

Central European University (CEU)
Department of Political Science

MA Program in Political Science
POLS5115 (2 credits)

Final version, 16 February 2023

Winter Semester 2023 (24 February–31 March)
Friday, 13:30–15:10 and 15:40–17:20 hrs.
Room QS D-212

Democracy and Trust: A Global Perspective

Andreas Schedler
CEU Democracy Institute and Department of Political Science
E-mail: schedlera@ceu.edu
Consultations by appointment

Introduction

Contemporary debates on polarization, fake news, and conspiracy theories have made us rediscover the existential relevance of trust for democracy. In the six double Friday sessions of the seminar, participants should acquire the analytic tools to understand, with clarity and precision, the structure of trust and its opposites (distrust and enemyopia, which is, the perception of others as enemies), its many faces, and the multiple roles it plays in democratic politics.

On Day 1 we will be reviewing the concept of trust (its structure, types of relations, domains, grounds, and opposites) on the basis of a paper on “Basic Democratic Trust” which I ask you to read in preparation for the seminar. On Day 2 we will seek to clarify the ambiguous relation between democracy and trust. We will also review prevalent empirical perspectives in the study of trust. On Day 3 we will reflect on sources of trust (norms vs interests) and the corresponding dynamics of trust creation and destruction. In the remaining sessions, we will discuss three fundamental locations along the continuum of trust: the positive pole of trust (Friday 4), the intermediate situation of distrust (Friday 5), and the negative pole of enemyopia (Friday 6).

The literature on social and political trust is immense and the seminar cannot provide but a glimpse of it. Yet, it should enable participants to understand the basic structure of arguments about trust and trustworthiness and to analyze the extant literature on trust as well as existing realities of trust in clear, critical, and creative manner.

Obligatory readings

In each 100-minute session of the seminar, we will be discussing 2–3 articles or book chapters (or text fragments). These texts provide our common ground. They form the main basis for our seminar discussions. Careful and critical reading is essential. You need these texts in class. I prefer you to bring paper copies and leave your electronic devices turned off.

All obligatory readings are listed in the course schedule below. Watch the *page references*, as I do not ask you to read all cited references in full, but only well-selected parts of them (even though you need not fear serious medical harm from full readings).

Critical questions

For one obligatory reading (chosen by yourselves) of each session (except the first two ones), I ask you to submit one critical question.

These critical questions may either ask for *clarification* of things that seems unclear in the text, such as opaque phrases, exotic concepts, missing explications, apparent contradictions, unclear references ...

Or they may address weaknesses in the *argument* of the text, in its treatment of the literature, its conceptual foundations, its premises, its structure, its empirical evidence, its inferences, its conclusions ...

Extension: The questions need to be specific and well explained. The more concise and precise, the better. None of them may exceed 80 words.

Submission deadline: 14:00 hrs. on the Thursday before the corresponding seminar session.

Short analytic essays

I ask you to write three “analytic case studies” on three different types of relationship that you (yes, you in person) entertain with different political actors:

- Basic democratic trust: someone whose democratic commitments you do not doubt
- Basic democratic distrust: someone whose democratic credential you doubt
- Democratic enemyopia: someone you think is an enemy of democracy

The actors under analysis are participants in domestic politics of any country in the world. They may be individuals (such as heads of

government, party leaders, MPs, or collective actors (such as political parties, civic organizations, or social groups).

The third essay excludes “easy cases” of individual or organizations that either embrace open anti-democratic ideologies or employ violence as a political means as well as those who support or form part of an authoritarian government.

The essays need to cover the following points:

- *Actor description:* Who is actor A? Who are you writing about?
- *Domain:* Which is the scope of your trust / distrust / enemyopia? What do you think A is capable of doing, or not doing?
- *Reasons:* Which are the empirical grounds of your expectations?
- *Personal background:* To what extent, do you think, are your expectations about A grounded in your personal experience and your personal disposition to trust, or distrust, certain actors?
- *Controversies:* Is there a social consensus about A’s democratic commitments? If yes, what makes you think so? If other people differ in their judgments about A, which are the claims they articulate and why do you think they are wrong?
- *Change:* What may happen, if anything, to make you change your mind? How resilient is your judgement or how open to reconsideration? Is there anything A may do, or anything that might change in his or her environment, that would lead you to reconsider your judgement? If yes, or no, why?

Extension: 1000–1500 words

Additional references: Together, these essays should incorporate at least 10 bibliographic references that do not form part of the obligatory seminar readings. Articles and book chapters count as one reference, monographs as two.

Deadlines: All essays are due at 14:00 hrs. on the Wednesday before the corresponding seminar session.

