Fall 2020
We know that you may be taking courses at multiple locations this semester. If you are enrolled in this course 100% remotely and are not a Go Local/Study Away student for this course site, please make sure that you’ve completed the online academic orientation via NYU Classes so you are aware of site specific support, policies and procedures. Please contact florence.academicsupport@nyu.edu if you have trouble accessing the NYU Classes site.

If you are attending in person, you will be instructed to choose your seat on the first day and are expected to use that seat for the entire semester due to NYU COVID-19 safety protocol.

Course Description:
The course focuses on democracy and how it evolved since the Enlightenment period to present days. This theme will be addressed by analyzing some of its aspects such as inclusion, equality, pluralism of information vs oligarchic corporate media, the erosion of the public space, representation, social activism, political participation, normative ideas of development/progress. The course aims at empowering students as global citizens. The study of some concepts, institutions, and events that shaped democracies is meant to help develop a critical awareness about today democracy. The shifts in global power balances and the post-Western world in which we live require also a careful consideration of what we can learn about politics from intellectual traditions outside the West. A key step in this direction is to adopt a perspective that allows us to see that the Western world does not have the monopoly of good government.

Tuesday classes will introduce the topic of the week and Thursday sessions will be mainly (but not only) devoted to the discussion of current issues: we will see how apparently theoretical democratic issues actually affect our daily life and how the concepts we study can apply to world around us. Discussions will include – but not be limited to – cancellation culture, academic "white curriculum", the relationship between capitalism and democracy, etc., the role of education, etc. Controversial issues will be explored and discussed.

Instructor Details:
Name: Natalia Piombino          Email: 
Office Hours: Thursday, 2:30pm-5:00pm by appointment
Villa Ulivi Office Location: Office n.7, top floor - Villa Ulivi Phone Number:
Appointments available via Zoom or in person on request
Zoom Personal Meeting Room:

Desired Outcomes:
On completion of this course, students should:

● Have improved their ability to think critically, engage in complex reasoning and express their thoughts clearly through their written work;
● Have improved their understanding of some fundamental works and discussions on democracy;
• Demonstrate familiarity with the debate about some key aspects of the democratic regime;
• Demonstrate a sound understanding of topics such as: the role of media, the involvement of citizens, the tools citizens can use to engage in the political arena.

Assessment Components
Academic Commitment**: 15%
Class presentations: 30%
Midterm Exam: 30%
Final Exam: 25%
Failure to submit or fulfill any required course component results in failure of the class.

**NB: Commitment: A student’s commitment will be evaluated based on active participation, involvement and contribution in the course either remote or in-person. This may include, but is not limited to, presence at synchronous class sessions, timely submission of predetermined course assignments to the instructor, collaboration with peers in group course work both during class time or independently outside of class time, individual oral or written contributions to synchronous course time through the chat function, in person discussion, or in individual office hours with the instructor. In an asynchronous format this academic engagement may take the form of written contributions to course forums, adding comments to posted work on VoiceThread or Google Drive shared docs.

Assessment Expectations:
• Grade A: The student’s work demonstrates an understanding of the subject that goes beyond assigned course readings. The student writes essays/exam questions that are an original synthesis of source materials, demonstrating the ability to evaluate source material critically. Written arguments are clear, well-organized and well-presented; oral presentations are concise, incisive and supplemented by appropriate visual materials. The student has distinguished himself/herself throughout the course of the semester for his/her contributions to class discussion.
• Grade B: The student’s work shows a clear understanding of assigned readings and materials covered in class. The student writes clear, well-organized and well-presented essays/exam questions; oral presentations are concise, incisive and supplemented by appropriate visual materials. The student is prepared in class and asks relevant questions.
• Grade C: The student’s work shows a basic understanding of the subject treated in assigned readings and covered in class. However, written and/or oral work is deficient in one or more of the following areas: clarity, organization or content. The student’s work is generally in need of improvement
• Grade D: The student’s work shows occasional understanding of the subject treated in assigned readings and covered in class. Written and/or oral work is deficient in one of more of the follow areas: clarity, organization or content. The student does not participate in class discussion and has not frequented the instructor’s office hours.
• Grade F: The student’s work does not demonstrate understanding of the subject treated in assigned readings and covered in class. Written and/or oral work are either insufficient or are not submitted. The student appears unprepared in class and has not frequented the instructor’s office hours.

Grading Guidelines
A = 94-100
A minus = 90-93
B plus = 87-89
B = 84-86
B minus = 80-83
C plus = 77-79
C = 74-76

Page 2 of 9
C minus = 70-73
D plus = 67-69
D = 65-66
F = below 65

Grading Policy:
Please refer to Assessment Expectations and the policy on late submission of work.

