

Gov 97 Week 1: What is democracy?

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(1) Features of democracies → ask students to brainstorm features of democracies

- Categorize into principles, institutions, rights/liberties, social conditions, political culture
- Many facets to democracy, which will be discussed in the coming weeks

(2) Shklar

- Right to vote as a sign of civic standing/social status rather than a way of bringing about political change

(3) Dworkin

- Dependent vs detached conceptions of democracy
 - Detached conception: procedural equality
 - Dependent conception: treats everyone with equal concern. This can mean a concern with outcomes (not necessarily equality of outcome)
 - Note: concept vs conception
- What are Dworkin's objections to the detached conception?
 - Equality of impact
 - Equality of influence
- What does it mean to treat people with "equal concern"?
- An equal vote: necessary but not sufficient for democracy? What else is necessary?
- Choice-sensitive vs choice-insensitive political decisions
- Takeaway: equality is a problematic concept. Could also clash with other democratic values, e.g. liberty.

(4) Other conceptions of democracy (Hand, Walzer)

- The collective/common good v. the aggregation of interests (Hand)
- Different modes of political activity (Walzer)
- If democracy is government by the people, who are "the people"? – e.g. are they the people in Tahrir Square? All citizens? Only those who turn out to vote?
- Learned [Hand](#) on the spirit of liberty as the spirit that's not too sure it's right