

**Direct Democracy: Theory and Practice
POS 6279 (Section 1H45)**

Fall 2014

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Time: Monday, 11:45am-2:15
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Course Description

This graduate seminar is intended to provide students with a scholarly and practical overview of direct democracy, focusing specifically on the *theory* and *practice* of the process in the American states. It is our goal not only to critically assess whether direct democracy promotes democratic norms as well as “good” public policy, but also to investigate both the policies that are adopted as well as the “educative effects” and “spillover effects” of the process itself. Some of the central questions we will address include: What are the origins and historical development of direct democracy in the American states? How are ballot measures placed on the ballot, by whom, and for what reasons? How do systems of direct democracy differ across the states? What is the legality of the direct democracy process? What is the role of money and the media in direct democracy contests? What information is available to voters on ballot questions and can they use it to make rational decisions? Do ballot measures foster or discourage participation in the electoral process? What are the direct and indirect effects of the initiative process in the making of public policy? Are minority rights at all jeopardized by direct democracy’s majoritarian nature? What are the “educative effects” of direct democracy, and do ballot measures have spillover effects on candidate elections? And perhaps most significantly, does direct democracy complement or undermine our system of representative democracy? These are not easy questions to answer, as the study of direct democracy is anything but settled.

Course Requirements

This course draws a mix of political science Ph.D. and M.A. students, as well as students from other disciplines. The professional expectations and goals of these sub-populations may at times vary, but I will do my best to ensure that this seminar caters to your professional interests.

Participation

Your weekly attendance is required. If you think you may have to miss more than one class during the semester, it is advised that you drop this course immediately. If for some unforeseen reason you are unable to attend class, it is imperative that you contact me ASAP. All students are expected to participate in class discussions, which means not only showing up for class, but being fully prepared to critically discuss the required readings. Participation is worth 20% of your final grade, and it includes not only your contributions in class discussions, but also your presentation of your research/campaign plan and your role as a discussant (see below). Do not assume that by merely showing up for class you will earn full participation credit.

Book Discussion Leader

Students are required to lead one class discussion on a book related to the required readings. This responsibility is worth 10% of your final grade. For the presentation, students must provide a handout in class to fellow students. The handout should provide a brief summary of the book, including: 1) the research question being addressed; 2) the theories or hypotheses being tested; 3) a summary of the data used or the logic of the argument; 4) the empirical findings

Thought Pieces

Ph.D. students are required to write two response papers, and M.A. students are required to write three response papers, or what I like to call “thought pieces.” Rather than summarizing, you are to react to the assigned material, critically analyzing the theses, themes, and assumptions of the readings and evaluating the appropriateness of the research designs or methods. When analytically questioning, comparing, and criticizing the texts, students should relate and interpose the arguments and empirical findings of the readings to previous readings or current political events. You should only briefly summarize the

arguments of the readings. Each thought piece is to be roughly 1,000 words. They may be written in the first person. There is no need to provide a reference page unless you cite material not listed in the syllabus. When quoting from or citing the assigned articles, just refer to them by the author's name, date, and page numbers in the body of the text (e.g., Smith 1998: 45-6).

You will sign up for your two thought pieces during our first session. Your thought pieces must be emailed to me by *noon* on the Sunday prior to our Monday morning class as a Microsoft Word attachment. Turning your assignments in early allows me to consider your thoughts, which in turn, helps to give me an idea of how to structure our discussions. ***I do not accept late thought pieces.*** Each essay is worth 10% of your final grade (20% total). I expect students who turn in thought pieces to be especially ready and willing participants during class.

Research Paper/Campaign Plan

Ph.D. students and M.A. students have different final assignments.

