

**POL 197 H1S: Solidarity in Diverse Societies
(First-Year Foundations Seminar)**

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Office Hours: Online by Appointment

(I will try to be as accommodating as possible)

Wednesdays, 2:00-4:00

Online

Liberal democracy is in crisis. A quarter-century following the triumph of liberal democracy over communism, the triumphalist conviction that liberal democracy has no competitors and that its spread is virtually inevitable has been replaced by cynicism and self-doubt. Liberal democratic politics is increasingly defined by polarization, and many observers fear that liberal democracies are in danger of becoming shadows of their former selves. These observers note that many liberal democracies are also finding it increasingly difficult to accommodate diversity. As a result, it has become unclear whether or not liberal democracies can even protect those commitments which they have traditionally held most sacred – the rule of law, free and fair elections, freedom of the press, and the like.

This course will explore how societies can cultivate solidarity in a manner that allows them to accommodate diversity and to preserve liberal democracy. We will first sharpen our understanding of what is at stake by refining our understanding of liberal democracy and by considering what is at stake in today's 'populist moment.' Next, we will consider various political theoretical attempts to cultivate civic unity in a manner that is consistent with liberal democracy and that is broadly inclusive, rather than in a manner that undermines liberal democracy and promotes ethnic, religious, and/or cultural homogeneity. Some of these approaches aim to promote solidarity by promoting a shared civic or national identity – the sense that we are all friends by virtue of being "fellow Canadians" or "fellow Americans." Other approaches instead focus on reinvigorating citizens' face-to-face relations; and others still, on cultivating dispositions and capacities of "political friendship" that can allow citizens to behave *as if* they were friends – even if they are strangers. Lastly, we will consider theories that reject the need for solidarity. Some of these theories deem solidarity redundant, arguing that liberal democracy and diversity are better served when individuals are allowed to interact freely, with minimal state interference. Others, in contrast, maintain that the promotion of solidarity and trust is counterproductive and that what matters is the expression of political antagonism *between* friends and enemies. This may or may not require societies to jettison their commitment to liberal rights and institutions and to abandon the pursuit of diversity.

This course is officially listed as a seminar. However, given the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, this course will take place completely online. So, even though I will do my best to encourage discussion, it might be difficult to capture the 'feel' of an in-person seminar. I ask for your patience as we figure out the best way forward. Suggestions are welcome.

Readings: All readings are available on **Library Course Reserves** in Quercus . If you wish to purchase these books, however, you can do so through online retailers (e.g., Amazon).

Readings Taken from the Following Books:

- Allen, Danielle, *Talking to Strangers* (978-0-226-01467-8)
 Habermas, Jürgen, *The Inclusion of the Other* (978-0-262-58186-8)
 Kaufmann, Eric, *Whiteshift* (978-1-4683-1697-1)
 Miller, David, *On Nationality* (978-0-19-829356-9)
 Murray, Charles, *What It Means to be a Libertarian* (0-7679-0039-1)
 Mouffe, Chantal, *For a Left Populism* (978-1-7866-3755-0)
 Mouffe, Chantal, *The Democratic Paradox* (978-1-84467-355-1)
 Mounk, Yascha, *The People vs. Democracy* (978-0-674-97682-5)
 Nozick, Robert, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (978-0-465-09720-3)
 Putnam, Robert, *Bowling Alone* (978-0-7432-0304-3)
 Schmitt, Carl, *The Concept of the Political* (978-0-226-73892)
 Schwarzenbach, Sibyl, *On Civic Friendship* (978-0-231-14723-1)
 Sunstein, Cass, *Can it Happen Here? Authoritarianism in America* (978-0-06-269619-9)
 Tocqueville, Alexis de, *Democracy in America* (978-0-06-112792-2)

External resources: I encourage you to dig deep into the texts and to independently develop fair interpretations of those texts, aided by the class discussions and reading questions– to *live* with the texts. I have tried to keep the reading load reasonable so that you can do this. If you would like to consult external resources, go to the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Do NOT consult Wikipedia except for biographical reasons. Some Wikipedia articles are good, but some are really not.

