

Power to the People?
Citizenship & Society in the United States
First-Year Seminar - Fall 2022

“It is a dignified proposition with us—is it not?—that as is the majority, so ought the government to be.”
-Woodrow Wilson, “Leaders of Men,” June 17, 1890

<p>Johns Hopkins University: AS.001.151 Tuesdays/Thursdays, 10:30-11:45 Mergenthaler 266</p> <p>Prof. Andrew J. Perrin Phone: 410-516-2006 / 410-516-2370 Email: aperrin@jhu.edu Offices: 556 Mergenthaler; N302 Wyman Park Office Hours: Wednesdays, 10:00-11:30, 556 Mergenthaler, or by appointment</p>	<p>Williams College: Political Science 118 Tuesdays/Thursdays, 9:55-11:10</p> <p>Prof. Nicole Mellow Phone: x3730 Email: nmellow@williams.edu Office: SAB 235 Office Hours: By appointment</p>
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Popular sovereignty — the idea that the people rule themselves — has been heralded as one of the preeminent innovations of the modern world. And over the course of the last two hundred or so years, a rising tide of nations committed themselves to the principles of popular sovereignty. Yet in recent years, the inevitability, soundness, and very viability of “rule by the people” has come into question. On the one hand, popular uprisings around the globe have rejected the decisions and practices of governing elites on the grounds that they are out of touch with the people’s needs. On the other hand, these uprisings have resurrected and strengthened authoritarian practices and have facilitated the erosion of liberal rights long considered instrumental to preserving democracy. The result — turmoil, unrest, and uncertainty about what the future holds — is evident from Venezuela to England, Turkey to the United States. Can popular sovereignty survive? In what form will the people rule, and at what cost?

This class is an investigation into the idea and practice of popular sovereignty in the contemporary United States. We will explore this topic by actively consulting theory and empirical research in the social sciences. We will supplement this with our own research on the 2022 election, including media coverage of issues, popular attitudes about democracy, and popular representation in government and by interest/advocacy groups and social movements. In other words, this class is part discussion seminar and large part hands-on active research.

Additionally, this class is organized as a collaboration between two first-year courses: one at Johns Hopkins University, the other at Williams College. Over the course of the semester, the two classes will meet frequently via videoconference to share research and discuss readings and ideas. This is intended to broaden the perspectives brought to bear on our investigation generally and, specifically, to allow each class to share real time research on the politics of the region in which their respective institutions are located. It is also intended as an exercise in the challenges and opportunities of collaborating across difference (in this case, geographic and institutional), of the sort that democratic community can require

— to borrow from political theorist and former political candidate, Danielle Allen, it is an exercise in the challenge and opportunity of “talking to strangers.”

One aim of this course is to introduce you to the concept of popular sovereignty in theory and practice. Another aim is to help you develop research skills and inclinations. This will help you if you pursue additional coursework, a major, or even a thesis in the social sciences. More than that, though, our aim is to encourage you, many of whom are just beginning your lives as rights- and responsibility-bearing participatory citizens, to think innovatively and creatively about the tasks, rights, and responsibilities of popular sovereignty. Our hope is to model forms of open-minded exploration, civil discussion, and creative investigation that we believe are necessary for citizens to rejuvenate popular governance in this moment.

Course Materials:

No books are required for the class. All materials will be made available electronically.

<p>Johns Hopkins University:</p> <p>We will be sharing a course site with our Williams colleagues on Glow: http://glow.williams.edu . You will be assigned an account on Glow for your use. Links will be provided from this course’s Canvas site (https://canvas.jhu.edu) for convenience.</p> <p>In order to view some of the hyperlinked publications, you will need to be on the Johns Hopkins campus or use the library’s proxy service (https://ask.library.jhu.edu/faq/44635).</p>	<p>Williams College:</p> <p>We will rely heavily on Glow to facilitate our class engagements with each other. The syllabus (with hyperlinks to readings) and all assignments will be posted there. All group projects and individual papers should be uploaded to Glow as well.</p> <p>In order to view some of the hyperlinked publications, you may need to sign in with your Williams log-in (search for Williams under the “search for your institution” prompt and then enter your student identification).</p>
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Course Requirements:

