

**Democracy in Crisis?
Understanding Historical Approaches
and Contemporary Challenges to
Democracy**

Sample Syllabus

Instructor

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Office hours: Mondays, 3:00–5:00

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Course Description

This course begins with an overview of approaches to theories of democracy and democratization from a historical and comparative perspective, and then uses this foundational work to introduce contemporary challenges to democracy in the form of failed consolidation, autocratic reversal, and especially democratic backslide. The lectures and readings for this course will span many countries and most regions of the world, but overall the focus will be thematic rather than geographically based. The course will begin with material on the definition of democracy and other related concepts, and then will give an overview of existing theories of the causes, pre-requisites, and means of democratization, highlighting how theories and approaches have shifted over time in response to empirical changes across the three “waves” of democracy. We will then turn to the concept of “democratic consolidation”, focusing in particular on characteristics and theoretical causes of consolidation, such as political culture, civil society, and political institutions. Finally, we will discuss what happens when consolidation fails, focusing on the concepts and causes of autocratic reversion, democratic backslide, populism, and illiberal democracy. We conclude the course with discussions of different examples of democratic backslide around the world, and what these cases suggest about the future prospects for liberal democracy.

Course Requirements

1. **Attendance and Participation:** Students are required to attend all class meetings having carefully read all the assigned readings. You should be prepared to summarize the main argument and/or findings of the readings, suggest one question that the reading raises, and discuss one positive and one negative aspect of them.
2. **Reading Quizzes:** There will be short quizzes on the assigned reading at the beginning of each class. These quizzes are designed simply to test whether or not you have done the reading, and thus should be straightforward if you have prepared for class.
3. **Midterm:** The mid-term exam will be an in-class exam.
4. **Final Project:** In lieu of a final exam, your final project for this course will be a research paper (20–25 pages). This paper should address a topic and pose a question relevant to the material discussed in the course. We will discuss the specifics of the final paper in class, but a one-page paper

topic proposal will be due the week after the midterm exam, and a three-page outline and bibliography for the paper will be due one month before the final project is due.

Grade breakdown:

- Attendance and Participation (including reading quizzes): 30%
- Midterm Exam: 30%
- Final Project: 40%

Course Policies

- *Communication with professor:* Your professor is here to help. In addition to holding weekly office hours, I am available via email; however, please do not expect a response within less than 24 business hours.
- *Missed quizzes:* There will be no make-ups for missed reading quizzes unless you contact me prior to missing class with a valid, documented excuse for why you will be absent.
- *Midterm:* Again, unless you have contacted me prior to the midterm exam day with a valid, documented reason why you will be unable to take the exam at the scheduled time, there will be no opportunities to re-take the exam.
- *Final project:* Without prior documentation, no late submissions will be accepted for credit.

Required Books

There are no required books for this course. The readings will either be made available online, or will be on reserve in the library for students to check out.

Academic Misconduct

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations.

Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp).

All students believe that they know how not to plagiarize. Many of them are wrong. Every year, many of them find that out the hard way. Don't be one of them.

The short version is that passing off another person's work or ideas as your own is plagiarism. That includes the unacknowledged word-for-word use or paraphrasing of another person's work or ideas. It is not enough, for example, simply to copy and paste a passage and then cite the source at the end. If the passage is taken word-for-word, it must be in quotes as well to indicate that fact.

There is an excellent video at <http://hdl.handle.net/1811/46848>, if you have any doubts. You should be crystal clear, as the University's policies exist to ensure fairness, and violators of University regulations on academic integrity will be dealt with severely.

Disability Services

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.

Schedule of Readings

Session 1: Introduction

- Sen, A. (1999). "Democracy as a Universal Value." *Journal of Democracy*, 10(3), 3-17.

Session 2: Defining Democracy Part I

- Schumpeter, Joseph. 1947. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. New York: Harper & Brothers. Chapters 21 and 22.

- Przeworski, Adam. 1999. "Minimalist Conception of Democracy: A Defense."

Session 3: Defining Democracy Part II

- Dahl, Robert. 1971. *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971. pp. 1-32.
- Zakaria, F. (1997). "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy". *Foreign Affairs*, 76(6), 22-43.

Session 4: What is Democracy? - Conceptual Confusion

- Schmitter, P. C., & Karl, T. L. (1991). "What Democracy is ... And is Not," *Journal of Democracy*, 2(3), 75-88.
- Diamond, L. J. (2002). "Thinking About Hybrid Regimes. *Journal of Democracy*," 13(2), 21-35.
- Munck, G. L., & Verkuilen, J. (2002). "Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy: Evaluating Alternative Indices". *Comparative Political Studies*, 35(1), 5-34.