Ph.D. students will write an original research paper (18-25 pages) on an aspect of direct democracy or a 20-25 page research proposal/prospectus on your dissertation topic (for those thinking of writing dissertations on direct democracy). A two-page research prospectus is due in class on September 15, 2014. Students are expected to meet with me individually prior to class to discuss their research proposals. The prospectus must state your research question, your tentative argument and hypotheses, and the data and research methods you plan to use. You might also mention any foreseeable limitations to your research. Two weeks later students must submit to me a detailed outline of their research paper, a summary of the data being used, and a bibliography of sources used for the theoretical section of the paper. On December 8, Ph.D. students will present their research in class (approximately 10-15 minutes for each paper). The final research paper is due on December 15, at 5pm; I need both a hard copy and an emailed MS Word attachment. It is possible that I might be interested in collaborating on one of my ongoing research projects. I have lots of data (aggregate-level, survey, and campaign finance), and I also have collected many archival materials that I will share with enterprising students who are interested in co-authoring a paper with me.

M.A. students will work in teams of two or three students and will write a 30-40 page campaign plan in support or against one of the two initiatives on the 2014 General Election ballot in Florida. More details provided in class about the initiative campaigns. On September 15, students must submit to me an outline of their campaign plan, including the overarching strategy, likely political environment, theme and message (including sample direct mail, etc.), demographics and targeting, fundraising, schedule and calendar, GOTV, polling and opposition research, voter contact, and a preliminary budget. Students are expected to interview the actual campaign staff working for and against Amendment 1 and Amendment 2, analyze ads and direct mail, dig through the campaign finance filings of the groups sponsoring and opposing the measures, analyze exit polls, and investigate past ballot initiative campaigns in Florida in preparing their plans. On December 8, the groups will present their plans (approximately 10-15 minutes for each group). The final campaign plans are due on Monday, December 15, at 5pm; I need both a hard copy and an emailed MS Word attachment.

UF Honor Code

All students are expected to abide by the [UF Honor Code](#), which reads, in part: "I affirm that this work in its entirety is mine alone, and that I have received no outside assistance from anyone else, including classmates, other students, or faculty. I understand that plagiarism, seeking or receiving other unauthorized assistance, or any false representations regarding this exam [or other work] are serious offenses punishable under the Student Honor Code."

Ph.D. Grading

Class Participation	20%
2 Thought Pieces	20% (10% each)
Book Discussion Leader	10%
Research Paper/Campaign Plan	50%

MA Grading

Class Participation	20%
3 Thought Pieces	30% (10% each)
Book Discussion Leader	10%
Research Paper/Campaign Plan	40%

The following cutoffs will be used for grades:

A	90-100
A-	88-89
B+	86-87
B	80-85
B-	78-79
C+	76-77
C	70-75
C-	68-69
D+	66-67
D	60-65
D-	58-59
E	57 & below

Grade Values for GPA Conversion

Letter Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
Grade Points	4.0	3.67	3.33	3.0	2.67	2.33	2.0	1.67	1.33	1.0	.67	0

For more information about UF's Grades and Grade Policies:

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

Only in the rarest of all circumstances will I grant an Incomplete ('I').

Required Text

The following book is required: David Magleby, *Direct Legislation* (1984)

Course Schedule

Week 1: What We Know and Don't Know about Direct Democracy

August 25:

- Cronin, "[The Paradoxes and Politics of Citizen Initiatives](#)" (1998)
- Smith & Tolbert, "[The Instrumental and Educative Effects of Ballot Measures](#)" (2007)
- Lupia & Matsusaka, "[Direct Democracy: New Approaches to Old Questions](#)" (2004)
- Maduz, "[Direct Democracy](#)" (2010)
- Magleby, *Direct Legislation* (1984), chapter 1

Sign-Up for Thought Pieces and Discussion Leaders

Week 2: NO CLASS—Labor Day

September 1

Week 3: History of Direct Democracy in the American States

September 8

Readings:

- Magleby, *Direct Legislation* (1984), chapter 2
- Piott, *Giving Voters a Voice* (2003), chapter 1
- Goebel, *A Government by the People* (2002), chapters 1-2
- Smith & Lubinski, "[Direct Democracy during the Progressive Era](#)" (2002)
- Kerber, "[The Initiative and Referendum in Florida, 1911-1912](#)" (1994)
- Smith & Fridkin, "[The Adoption of Direct Democracy in the American States](#)" (2008)

Book Discussant Leader: Thomas Goebel, *A Government by the People* (2002)
Stephen Piott, *Giving Voters a Voice* (2003)