All readings should be completed by the day for which they are assigned. Because of the daily unfolding of pertinent political events, we reserve the right to realign the syllabus (change readings). However, we will always do this at least a week in advance and will seek to keep the reading amount the same. Also, please note that there is considerable variation in the reading load for any given day and/or week. Some weeks we will be reading quite a lot. In others, there will be much less as we will be focused on other types of research and writing tasks. It is your job to plan your work accordingly. In addition, mindful of the potential challenges of this semester as the result of the still ongoing pandemic, we have chosen to make the overall reading load somewhat lighter than we would have otherwise. We have done this with the expectation that you will read carefully and closely what we do assign. We are happy to recommend supplemental reading if you wish to investigate a topic in even greater depth.

Readings listed as “recommended” are not required — we list them to provide additional information, ideas, or directions if you are particularly interested in that week’s areas.

<p>Johns Hopkins University:</p> <p>You are required to follow all COVID-19 related policies as documented at https://covidinfo.jhu.edu/. This requirement is to protect our educational community — your classmates and me – as we learn together. On days when the weather is suitable, we may meet outside in the Keyser Quad. I will notify you by email no later than 10:00 am if we will be meeting outside.</p>	<p>Williams College:</p> <p>You are required to follow all Williams College COVID-19 related policies. This requirement is to protect our educational community — your classmates and me — as we learn together.</p>
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Grading:

Active Class Participation (15%): One of your primary responsibilities for this class is active participation. This means that you come to class having completed the reading and any other assignments and that you actively engage in discussion and other activities with thoughtful and intelligent input.

Three essays (15% for essays 1 and 2; 25% for final essay): Essays will be assigned in class and due approximately two weeks later. These 4-page essays should be turned in via the Glow website. They are due no later than 5:00 pm on the due date.

Essay 1: Visions of Democracy (due Friday, October 7)

Essay 2: The People (due Friday, November 11)

Essay 3 (final essay): Governing (due Friday, December 9)

Three group presentations (10% each):

Presentation 1: Visions of Democracy

Presentation 2: The Constituted People

Presentation 3: Election Observation

<p>Johns Hopkins:</p> <p>Completing these requirements fully and adequately will earn you a B in the course. Completing them exceptionally well will earn you a B+, A-, or A, depending on the quality of work. Not completing them, or completing them less than adequately, will earn you a B- or below.</p>	<p>Williams:</p> <p>Completing these requirements fully and adequately will earn you a B in the course. Completing them exceptionally well will earn you a B+, A-, or A, depending on the quality of work. Not completing them, or completing them less than adequately, will earn you a B- or below.</p>
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<p>Your participation in this course is covered by the Homewood Undergraduate Academic Ethics Policy (https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/policies-guidelines/undergrad-ethics/). I take academic dishonesty—including, but not limited to, plagiarism—very seriously. There will be no excuses or second chances; if you have plagiarized the ideas or words of someone else without giving credit, or if you have cheated in other ways, you will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. If you have questions as to what constitutes academic dishonesty, check https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/policies-guidelines/undergrad-ethics/ or see me.</p>	<p>Your participation in this course is covered by the Williams Honor Code. I take academic dishonesty—including, but not limited to, plagiarism—very seriously. There will be no excuses or second chances; if you have plagiarized the ideas or words of someone else without giving credit, or if you have cheated in other ways, you will be referred to the Honor and Discipline Committee. If you have questions as to what constitutes academic dishonesty, check here and/or see me.</p> <p>Additionally, I encourage you to take advantage of the writing center and all other campus resources available to you.</p>
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Course Schedule:

UNIT 1: Visions of Democracy

Why is democracy challenging? What do different people and different groups living together in a democracy think it should entail? What do these differences mean for how they engage each other? How much power is invested in the people themselves as opposed to some sort of elite or representative?

