

Module full title	Democracy in Crisis
SITS Module Code	4PIRS002W
Credit level	Level 4
Length	
UK credit value	20
ECTS credit value	10
College	Liberal Arts and Sciences
School	Social Sciences
Host programme of study	<i>None defined</i>
Progression and assessment board	
Pre-requisites	None
Co-requisites	None
Study abroad	Yes
Special features	None
Access restrictions	None
Are the module learning outcomes delivered, assessed or supported through an arrangement with organisation(s) other than the University of Westminster:	No
Summary of module content	This module introduces students to the contested idea and practice of democracy. At the end of the twentieth century, it appeared that democracy was well on the way to achieving universal consent; but recently we have witnessed significant challenges to this trend across the globe. This module investigates the nature of these very different challenges to democracy, whether the rise of anti-politics in advanced industrial nations or the failures of the Arab Spring to replace autocratic with democratic regimes.

Assessment Methods

Rank	Assessment type	Assessment name	Weighting	Qualifying Mark	Qualifying set (where the minimum mark required applies across multiple assessments)
	Portfolio	Portfolio	10		
	Coursework Group Practical	Group Video	40		
	Coursework	Poster	50		

Synoptic assessment

Learning outcomes

By the end of this module students will be able to:

1. Understand the contested nature of democratic ideals and practice;
2. Understand and evaluate contemporary challenges to the concept and practice of democracy across very different political contexts and cultures';
3. Reflect on one challenge to democracy in detail through the medium of video and poster;
4. Work with other students in the creation of a multi-media presentation;
5. Present ideas in a way that is accessible to a general audience.

Course outcomes the module contributes to

All course outcomes are developed in the learning process without necessarily constituting primary module learning outcomes and without being directly assessed. The module learning outcomes are, however, a specific form of development of the following course outcomes:

L4.1 - The ability to identify the primary characteristics of Politics as a scholarly discipline, informed by key theories and political concepts, in the context of cognate disciplines (KU). [BA Politics]

L4.2 - Competence in identifying and distinguishing a variety of approaches to the study of Politics, which may conflict with one another (KU). [BA Politics]

L4.3 - The ability to evaluate the role of historical, structural, cultural and ideational dimensions of political processes, in theory and in practice (KU). [BA Politics]

L4.4 - An awareness of a relationship between political ideas and political agency and behaviour (KU). [BA Politics]

L4.5 - An awareness of different territorial and geostrategic locations of political agency, and of their interactions (KU). [BA Politics]

Indicative syllabus content

Although the exact content covered in this module may vary from year to year, students should expect to cover some or all of the following areas:

Introduction to the contested nature of democracy. This will offer both a historical and conceptual account of the emergence and spread of democratic ideas, including:

- Athenian democracy;
- The emergence of representative democracy;
- Waves of democratization.

Critical engagement with contemporary challenges to democracy. The contested nature of democracy will be given practical content through the analysis of a range of contemporary challenges. While the nature of these challenges will respond to current developments in politics, certain themes are likely to remain pertinent. For example:

- The rise and implications of anti-politics in advanced industrial democracies;
- Democracy and Islam, especially in relation to the emergence and impact of the Arab Spring;
- Democracy and international institutions, such as the Security Council, World Bank, etc.;
- Democracy and emerging powers, including India, Brazil and China.

Teaching and learning methods

The lectures will introduce students to the conceptual and historical development of democracy and its contested nature at both theoretical and practical levels. Experts within the Department in particular challenges to/for democracy will introduce students to their area of expertise. Lectures will be interactive – setting students tasks as part of the development of their understanding.

A weekly two-hour seminar will allow a student-led exploration of the challenges to democracy, both at conceptual and practical levels. Students will be required to analyse the nature of democratic challenges and to explore how these challenges might be ameliorated or overcome.

Students will be provided with training in how to produce a high quality video recording using smart phones and/or basic computer equipment. Support will also be provided during the production process.

Two one-hour screenings of the group videos will take place where students will offer peer- to-peer feedback on the work of other groups (having agreed the criteria through a democratic process) and award a prize for the best three videos. Final assessment will be by the course teaching team.

A three-hour event will be held at the end of the module where students display and defend their posters. Students will provide peer-to-peer feedback and assessment (having agreed the criteria through a democratic process) and award a prize for the three best posters. Final assessment will be by the course teaching team.

Activity type	Category	Student learning and teaching hours *
Lecture	Scheduled	24
Seminar	Scheduled	12
Tutorial	Scheduled	
Project supervisor	Scheduled	4
Demonstration	Scheduled	5
Practical classes and workshops	Scheduled	3
Supervised time in studio/workshop	Scheduled	
Fieldwork	Scheduled	
External visits	Scheduled	
Work based learning	Scheduled	
Scheduled online learning	Scheduled	
Other learning	Scheduled	
Total scheduled		48
Placement	Placement	
Independent study	Independent	152
Total student learning and teaching hours		200

* hours per activity type are indicative and subject to change

Assessment rationale: Why has this assessment been used for this module?

The assessment regime is designed to support and evaluate the development and final level of student achievement of the module learning outcomes. It tests the entire range of module learning outcomes via three pieces of assessment.

CW1: Portfolio [LO 1-2]

The learning portfolio is designed to promote informed participation within the weekly workshops. It is composed of 10 sets of reading notes, produced weekly at the workshops (from Week 2 to Week 11). These are a minimum one page in length including the main points from the readings and issues for discussion. The notes will be marked according to the degree of engagement with the reading for that week.

CW2: Group video [LO 3-4]

The video requires students to work in small groups to present an analysis of a current challenge to democracy in an accessible form. It will be an example (and training) in 'citizen journalism', using new technology for critical reflection on a topical issue of concern.

In marking the group video, academic staff will consider:

- The extent to which the remit of the assignment has been met;
- Evidence of data collection;
- Evaluation of reliability of sources and ability to identify problems with sources;
- Comprehensive usage of sources;
- The correct attribution of sources;
- Attention to detail in the information;
- Quality of collation of the information and material;
- Ability to summarise information;
- Presentation of data and arguments in an accessible and visually arresting manner;
- Capacity to work as a group.

CW3: Poster [LO 5]

The poster requires students to summarise the characteristics, impact and potential response to a democratic 'crisis' or challenge in a visually arresting form: using a combination of text and image for the poster, plus a 500-word explanation of the approach taken.

Assessment criteria: What criteria will be used to assess my work on this module?

University Grade Descriptors are a benchmark point of reference, they are contextualised using specific subject specialist criteria specific to a particular assessment.

[University Grade Descriptors](#)

Assessment criteria:

- The extent to which the remit of the assignment has been met;
- Evidence of data collection and ability to identify relevant sources;
- Attention to detail in the information;
- Quality of collation of the information and material;
- Ability to summarise a political issue in a visually-arresting form;
- Ability to offer an explanation of the chosen approach.