

Contemporary Social Sciences 3

 **ECTS**
3 crédits **Volume horaire**
24h **Période de
l'année**
Semestre 3

Présentation

DESCRIPTION

WHAT IS DEMOCRACY?

When asked what democracy is, the answer may appear simple and straightforward: it is a representative system of government in which the people elect their leaders through free and fair elections. This definition, however, is deceptively simple—it conveys little and may obscure more than it reveals. In reality, representative democracy is difficult to define and, to complicate matters further, it is only one among several models of democracy. A range of questions therefore arises when we attempt to define or theorise democracy. The purpose of this course is to engage with these questions through the study of a wide selection of classical, ancient, and contemporary texts on democracy. Its aim is to familiarise students with the historical development, philosophical foundations, and theoretical frameworks of democratic thought. The first part of the course will focus on various historical models of democracy, which are essential for understanding both the theory and practice of democracy today. From ancient Athens to the American Revolution, and from Rousseau to Tocqueville, democracy has assumed diverse forms throughout its long and complex trajectory. The second part of the course will turn to contemporary models of democracy, including deliberative, realist, populist, and illiberal variants. Particular attention will be paid to what may be regarded as the degenerations or distortions of democratic practice. Populism and illiberalism, for instance, are often viewed as corruptions of the democratic ideal; yet the nature and extent of this corruption remain subjects of considerable scholarly debate. Students will be encouraged to think critically about the so-called “crisis” of democracy and to explore the multiple forms and challenges that democratic regimes may assume in the contemporary world.

HEURES D'ENSEIGNEMENT

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Cours Magistral

24h

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