Session 5: Development and Democracy I

- Moore, Barrington. (1966). *The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. Boston: Beacon Press. pp. 413-432.
- Lipset, Seymour Martin. (1959). "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy." *American Political Science Review* 53(1): pp. 69-105.

Session 6: Development and Democracy II

- Przeworski, A., & Limongi, F. (1997). "Modernization: Theories and Facts." *World Politics*, 49(2), 155-183.
- Acemoglu, Daron & Robinson, James. (2006). *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 2.

Session 7: Civic Culture and Democracy

- Almond, G., & Verba, S. (1963). *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*. The Civic Culture. Sage Publications. Chapter 1
- Stepan, A. (2000). "Religion, Democracy, and the 'Twin Tolerations'," *The Journal of Democracy* 11(4), pp. 37-57.

Session 8: The Third Wave of Democracy

- O'Donnell, G., & Schmitter, P. C. (1986). *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Huntington, S. P. (1991). *Democracy's Third Wave*. *Journal of Democracy*, 2(2), 12-34.
- Fukuyama, F. (1989). "The End of History?." *The National Interest*.

Session 9: Elections and Democracy I

- Lindberg, S. (2010). "Democratization by Elections: A New Mode of Transition." Introduction and Chapter 1.
- Haggard, S., & Kaufman, R. R. (2016). "Democratization During the Third Wave". *Annual Review of Political Science*, 19, 125-144.

Session 10: Elections and Democracy II

- Flores, T. E., & Nooruddin, I. (2016). *Elections in Hard Times: Building Stronger Democracies in the 21st Century*. Washington, DC: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1 and 2.

Session 11: International Sources of Democratization

- Gleditsch, K. S., & Ward, M. D. (2006). "Diffusion and the International Context of Democratization". *International Organization*, 60(4), 911-933.
- Pevehouse, J. C. (2002). "Democracy from the Outside-In? International Organizations and Democratization." *International Organization*, 56(3), 515-549.
- Carothers, T. (2002). "The End of the Transition Paradigm". *Journal of Democracy*, 13(1), 5-21.

Session 12: Recap/Midterm Review

- No readings. Prepare questions to discuss about the midterm.

Session 13: MIDTERM

Session 14: Democratic Consolidation: Definitions

- Schedler, A. (1998). "What is Democratic Consolidation?", *Journal of Democracy*, 9(2), 91-107.
- Fortin, J. (2012). "Is There a Necessary Condition for Democracy? The Role of State Capacity in Postcommunist Countries". *Comparative Political Studies*, 45(7), 903-930.

- Herman, L. E. (2015). "Re-evaluating the post-communist success story: party elite loyalty, citizen mobilization and the erosion of Hungarian democracy." *European Political Science Review*.

Session 15: Democratic Consolidation & Institutions

- Huntington, S. P. (1968). *Political Order in Changing Societies*. New Haven: Yale University Press, chapter 1.
- Linz, J. J. (1990). "The Perils of Presidentialism". *Journal of Democracy*.
- Fortin, J. (2012). "Is There a Necessary Condition for Democracy? The Role of State Capacity in Postcommunist Countries". *Comparative Political Studies*, 45(7), 903-930.
- **Final paper topic proposal due online by 11:59pm tonight!**

Session 16: Autocratic Reversion

- Linz, Juan J. & Stepan, Alfred. 1989. *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press. Chapters 2 and 3.
- Svoboda, M. (2008). "Authoritarian Reversals and Democratic Consolidation". *American Political Science Review*, 102(2), 153-168.

Session 17: Democratic Backslide & Erosion: Introduction

- Kapstein, E. B., & Converse, N. (2008). "Why Democracies Fail". *Journal of Democracy*, 19(4), 57-68.
- Diamond, L. (2008). "The Democratic Rollback: The Resurgence of the Predatory State." *Foreign Affairs*, 87(2), 36-48.
- Foa, R. S., & Mounk, Y. (2017). "The Signs of Deconsolidation". *Journal of Democracy*, 28(1).

Session 18: Democratic Backslide & Erosion: Definitions

- Lust, Ellen & Waldner, David. (2015). “Unwelcome Change: Understanding, Evaluating, and Extending Theories of Democratic Backsliding.” Washington, DC: USAID. pp. 1-15.
- Bermeo, N. (2016). “On Democratic Backsliding”. *Journal of Democracy*, 27(1), 5-19.

