Course Description

The literature on democratization of political regimes has grown exponentially over the past couple of decades. This interest in political science has grown in large part as a response to real-world events: since the 1970s, the number of democratic regimes in the world has more than doubled, to total approximately 125 today (depending on whose definition of “democratic” we use), down from a high-water mark of approximately 140 in the early 2000s. In recent years an enormous number of “grey zone” regimes and electoral authoritarian regimes have developed in new and seemingly durable forms, leading scholars to question the initial theoretical paradigm of democratization that assumed full-fledged democracies as the outcome. Yet the Arab Spring of 2010-2011 renewed interest in the apparent relevance of democratic transitions. Despite all of the scholarly scrutiny, we still possess inadequate knowledge of the dynamics causing the onset of democracy and different regime outcomes, and a great deal of disagreement persists among scholars concerning the best way to define democracy.

In this course, we begin by considering some controversies in defining democracy and how universalizable it is, as well as the dominant schools of thought in explaining the emergence and “consolidation” of democratic regimes. We will then move to examine specific factors influencing democratization: formal institutional design, civil society, economic crisis and post-conflict environments, rival authoritarian options, and the international environment and foreign aid. We end the course with a critical examination of the dominant paradigm focused on “transition” and “consolidation” of new democracies.

Because of the time limits of the course, we will restrict ourselves to certain topics. The course focuses on transitions to democratic rule in countries that have recently been ruled by authoritarian regimes, rather than the problems of insufficient democratic practices in countries that long ago established democratic regimes. Thus, we largely leave aside questions such as voter apathy, lack of political participation, inequality, and the rise of nationalist populism in Western longstanding democracies (although no doubt these issues will come up in discussion!). I will bring examples from many diverse areas of the world, with cases of attempted democratization from the beginning of the third wave through today. Countries of the former
Soviet Union, particularly Russia, are my area of regional expertise, so these countries will be discussed frequently, as will recently salient cases around the world. I welcome you to participate in class discussion and to raise interesting examples or counter-examples from any countries in transition with which you may be familiar. For your group presentations in the course, you will also be tasked with researching the politics of a select set of countries that are currently undergoing challenges to democracy in significant ways.

We are forced to breeze through extremely important and complicated topics of discussion. However, it is my hope that this brief introduction to several topics will whet your appetite to read and learn more about processes of democratization around the world.

We have a teaching assistant for the course, named Stefano Burzo. Stefano is a PhD student in political science, who will be assisting by coaching you in developing and revising your research papers for the class, marking the research proposals and papers, and organizing and assisting with peer evaluation and group work. In addition, he will be attending some class sessions and meeting with you one-on-one in office hours to assist you.

Beyond the substantive topic of the course, there are several additional goals for this seminar. One is to “gel” your class as a cohort who will carry on together through your fourth year in the honours program. For that reason, we will be doing a great deal of small group work together and responding to one another’s ideas. We will also have a potluck lunch celebrating the end of the course following the last class of the term. In addition, during the course we will endeavor to strengthen your skills of academic writing and argumentation in the disciplinary style of political science. We will also work to increase your awareness of the variety of research methods scholars use in political science, and the advantages and drawbacks of them, as you head towards thinking about the question you will study and methods you will use to do so in your honours thesis. As such, throughout we will be attentive to how scholars in comparative politics select and analyze evidence, construct their arguments, and write about their research. Student assignments will emphasize critical engagement with this literature and peer-group discussions of one another’s ideas and arguments.

**Course Requirements and Evaluation**

1. **Weekly online reading responses (due each week by the beginning of class) (10 percent total):**
   - Each class, you must submit a brief online written response on the course Canvas site, in which you react to the week’s readings. This post should be no more than a few paragraphs and certainly no longer than 500 words, and the online format allows all of your classmates to read it. The post is to be submitted on the Canvas course site discussion board that is located in that week’s course module section of the site. Do not agonize over its elegance, since you will receive credit as long as you submit a response that refers to all of the readings. You may submit your response any time prior to class but you must submit it by the start of class (not after class), or you will not receive credit for it. You must at least briefly mention all of the required readings and your reactions could include affirmation, criticism, or simply questions about the readings for the week. These responses will demonstrate to me that you have
prepared for class and will provide a participation avenue more suited to those students who experience discomfort speaking in class. Ideally they will also help you to formulate some points to raise in class. These responses are marked on a pass/fail basis. You are not expected to submit a response on the week in which you submit a critical response paper on the readings, or on weeks when there are no assigned readings, and you are permitted to skip one additional week of the term without notice or penalty.