Final versions: At the end of the semester, you will have the possibility of revising your essays. Final versions are due one week after the final seminar session, at 18:00 hrs. on Friday, 7 April 2023. Please, submit all three essays in one single file.

Peer reviews

All short essays will be subject to peer review by one reader. Each participant will thus have to read and evaluate a total of three essays (mostly) according to standard criteria of academic writing:

- Style: clarity and quality of writing, orthography and grammar
- Clarity of structure
- Quality of argument: clarity, precision, persuasiveness of reasoning
- Background information: Does the essay provide sufficient contextual information to understand the case under analysis?
- Incorporation of literature: Do bibliographic references serve to justify and illuminate claims about the case (such as conceptual choices, empirical references, theoretical hunches, assertions of exceptionality or generality)?
- Formal criteria: Does the essay have a title and abstract? Does it indicate author, date, place, and genre (seminar essay). Are the pages numbered?
- Bibliography: Are citations complete and consistent?

These evaluations should be honest and clear, yet also, of course, courteous and constructive. They should highlight the strong as well as the weak sides of the essay. Ideally, they should contain suggestions for improvement.

Assignment of essays: In the alphabetical list of seminar participants (by first names), each student will be first reviewing the essay submitted by the person following them on the list, then the one by the next person for the second review, and by the subsequent one for the third review.

Extension: no more than 250 words per review.

Deadlines: Peer reviews must be delivered before 14:00 hrs. on the day after submission of the essay under review.

Plagiarism

As a matter of course, plagiarism will not be tolerated in the seminar. Students who practice it will forfeit their right to receive a course grading. As CEU guidelines explain,

Plagiarism is a form of academic misconduct. It is a practice that involves taking and using another person's work and claiming it, directly or indirectly, as one's own. Plagiarism occurs both when the words of another are reproduced without acknowledgment and when the ideas or arguments of another are paraphrased or summarized in such a way as to lead the reader to believe that

they originated with the writer. (CEU Policy on Student Plagiarism, p. 1)

The final version of your three case studies will be automatically checked by the online plagiarism detection platform Turnitin.

Participation and attendance

Active participation: Seminars are not one-man shows, but collective enterprises. The quality of our deliberations depends on the quality of active participation of each participant.

Attendance: Regular attendance is essential to building a consistent string of seminar conversations. You must attend at least 80% of all sessions (10 out of 12). You can miss 3 or 4 sessions with very good justifications only (such as illness). By missing 5 sessions or more, you waive your right to receive a grade and credits and will be unable to complete the seminar.

Ringling and singing: Cell phones must be turned off in class. If you receive a call or message during class, you have to sing a song of your own choice at the end of the session.

Course requirements and assessment

The final grade will be the sum of four elements of evaluation:

- Active class-room participation: 15%
- 10 critical questions: 15%
- 3 analytic case studies: 45%
- 3 peer reviews: 15%

Note the following rules from the DPS Faculty Handbook:

- In case of late submissions, one grade point from the final grade of the assignment should be deducted every 24 hours,
- Only a +/- 10% deviation is acceptable in terms of number of words in the cases of long assignments (i.e. above 1,000 words), while no deviation can be tolerated in short papers (i.e. below 1,000 words).

Seminar Schedule

Themes and Obligatory Readings

DAY 1: FRIDAY, 24 FEBRUARY 2012

1. Introduction

Presentation of syllabus and seminar participants.

2. The Concept of Trust

What is trust? Which are its constitutive elements, relational structure, basic political domains (words / actions, substance / procedures), opposites, empirical foundations, and manifestations (attitudes, behavior, discourse)?

Andreas Schedler (2020), "Basic Democratic Trust," Mexico City: CIDE, unpublished typescript.

Please, read this (long and winding) paper *before* our first session.

DAY 2: FRIDAY, 3 MARCH 2023

3. Trust and Democracy

The ambiguity of trust: Does democracy work on the basis of political trust, or distrust? And what about authoritarianism?

Schedler, Andreas (2013), "Authoritarian Insecurities," In: *The Politics of Uncertainty: Sustaining and Subverting Electoral Authoritarianism* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press), pp. 24–25.

Sztompka, Piotr (1999), "Trust in democracy and autocracy," In: *Trust: A Sociological Theory* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press), pp. 139–150 (Ch. 7).

Warren, Mark E. (2017), "What Kinds of Trust Does Democracy Need? Trust from the Perspective of Democratic Theory," *Handbook on Political Trust*, eds. Tom W.G. Van der Meer and Sonja Zmerli (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing), pp. 33–52.

4. The Study of Trust

Trust is a cognitive phenomenon but has behavioral and discursive manifestations. How have we been studying it? What have we learned from public opinion research and behavioral experiments?