Session 19: Democratic Backslide & Institutions I

- Corrales, Javier & Michael Penfold. 2014. “Manipulating Term Limits in Latin America.” *Journal of Democracy* 25(4): pp. 157-168.
- Gehlbach, Scott. 2010. “Reflections on Putin and the Media.” *Post-Soviet Affairs* 26(1): pp. 77-87.
- Hill, Daniel & Yonatan Lupu. “Restrictions on the news media are a bellwether for two disturbing trends.” *The Washington Post*. April 17, 2017.

Session 20: Democratic Backslide & Institutions II

- Gibler, D. M., & Randazzo, K. A. (2011). “Testing the Effects of Independent Judiciaries on the Likelihood of Democratic Backsliding”. *American Journal of Political Science*, 55(3), 696-709.
- Fish, M. S. (2006). “Stronger Legislatures, Stronger Democracies”. *Journal of Democracy*, 17(1), 5-20.

Session 21: Populism

- Berman, Sheri. (2017). “The Pipe Dream of Undemocratic Liberalism.” *Journal of Democracy* 28(3): 29-38.
- Kendall-Taylor, Andrea & Frantz, Erica. “How Democracies Fall Apart: Why Populism is a Pathway to Autocracy”. *Foreign Affairs*, December 5, 2016.

- Weyland, Kurt. “There are 4 big barriers to the populist model in America (and your democracy is safe).” *The Washington Post*. August 11, 2017.
- **3-page outline of final project + annotated bibliography due online by 11:59pm tonight!!**

Session 22: Mass Responses to Democratic Backslide

- Stephan, Maria & Erica Chenoweth. (2008). “Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict.” *International Security* 33(1), pp. 7-44.
- Chenoweth, Erica. “People Are in the Streets Protesting Donald Trump. But When Does Protest Actually Work?” *The Washington Post*. November 21, 2016.

Session 23: Contemporary Democratic Backslide: Latin America

- Weyland, Kurt. (2013). “Latin America’s Authoritarian Drift: The Threat from the Populist Left.” *Journal of Democracy* 24(3): 18-32.
- Levitsky, Steven & James Loxtton. (2013). “Populism and Competitive Authoritarianism in the Andes.” *Democratization* 20(1): 107-36.

Session 24: Contemporary Democratic Backslide: Africa

- Gyimah-Boadi, E. (2015). “Africa’s Waning Democratic Commitment.” *Journal of Democracy* 26(1): 101-13.
- Bratton, Michael, and E. Gyimah-Boadi. (2016). “Political Risks Facing African Democracies: Evidence from Afrobarometer.” Afrobarometer Working Paper No. 157.
- Louw-Vaudran, Liesl. “Term-limit changes the biggest threat to democracy in Africa?” ISS Today. September 14, 2016.

Session 25: Contemporary Democratic Backslide: Russia & Turkey

- Gessen, Marsha. (2012). *The Man Without a Face: The Unlikely Rise of Vladimir Putin*. New York: Riverhead. Chapters 6, 7 and 8.
- Esen, Berk & Gumuscu, Sebnem. (2016). “Rising competitive authoritarianism in Turkey”. *Third World Quarterly*, 37(9).

Session 26: Contemporary Democratic Backslide: Central & Eastern Europe

- Mungiu-Pippidi, A. (2014). “The Transformative Power of Europe Revisited”. *Journal of Democracy*, 25(1), 20-32.
- Rupnik, J. (2016). “Surging Illiberalism in the East.” *Journal of Democracy*, 27(4), 77-87.
- Nalepa, Monika. “This is what the gradual erosion of rule of law looks like in Poland.” *The Washington Post*, January 23, 2017.
- Mortkowitz Bauerova, Ladka. “How a Tokyo-Born Outsider Became the Face of Czech Nationalism”, *Bloomberg*. October 12, 2017.

Session 27: Contemporary Democratic Backslide: Asia

- Slater, Dan. (2013). “Democratic Careening.” *World Politics* 65(4): 729-63.
- Kurlantzick, Joshua. (2014). “Southeast Asia’s Regression From Democracy and Its Implications.” Council on Foreign Relations Working Paper.

Session 28: Future Prospects for (Liberal) Democracy

- Ulfelder, Jay. “What Now?” *Political Violence @ a Glance*. November 12, 2016.

- Levitsky, Steven, and Daniel Ziblatt. “Is Donald Trump a Threat to Democracy?” *The New York Times*. December 16, 2016.

Session 29: Course Wrap-Up

- No readings
- Class-time to work on final paper/ask any final questions.
- **Final project due by Sunday online at 11:59pm!!**