2. Critical response paper and brief oral comments on one week’s readings (5-7 pages, double-spaced) (20 percent)

- The paper is to be based on your reading and analysis of the required readings for the week for which you have signed up. If you have accumulated knowledge and experience on a certain region of the world, this will be your chance to put it to work! Refer to the more detailed description of the assignment at the end of this syllabus. Professor Sundstrom will be marking this assignment.

- Initial submission (worth 5 percent, pass/fail basis): You must write your paper on the material for the week in which you will present to the class on the week’s readings. Papers are due to me at the beginning of class on the date the readings are addressed in class. The initial submission has low grade weight and is marked on a pass/fail basis (full marks if submitted on time; zero marks if not submitted or submitted late). While the grade weight is low, the more effort and thought you put into your initial submission, the better comments I can offer for revision and the less work you are likely to have to do for the resubmission!

- Revised resubmission (15 percent): At some point in the term after receiving feedback and a mark from me on your initially submitted draft, you must revise and resubmit your paper to me, based on the feedback you have received. The latest date on which you are permitted to submit your revised paper to me is on Monday, December 4 (UNLESS you wrote your paper for the final section of material, Week 12 – in that case you have until December 11 to submit the revised paper to me via email). You should submit your hard copy paper to me in person or in my department office mailbox, with an emailed copy to me to “date-stamp” your paper. I encourage you to submit it earlier if possible, to avoid having all your assignments bunch up at the end of term!

- Brief oral comments on the readings: On the week for which you write your response paper, you will be asked to launch discussion of the readings in class by presenting very brief (5 minutes) comments about your reactions to the readings – similar to the points you have made in your initial response paper draft. Your comments can identify key themes that the authors of the week address, outline how the readings intersect with one another on these themes, critically reflect upon the readings, and/or locate the authors’ arguments in the wider context of what we have learned so far in the course. This presentation is brief, fairly informal, and not separately graded (other than as part of your overall course participation grade). It is merely intended to launch discussion through students’ eyes rather than the instructor’s perspective alone.
3. Research paper proposal (4-5 pages, double-spaced, plus a preliminary bibliography) (5 percent)

- This is the proposal for the paper described below. The proposal is a pass/ fail assignment. That is, you either receive a perfect mark for this 5% of your grade, or you receive zero marks. The purposes of the proposal are to prompt you to think early about your major paper for the course, and to ensure that you receive concrete feedback on your ideas for the paper before handing in the final assignment.

- The proposal should sketch out your preliminary ideas on the puzzle or question motivating your paper, what your argument will be, and how the paper will proceed. If you will conduct a case study, which country are you selecting to study and on what basis? Where you can, throughout, cite sources that you are finding useful. Include a bibliography of all the sources you have located so far. The more work you put into the proposal, the less work you will need to do later, and the more helpful comments the TA will be able to give you!

- This proposal is due at the beginning of class on October 5. The course teaching assistant will be marking this assignment and giving you feedback. Two of your class peers will also provide feedback (see below under “Participation”).

4. Research paper on some aspect of democratization (12-15 pages, double-spaced) (30 percent)

- This paper will constitute your research into some element of the democratization literature. You choose the topic, whether it be a more theoretical question such as a conceptual definition, key debate, or the “state of the field” in some substantive area; or an empirical one, such as how the democratization literature applies (or not) to a particular country case or event. The paper should survey the literature in this area and, even if it is primarily a case study, forward an argument about gaps, puzzles, shortcomings, progress in theoretical understanding or lack thereof in the literature. Even if theoretically focused, the paper should certainly include empirical examples, whether from multiple countries or focusing on just one, to ground the analysis. If you have an interest in the politics of a particular country or region, you may organize the paper around one or several case studies, as long as the case studies respond in some way to a theoretical question in the democratization literature.