Grade Breakdown

- Paper 1 – 25%
 Paper 2 – 30%
 Paper 3 – 30%
 Weekly Reflection Requirement – 15%

Assignments:

You will write **three double-spaced essays, the first of which will be 4-5 pages and the second and third of which will be 5-7 pages**. These essays will be based on prompts that I will distribute two to three weeks prior to the essays' respective due dates. For each essay, you will (1) **email me one copy** and (2) **upload an additional copy to Turnitin.com**.

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to TurnItIn.com for review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the TurnItIn.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the TurnItIn.com service are described on the TurnItIn.com.

If you have a good reason for feeling uncomfortable with TurnItIn.com, please come talk to me, and we will work out an alternative means of verifying the originality of your work.

Lateness policy: 5% will be deducted for every day the paper is late, except in pre-approved cases or emergencies.

Plagiarism policy: Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and will be dealt with accordingly. For further clarification and information on plagiarism, please see Writing at the University of Toronto: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources> .

Paper Grading Guidelines:

Percentage	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	Grade Definition	
90-100	A+	4.0	Excellent	Strong evidence of original thinking; good organization; capacity to analyze and synthesize; superior grasp of subject matter with sound critical evaluations; evidence of extensive knowledge base.
85-89	A	4.0		
80-84	A-	3.7		
77-79	B+	3.3	Good	Evidence of grasp of subject matter, some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; evidence of familiarity with literature.
73-76	B	3.0		
70-72	B-	2.7		
67-69	C+	2.3	Adequate	Student who is profiting from his/her university experience; understanding of the subject matter; ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material.
63-66	C	2.0		
60-62	C-	1.7		
57-59	D+	1.3	Marginal	Some evidence of familiarity with subject matter and some evidence that critical and analytic skills have been developed.
53-56	D	1.0		
50-52	D-	0.7		
0-49	F	0.0	Inadequate	Little evidence of even superficial understanding of subject matter; weakness in critical and analytic skills; with limited or irrelevant use of literature.

Attendance/Weekly Reflection Requirement

Given online format, I will **not be taking attendance and factoring attendance into your grade.** You are, however, strongly encouraged to attend all our class sessions so that you do not fall behind.

Please post a short reflection piece (roughly 150-200 words) on any or all of the given week's readings on **Quercus** by **11:59 p.m. every Tuesday**. I realize that this is annoying, but it is a useful practice for focusing your reading, distilling your thoughts, and discovering what might have resonated with you (in the readings). You may skip this requirement for **two weeks** during the semester. I also encourage to read at least some of your classmates' posts, and **I will give extra credit to those of you who choose to respond to your classmates' posts more than periodically.** Failure to fulfill these requirements will adversely affect your grade.

SCHEDULE

Wednesday, January 13: Tom Ginsburg & Aziz Huq, “How We Lost Constitutional Democracy, from *Authoritarianism in America*, edited by Cass Sunstein (Pg. 135-156)

LIBERAL DEMOCRACY & THE “POPULIST MOMENT”

Wednesday, January 20: Yasha Mounk, *The People vs. Democracy* – Introduction, Ch. 1-3 (Pg. 1-131)

Wednesday, January 27: Chantal Mouffe, *For a Left Populism* – Ch. 1-2 (Pg. 9-38)
Eric Kaufmann, *Whiteshift* – Ch. 1 (Pg. 1-28) **PAPER 1 DISTRIBUTED**

POTENTIAL WAYS TO CULTIVATE SOLIDARITY

Wednesday, February 3: Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* – Introduction (Pg. 9-20); Volume 2, Part II, Ch. 1-8 (Pg. 503-528); Volume 2, Part IV, Ch. 6-7 (Pg. 690-702)
Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone* – Ch. 1 (Pg. 15-28)

