POLS 335: Global Mobility and the Boundaries of Democracy

Trinity College
Spring 2013
Course Time: MW: 11:30AM-12:45PM
Course Location: McCook 307

Professor Rebekah Sterling
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Office: Downes Memorial 211
Office Hours: Mon. 3-5pm

Course website (moodle): http://moodle.trincoll.edu/course/view.php?id=5363

Course Description

Theories of democracy often assume that democracy requires boundaries: on the one hand, a bounded group of members, “the people,” and on the other hand, a bounded territory to which those people belong and over which their state has sovereignty. Historically, modern democratic institutions have grown up alongside the nation-state, and so their boundaries are usually thought to coincide. However, the global movement of people, ideas, goods, and more seems increasingly to challenge that familiar image of nation-states as the self-contained, neatly delineated units represented by color-coded political maps. As part of broader processes of globalization, global mobility puts in question conventional ideas of national identity, of state sovereignty, of belonging and membership, and of political activity – and, by extension, of democracy.

This course asks whether and how we should rethink the boundaries of democratic community, citizenship, and action in light of global mobility. Does democracy require boundaries – whether boundaries of membership or boundaries of territory? How should democratic states and citizens respond to increasing cultural diversity? What obligations do citizens have to foreigners? Can border controls be democratically justified? Can we imagine democratic citizenship, action, or institutions beyond the nation-state? Are we moving, or should we move, towards an idea of post-national democracy?

We will begin by examining the assumptions underlying the association of democracy with the nation-state. Then we will explore the nature of global mobility today and in the past, and consider how it challenges those assumptions. Then, we will explore various attempts within political theory to rethink the “boundaries” of democracy: multiculturalism and its challenge to traditional ideas of national identity and culture; debates about the ethics and politics of migration policy and border control; the figure of the “immigrant” and its relationship to democracy; cosmopolitanism and ideas of post-national and transnational citizenship. We will then turn to the contemporary securitization of migration and the proliferation of visible borders – walls – amid anxieties about waning nation-state sovereignty. Finally, we will explore examples of immigrant political movements and activities, and consider what they might mean for rethinking democratic political action in our times. Students will also explore their own areas of interest within these debates, by researching some of the scholarly debates in more depth, and applying them to a real-world case.

Required texts

Course Reader, available for purchase from Professor Sterling.
Supplementary and/or recommended readings will be posted on Moodle.
### Summary of Course Requirements and Key Dates

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<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
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<tr>
<td>Short Paper</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Fri. 2/15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Exercise</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Wed 3/13</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Final paper</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Abstract and outline</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Mon. 4/8</td>
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<td>- Final paper</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>Mon. 4/29</td>
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<td><strong>Blog</strong></td>
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<td>- 2 blog entries</td>
<td>10% (5% each)</td>
<td>Noon, _______ &amp;_______</td>
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<td>- 5 replies to other students’ entries</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>By class time, 5 occasions</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>In-class participation</strong></td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Every class</td>
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### Course Format

This is an upper-level course in political theory. Previous background in philosophy or political theory is helpful but not required. This is a reading-, writing-, and discussion-intensive course. In class, we will focus on analyzing the course readings and on discussing and debating the key concepts, questions, and arguments they raise. It is thus essential that everyone comes to class prepared, having read the texts closely, carefully, and thoroughly, and ready to engage actively and thoughtfully in our discussions.

The readings are the heart of the class. Theoretical texts can be abstract, dense, and difficult. It is important to read slowly, carefully, and actively. Look up unfamiliar words; take notes about an argument’s key concepts, assumptions, claims, and implications; jot down your thoughts and questions about points that are interesting, provocative, problematic, or confusing.

Our readings and discussions will raise many questions, and will offer many competing perspectives, ideas, arguments, and answers. You will not always agree with the readings, and we will also find, in our discussions, that we do not always agree with each other about the texts or the issues they raise. It is crucial that we maintain a constructive and civil discussion, where we can debate – and disagree – thoughtfully and respectfully. Our discussions should be a safe space for all of you to try out ideas and debate them.

At the same time, one of the goals of this class is to further develop your skills of analytic thinking and scholarly argument. That means more than just having an “opinion.” It means developing considered, cogent, and well-supported arguments through careful analysis of the texts and ideas – both in our discussions and in your writing. So I will encourage you to examine and clarify your assumptions, to provide support for your claims, to weigh potential objections, and to consider the complexities and implications of the positions you take. Finally, this course also aims to develop your research skills, and you will conduct research on a debate within political theory and on a real-world case, which you will integrate into your final paper.