- The paper is due at the beginning of class on November 16. The course teaching assistant will be marking this paper.

5. Country Case Group Presentation (November 30, 20 minutes) (20 percent)

- During the final session of our course on November 30, you will give a group presentation. Five groups will be created, each with 3-4 students as members. Each group will sign up to study a particular country that has fairly recently attempted or undergone a transition from authoritarianism to democracy (or in some cases, back again to authoritarianism).
• Your group’s task will be to investigate the history and context of the country as relevant for democratization. Present events and dynamics in this case, reflecting upon how the literature from the course informs your understanding of the country’s political trajectory, as well as how the literature seems misdirected or unhelpful in explaining outcomes.

• You will present as a group to the class for 20 minutes, then each group will have 5 minutes to entertain questions from the class.

• You will have an opportunity to rank your preferences among available countries (selected by Prof. Sundstrom), and we will do our best to satisfy your preferences.

6. Participation (15 percent):

• Your participation mark is based upon your attendance, quality of participation in class discussions, and active contribution to peer reviewing activities. These three components will count equally towards your participation mark.

• Peer reviewing: You will be asked to review in writing two of your classmates’ policy paper proposals, using an online peer reviewing function (PeerMark on Turnitin). At various other times during the course, you may be working together in small groups during class time to give feedback on your peers’ work.

• Participation in class discussion: Quality of oral contributions, rather than quantity, will be the standard by which I evaluate participation in class discussions. It is crucial to keep in mind three criteria for participation in class discussions throughout the term: (1) articulating clearly your own viewpoint, taking positions in a manner that is persuasive to the class; (2) active listening/synthesis of classmates’ viewpoints, ensuring that you are taking into account the contributions of your fellow students and building on a flow of discussion; and (3) incorporating the assigned readings into your contributions, in order to build your argument or challenge others’ points of view. Note: I will be providing each of you with interim feedback and advice on your quality of in-class participation halfway through the term.

Summary of Key Due Dates

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beginning of each class</th>
<th>Deadline to submit weekly online reading response</th>
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<tr>
<td>October 5</td>
<td>Deadline for research paper proposal</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 10</td>
<td>Deadline (midnight) to submit online peer review comments on two students’ paper proposals (to be discussed in class on October 12)</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 16</td>
<td>Deadline for research paper</td>
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<td>November 30</td>
<td>Group country case presentation in class</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 4</td>
<td>Deadline for revised short paper submission</td>
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Policy on Late Assignments

Unless you have a medical note from your doctor or a documented serious family emergency, there will be an automatic 3% grade penalty per business day for late papers. If you miss class to complete the paper and hand it in later in the day, your paper will be considered one day late. If you do hand in your paper late, please email it to me when it is completed in order to date-stamp the paper, then submit a hard copy to me either in class or in my department mailbox. The political science department office will not date-stamp papers that students hand in to professors’ mailboxes; therefore, if you hand your paper into my mailbox without emailing it to me, I will have no way of knowing for sure when you handed your paper in, and I will date receipt of your paper from when I pick it up. Please do not submit papers under my office door for the same reason.

Plagiarism

The UBC Library website has a very helpful page on academic integrity guidelines at: http://help.library.ubc.ca/planning-your-research/academic-integrity-plagiarism/. If you have not already done so, please read the guidelines and explore some of the learning resources provided there, in order to avoid committing plagiarism. Since good scholarship depends on the original intellectual contributions of scholars, dishonestly representing someone else’s ideas as your own is considered to be a serious affront to the spirit of academia.

