This seminar is on different aspects of the majority rule. Because rule by majority is, in different forms, a core feature of contemporary democracies, understanding its properties is essential to understanding and evaluating our democratic practice. We will examine arguments, some historical, others contemporary, for and against the majority rule and seek to assess their power and purchase.

Assignments
Because the reading material is cumulative and, at times, somewhat technical, it is critical that students in the seminar do their readings by the assigned dates. The grades will be determined by class discussion (30%), a midterm exam (25%), weekly 1-2 page thought papers (20%), and the final paper project (25%).

The weekly thought papers, identifying and critically probing an issue of particular interest in a given week’s readings will be due by 10pm on the Tuesdays before the class. The final research paper will be based on a group project and will be due at the end of term.

Schedule of Topics and Readings

1. Justifications of Majoritarian Democracy

2. A Bit of History
3. Axiomatizing Majority Rule


4. What Kind of Voters?


5. In Defense of Epistocracy?


6. Aggregating Reasons Across Persons


**MIDTERM EXAM**

7. What Kind of Elections?


8. The Epistemic Value of Majority


9. **Constraining the Majority: Federalism**


Madison, James. 1787. “Vices of the Political System of the United States.”


10. **Constraining the Majority: Judicial Review**


11. **Minority Representation**

