will assess student's ability to appreciate the richness of thought regarding democracy via comparative based projects. |
| Ethics and Social Responsibility | Another important principle of this course is that students come to their own understanding both of how democracy works in their lives and their individual responsibilities as members of a modern democracy. | Assessment will be based on student's ability to reflect on her or his individual relationship to democracy through reflective essays at the end of each quarter and also through the students reflection on the CBL project. |

III. Course Schedule and Topics

| Term | Tropical Outline | Faculty |
|-------------|---|---|
| First Term | <p>Historical and Theoretical Background on Democracy: “Ancient” history of Democracy in Athens</p> <p>City States: Florence (Renaissance) Venice</p> <p>Enlightenment Philosophy</p> <p>Revolutions in the United States and France</p> | <p>-Chuck White-theoretical background, Tim Garrison (if we’re lucky), constitutional history Renaissance-Ann Marie Fallon</p> |
| Second Term | <p>Comparative Development</p> <p>U.S. New Deal Era/Civil Rights Movement—Grapes of Wrath, street theater, Harlem Renaissance</p> <p>Africa-primarily South Africa and Nigeria</p> <p>Latin America—Mexico and Chile (Venezuela?)</p> | <p>New Deal Arts-Fallon Civil Rights—Carey</p> <p>African literature-Fallon</p> <p>Latin America-White and Fallon</p> |
| Third Term | <p>Localities and Future Issues</p> <p>Globalization and Anti-globalization movements</p> <p>Issues in education Pedagogy of the Oppressed but also Dewey among others.</p> <p>LaTour –science</p> <p>Would like to end with Iraq and Palestine but am not sure of reading...</p> | <p>Carey-Globalization and anti-globalization</p> <p>Carey-pedagogical issues</p> |

NOTE: This topical outline will change with the addition of new faculty.

IV. Preliminary Reading List: selections from the following may be assigned

Camp, Rod ed. *Democracy in Latin America*.

Coetzee, J.M. *Disgrace*. 2000

Dahl, Robert. *On Democracy*

DeTocqueville, Alex. *Democracy in America* (read alongside current issue of *The Atlantic*).

Dewey, John. "Creative Democracy- The Task Before Us" (1939)

Gastil, John. *Democracy in Small Groups*.

Gordimer, Nadine. *Burger's Daughter*.

Hughes, Langston "Democracy" (poem)

LaTour, Bruno. *The Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy*.

Locke, John. *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*

Rueschmeyer, Stephens, and Stephens. *Capitalist Development and Democracy*.

Said, Edward. *Humanism and Critical Democracy*, 2004

Sorenson, Georg. *Democracy and Democratization*.

Soyinka, Wole. *Climate of Fear : The Quest for Dignity in a Dehumanized World* (Reith Lectures 2004)

Thucydides: the Mytilenaeon debate and the Melian debate

Whitman, Walt. "Democratic Vistas" and selections from "Leaves of Grass"

Williams, Terry Tempest. *The Open Space of Democracy* (2004)

Wollstonecraft, Mary. *Vindication of the Rights of Women*.

Films:

"The Grapes of Wrath"

"This is what Democracy looks like"

"South Park" "Simpsons" (Satire in a democracy)