### Course expectations in brief:

**Before class:**

- Carefully read all assigned texts, making notes of key themes, claims, and concepts, as well as points you find interesting, confusing, or otherwise noteworthy.
  - Read over any study questions provided by the professor, and jot down ideas, relevant page references, or other notes related to those questions.
- Read the blog posts for the day’s reading.
- Complete any other assignments or exercises required for the day.
In class:
- Attend all classes on time, barring illness, emergencies, or special circumstances.
- *Always* bring the readings and your notes.
- Participate actively, constructively, and respectfully in our discussion: e.g. answering questions; asking questions; pointing out passages relevant to the point being discussed; making an argument or disputing one; explaining a concept; etc.
- Listen attentively and respectfully to the contributions of others (professor and other students).
- Take notes: on key concepts introduced or discussed in class; on passages referenced or discussed; on points clarified or questions answered; etc.
- Do not use electronic devices (e.g. laptops, phones) in class, and avoid distracting or disruptive activities.

In your writing and research assignments:
- Complete all assignments on time.
- Carefully follow the instructions and guidelines for the assignments.
- In your essays, make a cogent, focused, and thoughtful argument, backed up by appropriate evidence, sound reasoning, and careful analysis of the course readings.
- Use sources appropriately and honestly.

Course Components

In-class participation
Your participation grade will reflect not simply how much you speak, but also the quality of your contributions, your degree of attentiveness and respect for others' contributions, and factors like improvement over the quarter. Regular attendance is necessary but not sufficient for a good participation grade. *Active participation* in discussions is crucial not only for your grade but also for your own understanding and analysis of the course materials. There are many ways to contribute: asking questions; pointing out passages relevant to the point being discussed; making an argument or disputing one; explaining a concept; and more. Often there will not be a single right answer, but there are always more and less thoughtful answers. I will be looking for evidence that you've done the readings and are thinking carefully about them. Being attentive and respectful means, among other things, that you are actively listening and paying attention when others are speaking, that you help ensure that everyone has an opportunity to speak, and that you help to keep discussions and debates (including disagreements) civil, and that you avoid noisy, distracting, or disruptive activities. *Electronic devices policy:* Computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices may *not* be used during class; they must be turned off and put away.

Writing and research assignments
You will write one short essay, one research exercise, and a final paper. The short essay (4-6 pages) will focus on the concepts presented at the beginning of the semester. For the research exercise, you will prepare an annotated bibliography on the broader theoretical and scholarly debate on one of our course themes, and on a real-world example or case relevant to that debate. In your final paper (10-15 pages), you will connect that research to our course readings, and make an extended argument about a particular case and/or debate. You will also be required to submit an abstract and outline of the final paper ahead of time.
Submitting papers and written work: For most of your assignments, I will require both a hard copy and an electronic copy (submitted via Moodle). I will specify the submission instructions in class. I reserve the right to submit any submitted assignments to plagiarism-detection services, at my discretion.

Blog participation
1) Blog entries / Analytic reading responses (x 2) – due by noon the day before class
Over the course of the semester, each student will be required to write blog entries for two class meetings. I will distribute a sign-up sheet at the beginning of the semester. These blog posts should be 250-350 words (2-3 paragraphs, equivalent to about 1 double-spaced page). They should be focused, analytic responses to the assigned readings for the day (i.e. not a summary). The bulk of your post should analyze some point, idea, claim, or question in the reading that you find interesting or important, and you should conclude your post with 2-3 questions that we might discuss in class. Posts should demonstrate careful, thorough reading and thoughtful analysis. Blog entries are due by noon on the day before class (noon Sunday for Monday meetings, noon Tuesday for Wednesday meetings).

2) Blog comments / replies to other students’ blog entries (x 5) – due by beg. of class
Each student will also be required to comment on other students’ blog entries, for five different class sessions of your choice. Comments (replies) should be 2-3 thoughtful sentences in response to the blog post, and they should demonstrate careful thinking and reading of the assigned texts for the day. Blog comments must be submitted by the start of class on the day we are discussing those readings.

Keep track of your blog entries and replies:

Your blog entries (sign up for specific dates/ readings at the beginning of the semester):

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<tr>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Class date</th>
<th>Blog entry due date (noon, day before class)</th>
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<td>2.</td>
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Your replies to other students’ blog entries (5 different days of your choice)

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<tr>
<th>Reply to (student's name, blog entry title)</th>
<th>Replied on (date)</th>
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Additional Policies:

**Intellectual honesty:** I take intellectual honesty very seriously. As the Student Handbook explains: “Intellectual honesty assumes that students do their own work and that they credit properly those upon whose work and thought they draw” (p. 19). Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of intellectual dishonesty will result in an F for the assignment, and may also lead to disciplinary hearings and failure of the course as a whole. All students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic honesty and dishonesty, and for adhering to the Integrity Contract and the Student Handbook.