<p>Johns Hopkins:</p> <p><i>August 30:</i> Introductions, welcome, course terms and expectations</p> <p><i>September 1:</i> Difficult Dialogues: How to talk about hard subjects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Andrew Perrin. "How to Argue Online." IAH Blog, August 12, 2019. ● "A Letter on Justice and Open Debate." <i>Harpers</i> July 7, 2020. ● "A More Specific Letter on Justice and Open Debate." <i>The Objective</i> July 10, 2020. https://objectivejournalism.org/2020/07/a-more-specific-letter-on-justice-and-open-debate/ <p><i>September 6:</i> Democracy in Culture.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Melvin Rogers, "Democracy Is a Habit: Practice It." <i>Boston Review</i> July 25, 2018 ● Danielle Allen, ch. 2 of <i>Talking to Strangers</i> (GLOW) 	<p>Williams:</p> <p><i>September 8:</i> Introductions, welcome, course expectations.</p>
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September 8: Prepare for introducing JHU to Williams	
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September 13: Combined Class; First Presentation Assignment distributed

- Tocqueville, “On the Principle of Popular Sovereignty in America.” Volume 1, Part 1, Chapter 4 in *Democracy in America*. (GLOW)
- Sam Adler-Bell. “[Is the January 6 Committee Really Saving Democracy?](#)” *New York Magazine* July 11, 2022.
- Watch: [Remarks of Rep. Jamie Raskin](#), D-MD, House Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the United States Capitol, July 12, 2022, PBS NewsHour

Presentation 1 Group Topics Assigned:

1. Alexander Hamilton. [Federalist 1](#)
2. James Madison or Alexander Hamilton. [Federalist 55](#)
3. [The Sharon Statement](#)
4. [Port Huron Statement](#)
5. Black Lives Matter [Statement of Purpose](#)
6. Tea Party Patriots [Mission Statement](#)

September 15: Single-class discussions: competing origins of American democracy

- [Declaration of Independence](#).
- Thomas Jefferson. [Deleted antislavery passage from a draft of the Declaration of Independence](#).
- Frederick Douglass, “[What to the Slave is the 4th of July?](#)” July 5th, 1882
- [Federalist 10](#), [Federalist 51](#)
- W. E. B. du Bois. “[Reconstruction and its Benefits](#),” *American Historical Review* 15:4 (July, 1910).

September 20: Combined discussion: Contemporary reflections on origins

- David Bernstein. “[Teach ‘1619’ and ‘1776’ U.S. History](#).” *Wall Street Journal* April 10, 2022.
- Danielle Allen. “[The Declaration’s dual traditions: Broad equality, and equality for whites](#).” *Washington Post*, July 2, 2015.

September 22: Single-class discussion: Americans’ Self-Identity and the current moment

- Tocqueville, “On the Philosophical Method of the Americans.” Volume 2, Part I, Chapter 1, *Democracy in America*. (GLOW)
- Tom Nichols, “[The Death of Expertise](#),” *The Federalist*, January 17, 2014.
- Samuel Huntington, “[One Nation Out of Many: Why ‘Americanization’ of Newcomers is Still Important](#),” *American Enterprise Institute*, 2004
- Cottom, Tressie McMillan. “[Race is Always the Issue](#).” *The Atlantic* September 17, 2015
- Jennifer Carlson and Elliot Ramo. “[‘I’m Not a Conspiracy Theorist, But...’: Knowledge and Conservative Politics in Unsettled Times](#),” *Social Forces* 2022.

September 27: Visions of Democracy: Group Presentations

September 29: Visions of Democracy: Group Presentations

UNIT 2: The Public

What is a “public?” Of what is it constituted? Where does it come from, and what evokes it? How is it different from a group? Or a majority? Or a consensus? What strengthens, or provides cohesion, to the public? What strains, or rends, it?

October 4: Combined discussion: Publics and Representation.

- Edmund S. Morgan. *Inventing the People: The Rise of Popular Sovereignty in England and America*. New York: WW Norton, pp. 13-15, 55-77, 263-287. **(GLOW)**
- Andrew J. Perrin and Katherine McFarland. “[The Sociology of Political Representation and Deliberation](#),” *Sociology Compass* 2008.

