

EPS, Thursday, March 6, 3-5pm

**Alexander Guerrero**

Thursday Public Lecture

**Title:** Lottocracy: Democracy Without Elections

**Abstract:** Democracy is in trouble. What is going wrong? The first part of the talk argues that, perhaps surprisingly, the problem is with the heart of modern democracy: the election. Elections are failing as accountability mechanisms. Elections provide powerful short-term incentives, leading elected politicians to downplay long-term catastrophic concerns. Elections create division where none need exist. Elections and elected officials are easily bought off and captured by the elite. The most powerful among us take advantage of this to control who is elected, what policies are enacted, and which problems are ignored. As a result, modern electoral democracies are often incapable of helping us solve the urgent problems we face. What should we do? The second part of the talk introduces a radically new form of democracy: lottocracy. Lottocratic systems include many new elements, but the most striking is the shift from using elected representatives to using representatives selected through lottery. I introduce lottocratic systems, their potential advantages, and potential concerns. The argument engages with foundational philosophical questions, considering how rights of political participation, political equality, political power, considerations of accountability and legitimacy, and the nature of democracy itself are illuminated and reconfigured once we move past the electoral representative framework.