**Deadlines, late penalties, and extensions:** Late papers or research assignments will be penalized by 1/3 of a letter grade per 24-hour period. On rare occasions, I may grant extensions. However, extensions must be requested well before the deadline, and require proof of need (e.g. documentation of family or medical emergencies, other unusual circumstances). Late blog entries will lose a full letter grade per 12-hour period, and will not be accepted for credit after the relevant class session begins.

**Attendance:** Students are expected to attend class regularly and punctually, barring illness, emergency, or other unavoidable situations. Missing more than 3 class sessions for any reason will adversely affect your final grade. Students who anticipate absences due to religious observance or other circumstances should come see me at the beginning of the semester to make appropriate arrangements. If you do have to miss class for a legitimate and documentable reason:

- Let me know as soon as possible, preferably before class.
- Write a 1-2 page summary of the assigned readings, and hand it in to me at the next class meeting. This will help make up the missed participation component of the day; however, it will not prevent absences beyond three from hurting your grade.
- Get notes from a fellow student for the class you missed, since you are responsible for any material and discussion you missed. Once you’ve reviewed these notes, email or meet with me if you have any questions.

You are also expected to arrive on time and stay until the end of class. Repeatedly coming late or leaving during class will hurt your grade. If there is a rare occasion when you need to arrive late or leave early for a legitimate reason, you should inform me before class, and then come or go as unobtrusively as possible.

**Course communications:** I will regularly email the class with important class announcements, discussion questions, and information on assignments. You are responsible for the information in these emails, so make sure that you check your email regularly.

I am happy to answer simple questions by email, and I try to answer emails within 24 hours during the work week or 48 hours over the weekend. Please do make use of my office hours to ask questions about the course or to discuss the materials further. If my office hours conflict with your schedule, email me to set up an appointment at another time.

**Accommodations and other circumstances:** If you have a disability that requires accommodations, please come and see me at the beginning of the semester, either in my office hours or by appointment, and bring your official accommodations letter from Trinity College. Students must request accommodations from professors no later than 10 days before the accommodations are needed, but I strongly encourage you to come and see me within the first two weeks of class so that we can make arrangements as early as possible. For information on how to apply for accommodations at Trinity College, contact the Disability Coordinator, Lori Clapis, at Lori.Clapis@trincoll.edu or in her office at the Health Center, and see: http://www.trincoll.edu/StudentLife/DisabilityServices/students/Pages/default.aspx
Weekly Schedule

All required readings are in the Course Reader unless otherwise noted. The schedule may be subject to minor changes during the semester; any changes will be announced in class.

Wk 1 Introduction

W 1/23 Introduction


Wk 2 Democracy, Boundaries, and the Nation-State


Recommended: “Citizenship” in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, sections 1.1-1.2 (online)

Wk 3 De-naturalizing the Nation-State

M 2/4 Balibar, Étienne. “The Nation Form: History and Ideology.” *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 13, no. 3 (July 1, 1990). (Part II: History only)


Wk 4 Global Mobility: Present and Past


** Short paper due: Friday, February 15 at noon **

**Wk 5**  
**Inside (the) Boundaries**

**M 2/18**  

**W 2/20**  

Recommended: “Citizenship” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (online), section 2.1

**Wk 6**  
**Inside (the) Boundaries (continued)**

**M 2/25**  
**Library Session** (location to be confirmed)

**W 2/27**  

**Wk 7**  
**At the Border: the Ethics of Immigration policy**

**M 3/4**  


**W 3/6**  


**Wk 8**  
**At the Border: Democracy and Border Controls**

**M 3/11**  

**W 3/13**  

** Research Exercise Due: Wednesday, March 13 **
Wk 9  SPRING BREAK

M 3/18 and W 3/20 – NO CLASS

Wk 10  Boundary Figures: Democracy and the Immigrant


Wk 11  Beyond the Boundaries: The Scope of Democratic Citizenship


Wk 12  Beyond the Boundaries (continued)


** Abstract and Outline of Final Paper due: Monday, April 8 **


Wk 13  Re-bordering? Walls, securitization, and deportation


Film: “Lost in Detention”

W 4/17  Brown, Walled States, Waning Sovereignty, ch. 3: “States and Subjects”
Wk 14  Contesting Boundaries: Postnational Political Activity?


Wk 15  Conclusions

M 4/29 Concluding discussion – readings TBA

** Final paper due, Monday April 29 **