Presentation Group Topics - Comparative Constitutions

1. Comparative Constitutions: Who are the People?
2. Comparative Constitutions: Civic Responsibility?
3. Comparative Constitutions: Preparation for Citizenship?
4. Comparative Constitutions: Rights and Protections?
5. Comparative Constitutions: How are the People Represented?
6. Comparative Constitutions: Consent or Authorship?

Readings:

- Constitution of the [United States](#).
- [Massachusetts](#) Constitution.
- [Maryland](#) Constitution.
- [North Carolina](#) State Constitution.
- Constitution of the Republic of [South Africa](#).
- Philippe-Joseph Salazar. “[Compromise and Deliberation: A Rhetorical View of South Africa’s Democratic Transformation](#).” *Social Science Information* 43:2 (2004).

October 6: Single-class discussions: What is Required to be “a People?”

- Sarah Song, “[What Does it Mean to be an American?](#)” *Daedalus* Spring 2009
- Douglas Ahler and Gaurav Sood, “[The Parties in Our Heads: Misperceptions about Party Composition and Their Consequences](#),” *Journal of Politics* (July 2018) 80:3

<p>Johns Hopkins:</p> <p>October 11: Focused discussion: gerrymandering and districting in Maryland and North Carolina</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Princeton Gerrymandering Project, https://gerrymander.princeton.edu/● Andrew Reynolds, “North Carolina is No Longer Classified as a Democracy.”	<p>Williams:</p> <p>October 11: Fall Break</p>
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<p>https://www.newsobserver.com/opinion/op-ed/article122593759.html</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Susan Myrick, “Nonpartisan Redistricting is Just a Fantasy.” https://www.nccivitas.org/2017/nonpartisan-redistricting-just-fantasy/ ● Andrew Perrin, “Learning from gerrymandering.” AP News, February 1, 2018. https://apnews.com/article/0d1b79c60b7d46ca80026f1f004e43cf ● Peter Miller. “Maryland’s Extreme Gerrymander.” Brennan Center for Justice, March 7, 2019. https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/marylands-extreme-gerrymander 	
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October 13: Combined discussions: The People Divided. election observation assignment distributed

- Steven Webster, Elizabeth Connors, and Betsy Sinclair, “[The Social Consequences of Political Anger](#),” *Journal of Politics*, 84:3 (July 2022)
- Oliver Hahl, Minjae Kim, and Ezra Zuckerman Savan, “[The Authentic Appeal of the Lying Demagogue](#),” *American Sociological Review*, 88:1 (2018)
- Sarah Sobieraj and Jeffrey M. Berry. “[From Incivility to Outrage: Political Discourse in Blogs, Talk Radio, and Cable News](#).” *Political Communication* 28:1 (2011): 19-41
- *Recommended*: Christopher Achen and Larry Bartels, “[Democratic Ideals and Realities](#).” *Democracy for Realists* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), ch 1.

October 18: Single-class discussions: Consequences of the Divided People

- Lee Drutman. “[How Much Longer Can this Era of Political Gridlock Last?](#)” *fivethirtyeight.com*. March 4, 2021.
- Robert Draper. “[The Arizona Republican Party’s Anti-Democracy Experiment](#).” *New York Times Magazine*, August 15, 2022.
- Katherine Epstein. “[Trump’s Supporters and Detractors Are Mirror Images](#).” *Wall Street Journal* Aug. 21, 2022

<p>Johns Hopkins: October 20: Fall Break</p>	<p>Williams: October 20: Narratives of Democracy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Doug Bock Clark, Alexandra Berzon, and Kirsten Berg, “Building the “Big Lie:” Inside the Creation of Trump’s Stolen Election Myth,” <i>Propublica</i>, April 26, 2022 ● Russell Muirhead and Nancy Rosenblum, “Conspiracy and the Undoing of Democracy, 2021,” <i>theconstitutionalist.org</i>, 4/14/2021
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October 25: The Constituted People: Group Presentations

October 27: The Constituted People: Group Presentations

November 1: Combined discussion: Understanding January 6th—Breakdown of the People

