Challenges and Challengers to Democracy, Social Justice, and Public Policy in Europe

**Course code:** DOPP5670

Instructor: **Dr. Felix Butzlaff,** [**Butzlafff@ceu.edu**](mailto:Butzlafff@ceu.edu)

No. of credits (US/ECTS): 2

Academic year and term (fall/winter/spring): 2023/24 Fall

Course level: MA and PhD

Relationship with other courses (e.g. prerequisites for taking the course): None

Course type: Elective

In this seminar, we will look at the triangle of democracy, social justice, and public policy in contemporary Europe. For long decades, this triangle had become an implicitness and a core pillar of European democratic self-understanding: representative democracy requires a certain level of social justice available to all citizens; public policies were imagined providing the needed services and socio-economic base for people to engage in matters of democratic co-determination. In the multiple crises of today, from migration, the climate crisis, soaring inequalities, or the effects of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the connection between the three sides of the triangle are more and more challenged from different sides of the political spectrum. Focusing mainly on European societies and institutions, we will carefully analyze in which way and in which social or societal spaces democracy, social justice, and public policy responsibilities are imagined as connected – and how these imaginations are changing. Who is advocating which idea of a nexus between democracy, social justice, and public policies – and who is challenging established notions of it? Who is mobilizing for a new social embedding of democracy, social justice, and public responsibilities and what are the alternative societies that are imagined for a future Europe? Which roles can EU institutions play in strengthening democracy and social justice?

Through various theoretical lenses of democratic theory, participation research, social movement theory and research on populism, we will first establish a theoretical toolbox for analysis, before we jointly scrutinize today’s challenges and challengers of the established triangle between democracy, social justice, and public policy.

**Learning Outcomes**

After completing the course, students will

* have gained an overview of social science theories of social movements, participation, and democratic mobilization
* have applied several of these theories to protest movements and political mobilizations in contemporary Europe
* have been introduced to and discussed criticisms of contemporary representative democracy
* have discussed possible democratic remedies.

**Assessment criteria**

1. Written essay (approx. 4000 words; 40%)
2. presentation (15min presentation + chairing the discussion, 30%)
3. several smaller written essays and reading notes (20%)
4. participation in seminar debates (10%)

**Workload**

The workload of a standard 2 US (4 ECTS) credits course should be between 100-120 hours. This includes the hours students spend in class (21h). In this seminar, the workload shares can be estimated as

Seminar participation: 21hours

Seminar preparation (readings): 36 hours

Class input/presentation: 13 hours

Final assignment: 40 hours

**Prerequisites**

none

**Seminar Sessions and Readings**

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| **Sessions** | **Topic** | **Reading** |
| 1. **Monday Sept 18th**   **08:50-10:30** | **Introduction: The triangle of democracy, social justice, and public policy in the contemporary** | Reading: Afsahi A, Beausoleil E, Dean R, et al. (2020) Democracy in a Global Emergency: Five Lessons from the COVID-19 Pandemic. Democratic Theory 7(2): v–xix. |
| **Part A: democracy, social justice, and public policy - establishing scientific lenses** |  |  |
| 1. **Monday Sept 25th 08:50-10:30** | **The beginning of democratic participation and social justice: Mobilizing classes?** | Reading: Steven M. Buechler: Understanding Social Movements. Theories from the Classical Era to the Present, London 2016 S. 9 – 23. |
| 1. **Monday Oct 2nd 08:50-10:30** | **Proving resources – Which social grievances are mobilized?** | Reading: Steven M. Buechler: Understanding Social  Movements. Theories from the Classical Era to the  Present, London 2016, S. 109 – 124. |
| 1. **Monday Oct 9th 08:50-10:30** | **Collective Memories: Did we always do things this way?** | Reading: Manuel Jiménez-Sánchez & Patricia García-Espín (2022): The mobilising memory of the 15-M movement: recollections and sediments in Spanish protest culture, Social Movement Studies |
| 1. **Monday Oct 16th 08:50-10:30** | **Demand and Supply models of democratic participation and mobilization** | Reading: Bert Klandermans: The Demand and Supply of Participation: Social-Psychological Correlates of Participation in Social Movements, in: Snow et al. (ed): The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements, Blackwell 2007, S. 360 – 379. |
| **Part B: democracy, social justice, and public policy - contemporary challenges** |  |  |
| 1. **Monday Oct 23rd 08:50-10:30** | **Institutional crises of public policies? The loss of trust and legitimacy of representation** | Reading: Dalton, Russell J. “Citizenship Norms and the Expansion of Political Participation.” Political Studies, vol. 56, no. 1, 2008, pp. 76–98. |
| 1. **Monday Oct 30th 08:50-10:30** | **Democratic denial? Contemporary non-participation in Europe** | Reading: Schäfer A and Schwander H (2019) ‘Don’t play if you can’t win’: does economic inequality undermine political equality? European Political Science Review 11(3): 395–413;  Elsässer L and Schäfer A (2022) (N)one of us? The case for descriptive representation of the contemporary working class. West European Politics 45(6): 1361–1384. |
| 1. **Monday Nov 6th 08:50-10:30** | **Can new technologies save us? the digital society** | Reading: Gerbaudo, Paolo: The Platform Party: The Transformation of Political Organisation in the Era of Big Data. In: Dave Chandler, Christian Fuchs (Hg.): Digital Objects, Digital Subjects: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Capitalism, Labour and Politics in the Age of Big Data. London 2019, S. 187– 198. |
| 1. **Monday Nov 13th 08:50-10:30** | **Populist emancipation? New framings of democracy, justice, and the public** | Reading: Lütjen T (2022) The anti-authoritarian revolt: Right-wing populism as self-empowerment? European Journal of Social Theory 25(1): 75–93;  Schäfer A (2022) Cultural Backlash? How (Not) to Explain the Rise of Authoritarian Populism. British Journal of Political Science 52(4): 1977–1993. |
| 1. **Monday Nov 20th 08:50-10:30** | **New challengers in the climate crisis – who *does* public policies?** | Reading: Joost de Moor; Vydt, Michiel de; Uba, Katrin; Wahlström, Mattias (2021): New kids on the block: taking stock of the recent cycle of climate activism. In: Social Movement Studies 20 (5), S. 619–625. |
| 1. **Monday Nov 27th 08:50-10:30** | **Challenging health as public policy concern – the new private in the Covid pandemic** | Reading: Paolo Gerbaudo (2020): The Pandemic Crowd. Protest in the Time of Covid-19, in:  Journal of International Affairs, Vol. 73, No. 2, pp. 61-76. |
| 1. **Monday Dec 4th 08:50-10:30** | **Multinational Democracy - EU institutions as safeguards for the democracy, social justice, and public policy nexus?** | Reading: Sabine Saurugger (2010): The social construction of the participatory turn: The emergence of a norm in the European Union, in: European Journal of Political Research 49: 471–495. |