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Urgent Issues, Extraordinary Politics
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Is More Democracy the Cure for Democracy's Ills? Is the Process the Problem? Or Are We Hyper-democratic?

- I. Introduction to the Course
- II. Overview of Our Current Political Moment: A Crisis of Responsiveness and the 2016 National Elections
- III. Andrew Sullivan Sounds the Alarm: Is American Hyper-democracy Ripe for Tyranny?
 - A. The Platonic Foundations of Sullivan's Argument: The Fetish of Freedom and Equality
 - B. The American Republic's Neo-Platonic Architecture
 - C. The Gradual and Rapid Erosion of America's Counter-Majoritarian Checks
 - The Move to Less Indirect Democracy
 - The Presidential Nominating Process Transformed—Shifting Power from Elites to the People
 - The New Media Democracy: Lowering Costs and Removing Filters in Information Transfer, Boundary Breaking & Mobilization
 - D. Main Planks in Sullivan's Position
 - Obama then Trump Expose the Potentials for Hyper-Democracy
 - Donald Trump's Intuitive Grasp of the New Media Environment
 - Intuitive Grasp of 'Acute Frustration' (diminished expectations) as Fertile Source of Mass Movement Politics

- Failure of Political Mainstream—especially Democrats—to Respond to or even Acknowledge this Frustration
- Trump’s “Fascistic” Potentials

E. A Simple Critique of Sullivan: More Tocqueville, Less Plato

IV. The Limits of the Current Political Process I: Money in Politics, Non-Responsiveness, and Growing Mistrust of the Political Class as Such

- A. Money in Politics Before *Citizens United* (Gilens & Page)
- B. Money in Politics After *Citizens United*: *McCutcheon vs FEC*

V. The Limits of the Current Political Process II: The Roots of Polarization and Paralysis

- A. Electoral Factors: Districting
- B. Electoral Factors: Mobilization/Participation Alternation
- C. A Recipe for Divided Government and Paralyzed Politics
- D. Do Political Paralysis, Globalization and Shrinking Capacity Favor One Party or One Social Group’s Policy Agenda? Policy Drift and The Implication for Inequality, etc. (Hacker & Pierson)

VI. The Limits of the Current Political Process III: Civil Society and the Media Environment

- A. Lepore’s Thesis: Media Revolutions Drive Political Realignment
- B. The Current Media Revolution
- C. The Decline of Associations and Local Institutions: Tocqueville’s Nightmare

VI. Completing the Circle: A Dangerous Election?