Week 4: Ballot Measure Law, Use, & Reforms

September 15

Readings:

- Magleby, *Direct Legislation* (1984), chapter 3
- Smith, "Direct Democracy: Regulating the 'Will of the People'" (2012)
- Donovan, "[Direct Democracy as 'Super-Precedent'](#)" (2007)
- Florida Senate, "[Options for Authorizing Citizens to Propose or Adopt Statutes](#)" (2007)
- Donovan & Smith, "[Identifying and Preventing Signature Fraud on Ballot Measure Petitions](#)" (2008)

M.A. Campaign Plan & Ph.D. Research Paper Prospectus Due in Class

Book Discussant Leader: Kenneth P. Miller, *Direct Democracy and the Courts* (2009)

Week 5: Qualifying and Financing Ballot Measures

September 22

Readings:

- Magleby, *Direct Legislation* (1984), chapter 4
- Magleby & Patterson, "[Consultants and Direct Democracy](#)" (1998)
- Garrett & Smith, "[Veiled Political Actors](#)" (2005)
- Smith, Campaign Financing of Ballot Initiatives in the "[US States](#)" (2009)
- Strattman, "[Is Spending more Potent For or Against an Initiative](#)" (2006)
- De Figueiredo, Ji, & Kousser, "Financing direct democracy: revisiting the research on campaign spending and citizen initiatives" (2011)
- Burnett, "[Does campaign spending help voters learn about ballot measures?](#)" (2014)

Book Discussant Leader: [Elisabeth Gerber, *Populist Paradox* \(1999\)](#)

Week 6: Public Attitudes toward Direct Democracy

September 29

Readings:

- Magleby, *Direct Legislation* (1984), chapters 5 & 6
- Bowler & Donovan, "[Democracy, Institutions & Attitudes about Citizen Influence on Gov't](#)" (2002)
- Dyck & Baldassare, "[Process Preferences and Voting in Direct Democratic Elections](#)" (2009)
- Cronin, "[Public Opinion and Direct Democracy](#)" (1988)
- Dalton, Burklin, & Drummond, "[Public Opinion and Direct Democracy](#)" (2001)
- Bowler, Donovan, & Karp, "[Enraged or Engaged? Preferences for Direct Citizen Participation in Affluent Democracies](#)" (2007)

Book Discussant Leader: [Lydia Chávez, *The Color Bind California's Battle to End Affirmative Action* \(1998\)](#)

Book Discussant Leader: [Daniel A. Smith, *Tax Crusaders and the Politics of Direct Democracy* \(1998\)](#)

Week 7: Voting on Ballot Measures

October 6

Readings:

- Magleby, *Direct Legislation* (1984), chapters 7 & 8
- Bowler & Donovan, *Demanding Choices* (1998) ([chapter 1](#))
- Lupia, "[Shortcuts versus Encyclopedias](#)" (1994)
- Branton, "[Examining Individual-Level Voting Behavior on State Ballot Propositions](#)" (2003)
- Bowler, Donovan, & Happ, "[Ballot Propositions and Information Costs](#)" (1992)
- Nicholson, "[The Political Environment and Ballot Proposition Awareness](#)" (2003)
- Abrajano, "[Are Blacks and Latinos Responsible for the Passage of Proposition 8? Analyzing Voter Attitudes on California's Proposal to Ban Same-Sex Marriage in 2008](#)" (2010)

Book Discussant Leader: [Shaun Bowler & Todd Donovan, *Demanding Choices: Opinion, Voting, and Direct Democracy* \(1998\)](#)

Week 8: The Impact of Direct Democracy on Minorities

October 13

Readings:

- Gamble, "[Putting Civil Rights to a Popular Vote](#)" (1997)
- Frey & Goette, "[Does the Popular Vote Destroy Civil Rights?](#)" (1998)
- Donovan & Bowler, "[Direct Democracy and Minority Rights](#)" (1998)
- Tolbert & Grummel, "[Revisiting the Racial Threat Hypothesis](#)" (2003)
- Tolbert & Hero, "[Race/Ethnicity and Direct Democracy](#)" (1996)