- Richard Hofstadter, "[The Pseudo-Conservative Revolt](#)," *The American Scholar*, Winter 1954-55
- Blake Hounshell and Leah Askarinam, "[How Many Americans Support Political Violence?](#)" *New York Times*, January 5, 2022
- KK Otteson interview with Barbara Walter, "'[They are preparing for war.](#)' an expert on civil wars discusses where political extremists are taking the country," *Washington Post*, March 8, 2022
- Musa al-Gharbi. "[No, America is not on the brink of a civil war.](#)" *The Guardian* January 27, 2022.
- Additional reading to be determined
- *Recommended:* "[Far Right Violence and the American Midterm Election](#)" ACLED report, May 3, 2022

November 3: Combined discussion: Loss and sublimation

- Jan Werner Muller, "[Democracy for Losers](#)," *Boston Review*, Aug 6, 2020
- Paul Cantor, "[The Case for Barbarism](#)," *Claremont Review of Books*, Nov 2018
- Russ Muirhead and Jeff Tulis, "[Will the Election of 2020 be the End or a New Beginning?](#)" *Polity*, Summer 2020
- TBD: Andrew Perrin and/or Christian Lundberg on sublimation and loss

November 8: ELECTION DAY - Students observe voters and elections

November 10: Election roundup/discussion

November 15: Election Observations: Group presentations

November 17: Election Observations: Group presentations

UNIT 3. Rule/Sovereignty

How does a public translate its will into action? What does it mean to be "sovereign?" What degree of involvement should a democratic public have in decision-making for the polity? What are the mechanisms for "ruling," and where are they currently working well or, conversely, breaking down in the U.S.?

November 22: Combined class: What Is a Constitution, What Does it Do, What Should it Do?

Readings:

- "[The Democracy Constitution](#)," a symposium in *Democracy*, 61 Summer 2021
- Gary Jacobsohn, "[Rights and American Constitutional Identity](#)" *Polity*, October 2011

- Anne Norton, "[Transubstantiation: The Dialectic of Constitutional Authority](#)," *The University of Chicago Law Review* 55:2 (Spring 1988))

November 24: Thanksgiving Break

November 29: Single Class Discussion: Institutions/Mechanisms of Governance — Representation

- Benjamin Page and Martin Gilens, "[Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens](#)," *Perspectives on Politics* (Fall 2014);
- Hajnal, Zoltan, Nazita Lajevardi, and Lindsay Nielson. "[Voter Identification Laws and the Suppression of Minority Votes](#)." *The Journal of Politics* 79, no. 2 (2017): 363-79
- Jane Mayer, "[State Legislatures are Torching Democracy](#)," *New Yorker*, August 6, 2022
- "[NC Supreme Court rules against gerrymandered legislature](#)," *The Hill* August 19, 2022.
- *Recommended:* Michael Barber and John Holbein, "[400 million voting records show profound racial and geographic disparities in voter turnout in the United States](#)," *PLoS ONE*, 17:6 (June 2022)

December 1: Single Class Discussion: Institutions/Mechanisms of Governance — Majoritarian Rule and Antimajoritarian/Minority Protections

- Sarah Binder, "[The Dysfunctional Congress](#)," *Annual Review of Political Science*, 2015.
- Ezra Klein (on Frances Lee's *Insecure Majorities* argument), "[The political scientist Donald Trump should read](#)," *Vox*, January 24, 2019.
- Stephanie DeGooyer and Alastair Hunt. "[The Right to Have Rights](#)." *Public Books* 2018.
- [Ezra Klein interviews Larry Kramer](#), *New York Times*, Jul 5, 2022
- Aziz Huq, "[The Supreme Court and the Dynamics of Democratic Backsliding](#)," *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 699:1, 2022.
- *Recommended:* Norman J. Ornstein. "[The Republicans Broke Congress. Democrats Can Fix It](#)." *The New Republic* November 9, 2018.

December 6: Combined class discussion: Constitutional design project

December 6 or 7 evening: Combined discussion: Present and discuss constitution

December 8: Combined class: combining and evaluating our constitution