Academic Accommodations:
Academic accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980 or see the Moses Center for further information. Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in a class are encouraged to contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at (212) 998-4980 as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. For more information, see Study Away and Disability.

Attendance Policy:
Study abroad at Global Academic Centers is an academically intensive experience, in which students from a wide range of backgrounds exchange ideas in discussion-based seminars. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students. Since classes typically meet once or twice a week, even a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of a course. To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance at the Global Sites is expected. Unexcused absences will affect students' semester participation grade. Faculty will take attendance at the beginning of every class. If you have scheduled a remote course immediately preceding/following an in-person class, you may want to discuss where at the Academic Center the remote course can be taken. Both in-person and remote students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence. Repeated unexcused absences in a course may result in failure. This means they should initiate email and/or office hour discussions to address any missed lectures and assignments and arrange a timeline for submitting missed work.

Excused Absences:
In case of absence, regardless of the reason, the student is responsible for completing missed assignments, getting notes and making up missed work in a timely manner based upon a schedule that is mutually agreed upon between the faculty member and the student. The only excused absences are those approved by the Office of Academic Support; they are as follows:

**Absence Due to Illness**
- If you are sick, please see a doctor. Contact the Office of Student Life for assistance.
- For absences that last for two or more consecutive days, a doctor's certificate, "certificato medico" is required. The doctor will indicate in writing the number of days of bed rest required. Please note these certificates can only be obtained on the day you see the doctor and cannot be written for you afterwards.
- Absences can ONLY be excused if they are reported WITHIN 48 HRS of your return to class via the online NYU Florence Absence Form
- OAS will not accept a student email or telephone call regarding an absence due to illness
- OAS will only notify faculty of absences REPORTED on the ABSENCE FORM
- The Office of Student Life, when assisting you in cases of severe or extended illness, will coordinate with the Office of Academic Support to properly record your absences

**Due to Religious Observance**
- Students observing a religious holiday during regularly scheduled class time are entitled to miss class without any penalty to their grade. This is for the holiday only and does not include the days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday
● Information regarding absences due to religious observance must be provided at least SEVEN DAYS PRIOR to the date(s) in question using the online NYU Florence Absence Form.
● Please note that no excused absences for reasons other than illness can be applied retroactively.

*Due to a class conflict with a program sponsored lecture, event, or activity*
● All students are entitled to miss one class period without any penalty to their grade in order to attend a lecture, event or activity that is sponsored by La Pietra Dialogues, Acton Miscellany or the Graduate Lecture series.
● Information regarding absences due to a class conflict must be provided at least SEVEN DAYS PRIOR to the date(s) in question using the online NYU Florence Absence Form.
● Please note that no excused absences for reasons other than illness can be applied retroactively.

Students with questions or needing clarification about this policy are instructed to contact a member of the Office of Academic Support located in Villa Ulivi or to email florence.academicsupport@nyu.edu

**Late Submission of Work**
● All course work must be submitted on time, in class on the date specified on the syllabus.
● To request an extension on a deadline for an assignment, students must speak to the professor one week prior to the due date.
● To receive an incomplete for a course at the end of the semester, two weeks before final exams, both the student and the faculty member must meet with the Assistant Director of Academic Affairs to review the request and if granted, they must both sign an Incomplete Contract detailing the terms for completing missing coursework.

**Plagiarism Policy**

PLAGIARISM WILL NOT BE TOLERATED IN ANY FORM:
The presentation of another person's words, ideas, judgment, images or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism.
In the event of suspected or confirmed cases of plagiarism, the faculty member will consult first with the Assistant Director for Academic Affairs as definitions and procedures vary from school to school.

**Writing Center**
The Writing Center, located in Villa Ulivi, offers you feedback on any type of writing, at any stage in planning or drafting; very rough drafts are welcome. Sign up for a consultation at the Writing Center's website and submit your working draft or ideas at least six hours in advance to NYU Florence Writing Center. You can drop in for a consultation M-Th, but remember that appointments are given priority. Please also note that the Writing Center does not correct or "fix" your writing but prompts you to think and work. The aim is to create stronger writers in the long term, not necessarily perfect papers in the short term.

**Required Text(s):**
All required texts can be found on NYU Classes.
Copies of each textbook are available for consultation and short term loans in the Villa Ulivi Library. Extra copies of some textbooks are also available for semester long loans. More information on Books and Course Materials.

