

Emergence and Persistence of Bureaucratic Thinking: Critical and Historical Perspectives

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Course Description

Bureaucracy as a major cultural concern might appear to be a thing of the past. With the progressive erosion of the welfare state since the 1980s and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the rejection of unwieldy hierarchical planning structures has become commonplace. According to neoliberal doctrine, privatization of state functions and increased flexibility within private firms would revolutionize and dynamize economy and society. Increased individual autonomy was meant to follow from this. The alienated bureaucratic subject was to be emancipated as a free agent who could become the entrepreneur of his or her own life. This course aims to question the common wisdom and ask, instead, if bureaucracy and technocracy have not simply changed masks, adapting to changing circumstances and gaining acceptance under other names. Has bureaucracy—not unlike the capitalist firm—managed to subsume demands for individuality, participation, and flexibility in order to maintain domination in a more covert way? Can the generalization of the market principles of competition, calculation, and efficiency in various spheres of social life be attributed to a new type of technocratic thinking? Further, what can democracy mean if the overlapping neoliberal and bureaucratic principles of discipline, depoliticization, and distance from citizens are deemed the best ways to realize the common interest?

The democracy / bureaucracy question is a pressing one in light of current international politics and government responses to economic crisis. Attempts to enhance international or transnational cooperation often have democratic aims at their core. Many structures for cooperation, like the EU, have been promoted as vehicles for regaining sovereign, democratic control over issues that now seem to be determined by global forces beyond the scope of the national democratic will. Yet, the institutions of governance often work within a bureaucratic paradigm, which can be a threat to political democracy. Global governance as a discourse of efficient outcomes blends bureaucracy into the idea of democratic legitimacy or substitutes for democratic legitimacy altogether.

In this course, we will examine the conceptual history of bureaucracy and technocracy in order to unsettle current assumptions about their relationship to democracy, the state, and the market. How have these social institutions or practices changed over time in relation to their social, political, and economic environments? We will see that varying historical and contemporary definitions of bureaucracy and technocracy have implications for our evaluation of their utility and normative content. Starting with bureaucracy as it developed within the modern state alongside democratic consolidation, we will organize our exploration into three periods: 1) Bureaucracy in the modern state, nineteenth-early twentieth centuries; 2) Bureaucracy and technocracy of the welfare state, mid-twentieth century; and 3) Neo-bureaucracies of the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Establishing continuity over historical periods, while recognizing difference, will allow us to evaluate the applicability of older critiques of bureaucracy from various points of view.

Course Requirements:

- Reading, participation, response papers, 10% of final grade
Students must hand in 8 non-graded reading response papers, 1-1.5 pages in length
- Three papers (and rough drafts), 5-7 pages, double-spaced, addressing topics that will be handed out in class, each worth 30%
 - Your third paper may be an extension and substantial revision of one of the first two

1. Introduction
2. Max Weber, "Bureaucracy" in Gerth and Mills, *From Max Weber*
3. Weber "Bureaucracy" cont.
and John Stuart Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government*, Ch. 6
4. Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation" in Gerth and Mills, *From Max Weber*
5. Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation" in Gerth and Mills, *From Max Weber*
6. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*
7. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (cont.) (rough draft of paper 1 due)
8. Émile Durkheim, *Professional Ethics and Civic Morals*, sections on democracy
9. Émile Durkheim, *Socialism and Saint-Simon*, Ch. 8
10. G.W.F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, sections on the executive power
Shlomo Avineri, *Hegel's Theory of the Modern State*, Ch. 9
11. Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Ch. 3 and 6
Hannah Arendt, "Franz Kafka: A Revaluation" in *Partisan Review* (1944) (final draft of paper 1)
12. Cont. Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Ch. 3 and 6
Hannah Arendt, "Franz Kafka: A Revaluation" in *Partisan Review* (1944)
13. Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*
Albert Camus, *The Plague* (short excerpt)
14. Cont. Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*
Albert Camus, *The Plague*
15. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*
16. Hannah Arendt, *On Violence*, sections 2 and 3 (rough draft of paper 2)
17. Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, Introduction, Ch. 2, Conclusion
18. Cont. Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, Introduction, Ch. 2, Conclusion
19. Ludwig von Mises, *Bureaucracy*
Friedrich von Hayek, "The Use of Knowledge in Society"

- Dardot and Laval (chapter from reader to be specified)
20. Robert K. Merton, “Bureaucratic Structure and Personality”
Alvin W. Gouldner, *Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy* (final draft paper 2)
 21. Carole Pateman, *Participation and Democratic Theory*
 22. Pierre Rosanvallon, *Democratic Legitimacy*, Introduction, Ch. 4, 5 (excerpt), 10
Jennifer Hudson, Review of Rosanvallon’s *Democratic Legitimacy*
 23. Cont. Pierre Rosanvallon, *Democratic Legitimacy*, Introduction, Ch. 4, 5 (excerpt), 10
Jennifer Hudson, Review of Rosanvallon’s *Democratic Legitimacy* (rough draft paper 3)
 24. Giandomenico Majone, “The Regulatory State and its Legitimacy Problems”
 25. Michel Foucault, “Governmentality”
Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, Ch. 11 and 12
 26. Richard Sennett, *The Culture of the New Capitalism*, Ch. 1
 27. Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval, *The New Way of the World: On Neoliberal Society*,
chapters to be specified
 28. Conclusion (final draft of paper 3)