- Moore & Ravishankar, "[Who Loses in Direct Democracy?](#)" (2011)
Haider-Markel, Querze, & Lindaman, "[Lose, Win, or Draw? A Reexamination of Direct Democracy and Minority Rights](#)" (2007)
Hajnal, Gerber & Louch, "[Minorities and Direct Legislation](#)" (2002)
Bowler, Segura & Nicholson, "[Earthquakes and Aftershocks](#)" (2006)

Book Discussant Leader: Daniel Lewis, *Direct Democracy and Minority Rights: A Critical Assessment of the Tyranny of the Majority in the American States* (2012)

Week 9: Direct Democracy, Representation, and Legislative Responsiveness

October 20

Readings:

- Matsusaka, *For the Many or the Few* (2004), chapter 1
Bowler & Donovan, "[Measuring the Effects of Direct Democracy on State Policy](#)" (2004)
Gerber, "[Legislative Response to the Threat of Popular Initiatives](#)" (1996)
Hagen & Lascher, "[Gun Behind the Door?](#)" (1998)
Berry, *Direct Democracy and Redistribution* (2009)
Smith, "[Homeward Bound?](#)" (2001)

Book Discussant Leader: John Matsusaka, *For the Many or the Few* (2004)

Week 10: The Educative Effects of Direct Democracy

October 27

- Smith & Tolbert, *Educated by Initiative* (2004), chapters 1-2
Tolbert & Smith, "[The Educative Effects of Ballot Initiatives on Voter Turnout](#)" (2005)
Binder & Childers, "[Engaged by the Initiative? How the Use of Citizen Initiatives Increases Voter Turnout](#)" (2010)
M. Smith, "[Ballot Initiatives and the Democratic Citizen](#)" (2002)
Boehmke, *The Indirect Effect of Direct Legislation* (2005), chapter 1
Donovan, Tolbert, & Smith, "[Political Engagement, Mobilization, and Direct Democracy](#)" (2009)
Parry, Smith, & Henry, "[The Impact of Petition Signing on Voter Turnout](#)" (2012)

Book Discussant Leader: Smith & Tolbert, *Educated by Initiative* (2004)

Week 11: NO CLASS: ELECTION DAY ACTIVITIES

November 3

Week 12: The Educative Effects of Direct Democracy Reconsidered

November 10

Readings:

- Schlozman & Yohai, "[How Initiatives Don't Always Make Citizens: Ballot Initiatives in the American States, 1978–2004](#)" (2008)
Dyck, "[Initiated Distrust: Direct Democracy and Trust in Government](#)" (2009)
Dyck & Lascher, "[Direct Democracy and Political Efficacy Reconsidered](#)" (2009)
Dyck & Seabrook, "[Mobilized by Direct Democracy: Short-Term Versus Long-Term Effects and the Geography of Turnout in Ballot Measure Elections](#)" (2010)
Dyck & Pearson-Merkowitz, "[The Conspiracy of Silence: Context and Voting on Gay Marriage Ballot Measures](#)" (2012)
Burnett & Kogan, "[Familiar Choices: Reconsidering the Institutional Effects of the Direct Initiative](#)" (2012)

**Week 13: Spillover Effects of Direct Democracy: Agenda Setting & Priming Candidate Votes
November 17**

Readings:

Nicholson, *Voting the Agenda* (2005), chapters 1-2

Smith, DeSantis, & Kassel, "[Same-Sex Marriage Ballot Measures and the 2004 Presidential Election](#)" (2006)

Donovan, Tolbert, & Smith, "[Priming Presidential Votes by Direct Democracy](#)" (2008)

Smith & Tolbert, "[Direct Democracy, Public Opinion, and Candidate Choice](#)" (2010)

Book Discussant Leader: [Stephen Nicholson, *Voting the Agenda: Candidates, Elections, and Ballot Propositions* \(2005\)](#)

**Week 14: Research Week
November 24**

**Week 15: M.A. Campaign Plan Presentations
December 1**

**Week 16: Ph.D. Research Paper Presentations
December 8**

December 15: Research Papers & Campaign Plans Due (hard copy & emailed as an MS Word attachment), by 5pm.

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