Overview of class
In this seminar we will examine some of the fundamental ideas and questions behind democracy and provide a reading of their "inventors". Some of the questions are: What is democracy? Is it a form of government, a value, an ideal, a political system, a form of life, a bit of all this? Is democracy always the best political solution (in wartime? general starvation?)? Why should the whole of the people decide and not the specialists in the respective questions? Are all democratically taken decisions automatically legitimate (what about minorities' rights?)? How should all citizens in a democracy participate in politics? By direct self-government of the people or by voting representatives? Is everything democratically decidable or does the individual have unalterable rights? Is tolerance and/or free speech necessary for democracy and how far can it go?

Learning Objectives
This Seminar will acquaint the students with the core ideas of major classics of democratic theory from Aristotle to Habermas. The method will be that of a historically guided systematic development of the normative ideal "democratic state", on which students at the conclusion of the course will be able to write a competent research paper that uses central sources. Writing with sources and producing a standard academic research paper will be the other main focus of the instruction in the Seminar.