

Feb 4: Democracy, Ancient and Modern

Ruling

Aristotle: Regime types, and what is meant by "democracy."

Kingship	Tyranny
Aristocracy	Oligarchy
Polity	Democracy

Aristotle says the main difference between regime types is who rules, and the whole debate about what kind of government you have is a debate about who has the right to rule. So democracy was a partisan term.... until it became the only legitimate form of government. But does that mean that we all agree on what exactly democracy is?

And we could add: what kind of rules these rulers have the right to make:

Ancients v. moderns, Aristotle v. Constant, esp. ostracism and censorship. But think also about current debates: who has the right to vote; what are the conditions for citizenship; does the government have the authority to regulate private life, economic life? What is the role of religion in government? Should government deal with individuals or communities?

Participating

Ancients v. moderns, direct v. delegative.

Pericles v. Constant v. Tocqueville

Internet democracy?

Making a living

Constant and Tocqueville on commerce and democracy.

What is the relationship between democracy and "equality of conditions"? Is one necessary for the other?

How democracy could go horribly wrong, and what to do about it

Federalist papers:

#10: tyranny of the majority / Aristotle's tyranny of the poor

#14: inefficient exercise of power

#39: too much centralization of power

#63: instability, or aristocracy?

Constant: too much attention to one's private life

Tocqueville: general mediocrity at best (US); vice and instability at worst (Europe)