

The course 'STV4105 – Democracy: From Theory to Practice' ran in the Fall semester of 2023 at the University of Oslo. Jonathan W. Kuyper acted as course convenor and gave eight lectures. The course also had lectures from Dr. Hallvard Sandven and Magnus Hoel (one lecture each). The course covered topics from Democracy and the State, Direct Democracy, Republicanism, Competitive Elitism, Representative Democracy, Liberal Democracy, Participatory Democracy, Deliberative Democracy, Free Speech, and Cosmopolitan Democracy. It is an advanced course that tracks the history of democracy in both theoretical and historical/contemporary forms. From the learning outcomes, all lectures focus on the historical roots of each theory, its core normative principles, and the institutional implications. Students were required to take an oral presentation as preparation for their term paper as a compulsory activity – this was pass/fail and evaluated by Kuyper and Sandven. The term paper was designed so students would select and write on their own research question. The papers were sensed by Kuyper and Sandven.

The course had changed from 2022 in only slight ways. For instance, the term paper limit in 2022 was 5000-7500 words. This was thought of as too long by several students, so it was reduced to 3500-5000 words. This change worked well and seemed to reduce pressure on students while still allowing 5000 words for those students who wished to write at the high end of the spectrum. The lecture on Epistemic Democracy from 2022 was removed in favour of the lecture on Free Speech. Given that two students wrote directly on Free Speech, this seems to have been a useful shift that we will continue.

From the subject coordinators, we received the following positive feedback. The students enjoyed the breadth of topics offered in the course. They – for the most part – enjoyed their term paper activity though two students noted that coming up with their own question was difficult. Kuyper met with or received emails from almost all students to help them workshop their papers. Given that most students were able to construct interesting questions and complete the course, the pedagogical benefits of being able to construct and answer a question seems worthwhile. The students appreciated that Kuyper attended all other lectures and asked questions of the lecturer – creating a more free-flowing atmosphere. However, it was noted that in Kuyper's lectures more time could have been made for discussion. It was agreed that starting each lecture with a quiz made for a more relaxed atmosphere as well.

We also received the following constructive comments. First, some students felt that the course was too Western-centric and that more diversity of critical perspectives were required. Second, while the quizzes were enjoyed, they could have been more directly tied to the course readings. Finally, some students were concerned that the oral presentation may influence their term paper grade (which is not the case – it was a pass/fail compulsory activity).

In response, the following steps will be taken. First, Kuyper has tried to expand the scope of the course to non-Western centric cases. The week on Participatory Democracy focuses largely on Brazil. Kuyper will seek to do this for other lectures. Second, and relatedly, while the course covers a wide range, perspectives from Feminism and Post-Colonialism need to be integrated more thoroughly. Kuyper will add some readings in the weeks on Deliberative Democracy and Cosmopolitan Democracy on Feminism and Post-Colonialism respectively. Third, the quizzes were amended in 2023 from 2022

to have more questions on the readings. This will be increased again. Finally, it will be made clearer on the course page that the oral presentation is pass/fail and not related to their term paper grade.

Overall, the course ran well with good sign-up and completion rates.