Submitting Papers to Turnitin.com

In an effort to deter plagiarism, the Political Science Department requires that you submit an electronic copy of each of your papers to Turnitin.com. You will be required to submit your papers and proposals to Turnitin. This is a service that universities are using increasingly as a method to detect instances of plagiarism. This service compares student papers to thousands of published documents, “paper mills” of essays for sale, and to all of the other student papers submitted to the website, to detect levels of overlap in wording. You can find out more about Turnitin, and the Department’s policy on it, at http://politics.ubc.ca/undergraduate/program-information/plagiarism-and-turnitin/. In order to submit your paper to Turnitin.com, you will need to create a user profile on the website at http://www.turnitin.com/login.asp. You will also need to enter the “course ID” and the “course password” for this course. The information you will need is:

Course ID: 16113263
Course enrollment key: polihonours

You can then upload your paper as a file. Please note if you are new to Turnitin.com that your paper will NOT be available to anyone to read as a public document (except your memo paper proposal strictly for classmates in the peer reviewing exercise) – so you do not need to worry about other students finding your paper on the internet and copying it for their own use.
Your paper must be uploaded to Turnitin.com by one day after the due date for handing in the paper to me. Otherwise, you will be penalized at a rate of 3% per day for each day you are late in submitting the paper. Note that if you are handing in the paper to me late anyway, you will only be penalized a total of 3% per day (not 6% per day) until you have handed in the paper to me and uploaded it to Turnitin.

**Citations and Paper Formats**

I am happy to accept any common style of citation in your papers, whether it uses in-text author-date-page citations, footnotes at the bottom of each page, or endnotes at the end of the essay. The key requirement is that you should be thorough and consistent in your citation style. If you need a reference guide, the UBC library website has basic style guides for the APA and MLA citation styles ([http://help.library.ubc.ca/researching/how-to-cite/](http://help.library.ubc.ca/researching/how-to-cite/)). Another more detailed reference is the well-known *Chicago Manual of Style* (University of Chicago Press). In any case, in addition to individual citations, you should include a list of references at the end of your essay as a matter of standard practice, even though the sources are likely to be from the course syllabus itself. Please come and see me if you have any questions about styles of reference.

Papers must be double-spaced with one-inch margins and use 12-point font for the text.

**Reading Requirements**

The attached reading list is separated into two portions: required and recommended readings. You must read the required list each week. I must be honest: this is a heavy reading course, in keeping with honours program expectations that you are completing above-average work and receiving six academic credits for the course. This list averages a total of approximately one hundred pages per week. The literature on democratization is growing extremely large, so it is difficult to get away with reading less and having a competent knowledge of the subject. Some weeks have a heavier reading load than others, and there are several weeks with no assigned reading. Unfortunately, sometimes there are simply key writings that I feel are important for you to have in your repertoire. If you are interested in pursuing any week’s topics further, I strongly encourage you to look at the recommended readings.

**Required Texts**

There is one book available at the UBC Bookstore, which we will read in considerable depth during the course:


You can find all other required readings on the syllabus electronically through the UBC Library Reserves site. Go to [https://courses.library.ubc.ca](https://courses.library.ubc.ca), and log in with your UBC CWL to access the
online readings for the course. You will be able to access pdf versions of each journal article and book chapter listed as a required reading through that service.

**Week-by-Week Schedule of Topics and Readings**

**PART I: DEFINING DEMOCRACY AND WHY IT MATTERS**

**Week 1 (September 7): Introduction**

**Week 2 (September 14): What is Democracy? How Far Can/ Should it Extend?**

**Required Readings:**


Huntington, Chapter 1 (pp. 3-30).


**Recommended Readings:**


**PART II: THEORETICAL SCHOOLS – PRECONDITIONS AND TRANSITOLOGY/ CONSOLIDOLOGY**

**Week 3 (September 21): Structural Approaches to Democratization**

**Required Readings:**


Poli 390 (001), 2017-18
Professor Sundstrom

**Recommended Readings:**


Dunning, Thad, *Crude Democracy: Natural Resource Wealth and Political Regimes,* Ch. 1.


**Week 4 (September 28): Actor-Based Approaches (Transition and Consolidation School)**

**Required Readings:**


Tilly, Charles, Chapter 3 (pp. 51-79) of *Democracy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
Poli 390 (001), 2017-18
Professor Sundstrom

Recommended Readings:


Diamond, Larry, *Developing Democracy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), Ch. 3 (pp. 64-116).