Citrin, Jack, and Laura Stoker (2018), "Political Trust in a Cynical Age," *Annual Review of Political Science* 21: 49–70.

Johnson, Noel D., and Alexandra A. Mislin (2011), "Trust Games: A Meta-Analysis," *Journal of Economic Psychology* 32: 865–889.

DAY 3: FRIDAY, 10 MARCH 2023

5. Sources of Trust

Is trustworthiness the result of normative commitments or interest structures? How do actors communicate their trustworthiness?

Hardin, Russell (1990), "Trusting Persons, Trusting Institutions," *Strategy and Choice*, ed. Richard J. Zeckhauser (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), pp. 185-192.

Rothstein, Bo (2005), *Social Traps and the Problem of Trust* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press), pp. 54–63 and 136–145

6. The Creation of Trust

How easy is it to create and destroy trust (or distrust)? How do actors communicate their trustworthiness?

Kalyvas, Stathis N. (2000), "Commitment Problems in Emerging Democracies: The Case of Religious Parties," *Comparative Politics* 32: 379–398.

Gambetta, Diego, and Michael Bachrach (2001), "Trust in Signs," *Trust and Society*, ed. Karen S Cook (New York: Russell Sage Foundation), pp. 148–184.

DAY 4: FRIDAY, 17 MARCH 2023

7/8. Civic Trust: Moral Communities

Which are the bases of social trust? How do citizens develop generalized expectation good faith and civic behavior among each other? Do they need a strong state? Impartial institutions? Or social norms?

The ethos of impartiality:

Hobbes, Thomas (1651), "On the Natural Condition of Mankind as Concerning Their Felicity and Misery," *Leviathan* (Part I, Chapter XIII). <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/3207/3207-h/3207-h.htm#link2HCH0013>

Rothstein, Bo, and Dietlind Stolle (2008), "The State and Social Capital: An Institutional Theory of Generalized Trust," *Comparative Politics* 40/4: 441–449 [excluding "Empirical Illustrations"].

The ethos of class:

Uslaner, Eric M. (2002), *The Moral Foundations of Trust* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press), p. 2 (§ 3).

Blajer de la Garza, Yuna (2019), "Leaving Your Car with Strangers: Informal Car Parkers and Improbable Trust in Mexico City," *Politics & Society* 47/3: 361–394.

DAY 5: FRIDAY, 24 MARCH 2023

9/10. Political Distrust: The Primacy of Self-Interest

How does democracy work when political actors (including citizens) assume others to be opportunists, that is, self-serving players without firm democratic commitments?

The self-serving elite:

Banfield, Edward C., with Laura Fasano Banfield (1958), "A Predictive Hypothesis," *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society* (New York and London: Free Press), pp. 83–101 (Ch. 5).

Schedler, Andreas (1996), "Anti-Political-Establishment Parties," *Party Politics* 2/3: 291–297 (excluding "Constructing the Anti-political Self").

Democracy as self-reinforcing equilibrium:

Svolik, Milan (2015), "Equilibrium Analysis of Political Institutions," *Routledge Handbook of Comparative Political Institutions*, eds Jennifer Gandhi and Rubén Ruiz-Rufino (London: Routledge), pp. 70–72 ("Introduction") and 73–74 ("Institutions as Strategic Equilibria").

Kis, János (2022), "Ideal Theory," Budapest: CEU Democracy Institute, unpublished typescript, pp. 11–14 (the assumption of strict compliance).

Schedler, Andreas (2019), "The Breaching Experiment: Donald Trump and the Normative Foundations of Democracy," *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft / Comparative Governance and Politics* 13/4 (December): 433–460.

DAY 6: FRIDAY, 31 MARCH 2023

9/10. Democratic Enemyopia: Threats of Violence and Authoritarianism

How does democracy work when political actors (including citizens) assume others to be enemies of democracy who are pursue authoritarian designs and are willing to use violence to achieve their political goals?

Conspiracy theories:

Hofstadter, Richard (1965), *The Paranoid Style in American Politics: An Essay* (New York: Vintage Books).

Kloppe-Santamaría, Gema (2021), "Deadly Rumors: Lynching, Hearsay, and Hierarchies of Credibility in Mexico," *Journal of Social History* 55/1: 85–104.

Authoritarian adversaries:

Linz, Juan J. (1978), "Disloyal, Semiloyal, and Loyal Oppositions," *Crisis, Breakdown, and Reequilibration* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press), pp. 27–38.

Alberta, Tim (2022), "What Comes After the Search Warrant?," *The Atlantic* (10 August), <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2022/08/trump-fbi-search-mar-a-lago-republicans/671093/>.

Concluding reflections