Wednesday, February 10: Jürgen Habermas, *The Inclusion of the Other* – Ch. 4 (Pg. 106-127), Part of Ch. 8 (Pg. 222-226)
For context: Robert Strayer, “Communism and fascism,” from *The Cambridge World History Volume 7*, edited by J.R. McNeill and Kenneth Pomeranz (Pg. 442-464) [focus on fascism]

Wednesday, February 17: **READING WEEK** **PAPER 1 DUE**

Wednesday, February 24: David Miller, *On Nationality* – Ch. 2 (Pg. 17-47); Part of Ch. 3 (Pg. 65-80); Ch. 5 (Pg. 119-154) [Pg. 124-140 are recommended but not mandatory]

Wednesday, March 3: Sibyl Schwarzenbach, *On Civic Friendship* – Ch. 1 (Pg. 1-23); Ch. 2 (Pg. 27-58) [SKIM Pg. 27-40]; Parts of Ch. 3 (Pg. 59-82); Parts of Ch. 5 (Pg. 135-142, 164-175)
PAPER 2 DISTRIBUTED

Wednesday, March 10: Danielle Allen, *Talking to Strangers* – Prologue (Pg. xiii-xxii); Ch. 1-4 (Pg. 1-49); Ch. 9 (Pg. 119-139) [focus on Pg. 133 onwards]; Ch. 10 (Pg. 140-159)

OBJECTIONS TO SOLIDARITY

Wednesday, March 17: Charles Murray, *What it Means to be a Libertarian* – Part I (Pg. 1-44); Optional: Part II (Pg. 45-140)
Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* – Ch. 10 (Pg. 297-334) **PAPER 2 DUE**
PAPER 3 DISTRIBUTED

Wednesday, March 24: Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* (Pg. 19-79)

Wednesday, March 31: Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox* – Ch. 2 (Pg. 36-59); Ch. 4 (Pg. 80-107) [SKIM Pg. 80-93]
Review: Chantal Mouffe, *For a Left Populism* – Ch. 1-2 (Pg. 9-38)

Wednesday, April 7: **TBD** **PAPER 3 DUE**

READING QUESTIONS

Yasha Mounk – *The People vs. Democracy*

- What, according to Mounk, is ‘liberalism’? ‘Democracy’?
- What, according to Mounk, is ‘liberal democracy’? Why, according to Mounk, do we need both liberalism and democracy?
- What, historically speaking, lead to the emergence of ‘representative’ liberal democracy? How ‘democratic,’ according to Mounk, is liberal democracy? Why do many people now view traditional liberal democratic institutions as not truly democratic?
- What is ‘undemocratic liberalism’ (‘rights without democracy’)? What are some examples of undemocratic liberalism? For what reasons does Mounk find it problematic?
- What is ‘illiberal democracy’ (‘democracy without liberalism’)? What are some examples of illiberal democracy? For what reasons does Mounk find it problematic?
- How do young people, according to social science and polling, view democracy? Are you surprised?
- Do you see the trends Mounk describes reflected in Canada?

Chantal Mouffe – *For a Left Populism*

- What, according to Mouffe, is a ‘hegemonic formation’? What was the hegemonic formation in the decades following World War II? Since the 1970s?
- What, according to Mouffe, are the characteristics of centrism?
- What is the primary division or ‘frontier’ in Western politics today?
- Are all forms of populism, for Mouffe, equal?

Eric Kaufmann – *Whiteshift*

- Mouffe provides an economic account of the rise of populism. How about Kaufmann?
- What is the difference, according to Kaufmann, between ethnicity and nationality? Why is the distinction blurred for some whites?
- What is ‘whiteshift’? What are its causes?
- What are the four potential white responses to rising diversity?
- What is Kaufmann’s proposed solution to the predicament at hand?

Alexis de Tocqueville – *Democracy in America*

- “No novelty in the United States has stuck me more vividly during my stay there than the Equality of Conditions (9).” What does Tocqueville mean?
- What are the characteristics of the “Age of Aristocracy” and of the “Age of Democracy”? What, according to Tocqueville, are the positive and negative attributes of each?
- What are the differences between egoism and individualism? Why is individualism, according to Tocqueville, a specifically democratic phenomenon?
- What is “soft despotism”/“democratic despotism”?
- How does Tocqueville propose to “relink” people in the democratic age?

