**Democracy: From Theory to Practice**

**Course content**

Why did so many people throughout history decide that political power should be exercised democratically? Is democracy actually the best form of government? If so, which type of democracy? For millennia, different strands of democratic theory have arisen, shaping how democracy emerges, survives, declines, and re-emerges within nation-states. In this course, we begin by looking at how democratic theory related to the appearance of nation-states and its project of maintaining political power. Then we turn to how different theories of democracy impacted nation-state democratization in the 20th Century, transpiring in widespread liberal democracy efforts. After we look at how current crises, such as globalization, polarization, and populism, are impacting democratic systems. Finally, we ask whether democratic theory can marshal responses to these (and other) problems, and if so, what those responses might look like.

Over, in this course, we will:

* Trace how the rise in political power of nation-states related to the rise of democratic thought.
* Discuss how different theories led to waves of democratization over history.
* Examine current problems facing democracies across the globe.
* Question how, if at all, democratic theory might help us respond to myriad crises we are facing.

**Learning outcome**

**Knowledge:**

After the successful completion of the course students will:

* Have an in-depth knowledge about a variety of democratic theories
* Be able to understand why and how states adopted different democratic forms
* Understand how different democratic crises have emerged in practice
* Explain and defend how democratic theory might be used to respond to problems facing nation-states

**Skills:**

The students will be able to:

* Use democratic theories to examine historical reasons for states adopting different systems
* Explain how different democratic theory relate to why nation-states adopt different institutional designs
* Assess how theory could inform contemporary democratic debates, including (but not limited to) how current challenges to democracy should be understood and addressed
* Communicate academic knowledge in writing and orally

**Competences:**

The students will:

* acquire an in-depth understanding of democratic theory
* Explain how democratic theory has informed the institutional design of states (and vice-versa)
* Apply theory to understand and remedy current problems with democracy

**Admission**

Students who are admitted to study programmes at UiO must each semester [register which courses and exams they wish to sign up for](http://www.uio.no/english/studies/registrations/course-registration/) in Studentweb.

Students enrolled in other Master's Degree Programmes can, on application, be admitted to the course if this is cleared by their own study programme.

If you are not already enrolled as a student at UiO, please see our information about [admission requirements and procedures](http://www.uio.no/english/studies/admission/).

[Apply for guest student status](http://www.sv.uio.no/english/studies/admin/guest-student/isv.html)if you are admitted to another Master's programme.

**Prerequisites**

Recommended previous knowledge

Bachelor degree in political science or equivalent.

**Teaching**

Ten two-hour seminars

Compulsory activities:

* Attend at least 8 out of 10 seminars.
* One-page memo (preparation for the discussion seminar)
* Discussion seminar

The course is taught in English, and the papers handed in must be written in English.

See [guidelines for compulsory activities](https://www.uio.no/english/studies/examinations/compulsory-activities/index.html)

**Absence from compulsory activities**

If you are ill or have another valid reason for being absent from compulsory activities, your absence needs to be approved and you will need to submit a complementary assignment.

* [Report absence from or the need for a postponed deadline on a compulsory activity](https://www.uio.no/english/studies/admin/compulsory-activities/sv-absence-from-compulsory-tuition-activities.html)

**Examination**

Term paper, an oral presentation

The term paper:

* must be between 5000-7500 words
* meet the [formal requirements for submission of written assignments](http://www.sv.uio.no/english/studies/resources/submission-written-assignments/isv.html)

The oral presentation will be held in a seminar after the submission of the term paper.

You must pass the compulsory activities in order to be eligible to take the exam.

The term paper counts 75 percent of the final grade and the oral presentation counts 25 percent. You receive one overall grade. You must pass the term paper and the individual oral presentation in the same semester.

**Grading scale**

Grades are awarded on a scale from A to F, where A is the best grade and F is a fail. Read more about [the grading system](http://www.uio.no/english/studies/examinations/grading-system/).

Explanations and appeals

* [Explanation of grades and appeals](http://www.uio.no/english/studies/examinations/explanation-appeal/)

**Resit an examination**

If you are sick or have another valid reason for not attending the regular exam, we offer a [postponed exam](http://www.uio.no/english/studies/examinations/illness-postponed/) later in the same semester.

See also our information about [resitting an exam](http://www.uio.no/english/studies/examinations/new-exam/).

**Special examination arrangements**

Application form, deadline and requirements for [special examination arrangements](http://www.uio.no/english/studies/examinations/special-arrangements/).

**Evaluation**

The course is subject to continuous evaluation. At regular intervals we also ask students to participate in a more comprehensive evaluation.