**Basic Bibliography**


https://www.marxists.org/archive/gramsci/prison_notebooks/reader/index.htm


Klaas, S., The Americanization of Human Rights, Heidelberg, Winter, 2018


Norris, P., “The Bridging and Bonding Role of Online Communities”

Nussbaum, M., Not For Profit. Why Democracy needs the Humanities, Princeton, Princeton UP, 2010


Walzer, M., On Toleration, Yale UP, 1999

Additional Reading

Gramsci, A., ‘Some Aspects of the Southern Question’
https://cpb-us-e1.wpmucdn.com/blogs.uoregon.edu/dist/f/6855/files/2014/03/gramsci-southern-question1926-2jf8c5x.pdf


Schneider, J., ed, Italy’s “Southern Question”: Orientalism in one country, Oxford, Berg, 1998


Class Assignments and Topics

Session 1 – September 3 - Introduction to the course. Definition(s) of democracy.
Discussion: C.Ratti, the rebirth of the public space after the coronavirus crisis and the death of George Floyd.
Reading: “China is the best place to learn about smart cities”
“Urban demonstrations are a triumph of the city”
https://www.bostonglobe.com/2020/07/22/opinion/urban-demonstrations-are-triumph-city/
E.Budger, What makes a public space good for democracy?

Session 2 – September 8-10 - From the Ancien régime to the French Revolution (1789).
De Gouges, The Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Female Citizen,

Session 3 – September 15-17 -The sharecropping as an incubator of democracy?
Guest speaker: Nickolas Dakin-Elliot.
Screening: Happy Lazzaro, by A.Rorwacher (excerpts).
https://www.amazon.ca/Civil-War-Agrarian-Unrest-Confederate/dp/1107038421
https://www.jstor.org/stable/4144897?seq=9#metadata_info_tab_contents

Session 4 – September 22-24 - On Citizens' Participation – from De Tocqueville to Putnam’s “civicness” and social capital.
Session B: discussion on social activism today. Reading: M.J.Sandel on social activism at the time of Covid-19
https://www.ineteconomics.org/perspectives/podcast/michael-sandel

Session B: The European dream and democracy in Europe today.

Session 6 – October 6-8 - Italy’s “familism” and democracy.
Session B: Guest-speaker Marco Wang will talk about “Family values and civic participation in second generation Chinese-Italian citizens”.

Session 7 – October 13-15 - Systemic/institutional racism and democracy.
Racist theories about Southern Italians and the construction of the national community in Italy. The “probationary whiteness” of (southern) Italians in the US around the 1890s-1920s.
VIDEO: on racial inequality. TBA

Session 8 – October 20-22 - Review and Midterm Exam

Session 9 – October 27-29 - The status and narration of women in Italian and American television and cinema. Self-objectification and its political effects.

Session 10 – November 3-5 - Do we live in post-democracies?

Session 11 – November 10-12 - Earth Democracy and Education for Democracy: a non-Western, non-male Perspective


Session 15 – December 10 - Review

Final Exam December 15

Class Time Expectations
In light of the unique circumstances of blended instruction, we ask students to consider the following class time expectations to ensure a productive class:

- Prepare your workspace for class, limit non-class activities during synchronous class time.
- If you are not using your cell phone to follow the lesson, cell phones should be turned off or in silent mode during class time.
- If deemed necessary by the study away site (i.e. a COVID related need), synchronous class sessions may be recorded and archived for other students to view. This will be announced at the beginning of class time.
- Students should be respectful and courteous at all times to all participants in class. Consider using the chat function or “raise hand” function in order to add your voice to class discussions.
Please be mindful of your microphone and video display during synchronous class meetings. Ambient noise and some visual images may disrupt class time for you and your peers.

Final Exams
Final exams must be taken at their designated times. Should there be a conflict between final exams, please bring it to the attention of the Office of Academic Support florence.academicsupport@nyu.edu as soon as this is known to facilitate alternate arrangements. Final exams may not be taken early, and students should not plan to leave the site before the end of the finals period.

Inclusion, Diversity, Belonging and Equity
NYU is committed to building a culture that respects and embraces diversity, inclusion, and equity, believing that these values – in all their facets – are, as President Andrew Hamilton has said, "...not only important to cherish for their own sake, but because they are also vital for advancing knowledge, sparking innovation, and creating sustainable communities." At NYU Florence, we are committed to creating a learning environment that:
• fosters intellectual inquiry, research, and artistic practices that respectfully and rigorously take account of a wide range of opinions, perspectives, and experiences; and
• promotes an inclusive community in which diversity is valued and every member feels they have a rightful place, is welcome and respected, and is supported in their endeavours.

Classroom Etiquette
Eating is not permitted in the classrooms. Bottled water is permitted.
Cell phones should be turned off during class time.
The use of personal laptops and other electronic handheld devices is prohibited in the classroom unless otherwise specified by the professor.
We recycle! So keep it green! Please dispose of trash in the clearly marked recycle bins located throughout the on campus buildings

Required Co-curricular Activities
Attendance at one lecture outside of regular class time might be required.

Your Instructor
After graduating in Italy, Natalia did an MA at UCL London and then earned her PhD from Royal Holloway, U. of London. She has been teaching at various American Universities for about 20 years.