In this seminar we will examine contemporary conceptions of democracy (minimal, pluralist, agonistic, deliberative, etc.) to see how each of them interprets the democratic ideal of a society of free and equal citizens, and how they propose, in consequence, to organize social and political institutions. Although the normative assumptions of these conceptions vary widely, all of them share the assumption of a relatively closed society of a single nation-state. However, under current conditions of globalization, this is no longer a plausible assumption. Indeed, unless transnational democratization is possible, the future of democracy seems seriously threatened. Thus the main challenge facing contemporary democratic theory is to figure out whether the essential components of democratic legitimacy (such as citizens’ participation in political decision making, public deliberation, etc.) can be reproduced at the global level. In the second part of the seminar, we will address this difficult question by analyzing some recent proposals for a new international order (Rawls, Habermas, Held, etc.) with a focus on the level of democratization beyond national borders that each of them considers feasible and desirable.