

Tsin Yen Koh

## Gov 97 Week 2: Democracy ancient and modern

### Overview

- Theme for the class: self-government vs representative/delegated government

#### (1) Ancient vs modern democracy

- Key features of each – dangers of ancient democracy, how the system of representative government was meant to counter these dangers (using Constant to structure the discussion)
- Benefits of ancient democracy – e.g. is there enough/the right kind of political participation today? (cf. Aristotle, Constant)
- Dangers of modern democracy – e.g. Tocqueville's milder despotism (if students are assigned extra reading from Tocqueville)
- Relevance to the political system today – e.g. role of political parties (link to Week 3)

#### (2) Citizenship

- Prompt: citizenship for sale in [Malta](#)
- Cf. Aristotle on citizenship and political participation; to Shklar (Week 1) on the different roles of the citizen through history

#### (3) Build your own democracy exercise

- To synthesize discussions in the first two weeks and look ahead to the next week or so

### **Build your own democracy!**

*If you were to America 2.0 what Solon were to Athens, what kind of democracy would you have? Pick one option for each choice, and explain your choice with reference to the readings. Make sure your choices do not contradict one another.*

1. Would you have a federal state **or** a centralized national administration?
2. Would your legislative assembly have one chamber **or** more than one chamber?
3. Would your legislators be selected through elections **or** by lot?
4. Would you have organized political parties **or** individual legislators?
5. Would you have quotas in the legislature for women and ethnic minorities **or** no quotas?
6. Would your legislators make all legislative decisions **or** would some decisions be made by popular referenda (or internet voting)?

7. Who would get to vote? All citizens (say above 18) *or* a more restricted group (e.g. limited by age, property, education etc.) *or* an expanded group (e.g. including permanent residents, immigrants, citizens of former colonies etc.)?

8. Would you have voluntary voting *or* mandatory voting?

9. Would you have mandatory military service *or* voluntary military service?