Robert Putnam – *Bowling Alone*

- What is “social capital”?
- How is social capital useful?
- What is the difference between “bridging” and “bonding”?

Robert Strayer – “Communism and fascism”

- What is fascism – its presuppositions, strategies/tools, and political goals?
- What is special about German fascism?

Jürgen Habermas – *The Inclusion of the Other*

- What is the difference between “the nation” and “the state”?
- What, according to Habermas, must a plausible conception of solidarity (“social integration”) overcome?
- Why does Habermas reject nationalism?
- What is “constitutional patriotism”? What is it developed on top of? How do citizens, under constitutional patriotism, come to share in solidarity? Are constitutional patriotism and cosmopolitanism the same things? How is constitutional patriotism “post-national”?

David Miller – *On Nationality*

- What is the difference between nationality and ethnicity?
- How are nations, according to Miller, imagined/mythical? Does that imagined quality, for Miller, make nationality a problem?
- What makes a given national identity legitimate? Illegitimate?
- How does Miller think nationalities can evolve into conformity with liberal democracy and become inclusive?
- In what way are groups defined by “mutual responsibility”?
- How are nations different than other groups from a normative standpoint?

Sibyl Schwarzenbach – *On Civic Friendship*

- How does Aristotle’s conception of “friendship” (roughly speaking) differ from our contemporary understanding of friendship?
- What, according to Schwarzenbach, is “productive” labour and property? What is the “public acquisitive” conception of the self?
- How does productive labour differ from “ethical reproductive labour”? Who exemplifies such activity?
- What, according to Schwarzenbach, is the danger of a state that does not realize the importance of ethical reproduction?
- What does a state that recognizes the importance of ethical reproduction look like? What sorts of citizens are required to support such a state?

Danielle Allen – *Talking to Strangers*

- What is the (concrete) motivating social and political problem that Allen tries to address through her discussion of political friendship?
- What are the two “myths” of American society? How have they been disproven?
- What does Allen mean when she says that we must “preserve the allegiance of all citizens, including electoral minorities, despite majority rule (xix)”?
- What is the “preeminent democratic ritual,” and how can it redress the above problem?
- How might political friendship motivate citizens to practice that preeminent democratic ritual?
- What is the difference between *pleonexia* (rivalrous self-interest) and equity?
- How is political friendship different, according to Allen, from other forms of friendship?
- What are some of the practices of political friendship discussed by Allen?

Charles Murray – *What it Means to be a Libertarian*

- What is the preeminent value of libertarianism? How does libertarianism, according to Murray understand that value?
- What libertarianism’s vision of the ideal state – its size and functions?

Robert Nozick – *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*

- What is the ideal libertarian society, according to Nozick? How does it serve to actualize libertarian values?

Carl Schmitt – *The Concept of the Political*

- What, according to Schmitt, is the relationship between “the state” and “the political”?
- How does Schmitt define “the state”? “The political”?
- What, according to Schmitt, is the distinction between friends and enemies? How does it differ from other sorts of antagonisms?
- How can the friend-enemy distinction be expressed? How, by implication, must a state maintain security and stability?
- What, according to Schmitt, is the problem with liberalism? With the League of Nations?

Chantal Mouffe – *The Democratic Paradox*

- Why does Schmitt, according to Mouffe, believe that democracy demands homogeneity?
- Why, according to Schmitt, is democracy incompatible with liberalism and pluralism?
- What does Schmitt, according to Mouffe, get wrong about political identity? How, according to Mouffe, is political identity actually determined?
- What, according to Mouffe, is hegemony?
- Why does Mouffe believe that her model of “agonistic democracy” can both satisfy the need to express political antagonism (between friends and enemies) *and* enable pluralism to persist within a political society?