

38. Description of Democracy Theory Journal/Thoughtbook

I have been experimenting with this kind of theoretical writing, and in my estimation it has been a great success, though a lot of work for all involved, including me. Instead of writing a number of separate, unconnected critical essays or papers, I am asking you to keep an ongoing “Democracy Theory Journal” or “Thoughtbook” (to borrow a term from the political philosopher Hannah Arendt) - which is not the same thing as a diary or a log - which will incorporate readings, class discussions, and your own personal analysis and insights. The writing will be cumulative, with a view to assisting you in crafting *your own theory of democracy*. My expectation is that you will write somewhere in the general vicinity of 4-7 pages per week (typed, double-spaced) in this Democracy Theory Journal, resulting in a total of 50-80+ pages over the course of the semester. Most of the time, I will structure your writing in the form of a written question or suggested topic for you to address; at other times we may identify issues or questions during class discussions to follow up on in the journal/thoughtbook, or the discussion leaders may identify the topic to cover; at other times, much of your journal/thoughtbook entry will consist of responses to my comments/questions, or perhaps to current issues/events which are related to readings or class discussions. After all, we have many questions being raised about democracy in different parts of the globe: Afghanistan, Iraq, the Ukraine, and even the United States! My intention is to collect your writings three or four times during the semester, and in addition to making my comments and challenging further thought with questions, I will grade your “thoughtwork” each time I read entries. I will clarify and/or answer questions about the Democracy Theory Journal/Thoughtbook in class early on in the semester.

Please feel free to raise concerns, questions, criticisms, and suggestions as we go along, either

publicly or in private consultation with me. The course outline that follows is tentative, and should be seen as a general guide, not a prison out of which none of us can escape. Democracy always requires flexibility!