PART III: FACTORS INFLUENCING DEMOCRATIZATION

*** REMINDER: RESEARCH PAPER PROPOSALS DUE IN CLASS ON OCTOBER 5 ***
Week 5 (October 5): Institutional Design for New Democracies

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


*** REMINDER: PEER REVIEW COMMENTS DUE ONLINE BY MIDNIGHT ON TUESDAY, OCTOBER 10 ***

**Week 6 (October 12): Difficult Contexts – Economic Crisis and Post-Conflict Situations (and Peer Discussion of Paper Proposals)**

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


**Week 7 (October 19): Civil Society and Informal Institutions**

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


Week 8 (October 26): International Factors – Western Democracy Assistance

Required Readings:


Recommended Readings:


**Week 9 (November 2): International Factors – International Institutions’ Accountability Mechanisms**

**Required Readings:**

Poli 390 (001), 2017-18
Professor Sundstrom


**Recommended Readings:**


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**Week 10 (November 9): Session for Group Presentation Preparation**

*** REMINDER: RESEARCH PAPERS DUE IN CLASS NOVEMBER 16 ***

**Week 11 (November 16): Competitive Authoritarianism and Autocracy Promotion**

**Required Readings:**


Recommended Readings:

Levitsky, Steven and Lucan Way, Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War (Cambridge University Press, 2010).


PART IV: CONCLUSION

Week 12 (November 23): Taking Stock – Criticisms of the Existing Paradigm and New Challenges for Democracy

Required Readings:


Huntington, pp. 253-316.


**Recommended Readings:**


**Week 13 (November 30): Group Country Presentations and Potluck Lunch (**class extends to 1:00 pm**)
Advice for Writing Short Reading Response Paper

You are required to write a short, 5-7 page paper (double-spaced) during the course of the term, based on the required readings from the reading list for a particular week. The paper is due to me at the beginning of class on the first day on which we are scheduled to discuss the topic according to the syllabus.

Your paper should primarily be a critical consideration of the questions and themes that the readings discuss. If some of the readings express differing points of view on particular topics, it would be a good idea to consider the controversies in the paper and to formulate your own opinion on the issues, backed up by evidence from the readings, lectures, or details you may know about particular countries from your own outside reading or experience.

While it is useful to provide a brief summary of the ways in which the readings covered the topics you consider in your paper, descriptive summary should only be a small part of the paper – say 1-2 pages of a 5-page paper or 2-3 pages of a 7-page paper. Even though the summary should be short, note that it is important that you briefly summarize the main point(s) of EVERY required reading for the week.

The bulk of the paper should be devoted to evaluating the arguments presented in the readings, pointing out priorities or values that the authors may be implicitly favoring or excluding in their discussions of democracy or democratic transitions, and raising interesting questions that remain unanswered by the authors. For example, if you choose to write on Week 5, which primarily discusses electoral systems and parliamentary versus presidential government in democratic regimes, you might briefly summarize the pros and cons of each institutional system that the authors discuss, but then move on to point out strengths and weaknesses of the arguments and perhaps any ideas you may have about why one or another institutional setup would or would not work well in one country or several countries you know about. In this critique section, you should feel free to concentrate on points raised in just one or two of the required readings, rather than having to respond to each of the readings. You can concentrate on one point or argument that one of the authors makes, or you may prefer to react to several smaller points that the readings raise. You might criticize them for exhibiting biases or oversight or their points not applying to other cases, or you might try to apply their arguments to another country case and see how they stand up. In other words, there is a great deal of flexibility in how you may approach your critique.

Please note: You are NOT expected to conduct much additional research to write this paper. You should be able to write excellent papers mostly based on the required readings and your own reasoning and prior background knowledge. However, it is always necessary to provide evidence to back up any argument or assertions that you are making, so in some cases, depending on your existing knowledge base, you will have to hunt for evidence to back up claims that you are making.
The organization and clarity of your writing will count for 30 percent of the mark you receive on your final submitted paper, so please pay attention to the structure and style of your paper. The overall breakdown of marks for the paper will be as follows:

- 30 percent for quality of summary (coverage, accuracy);
- 30 percent for writing style and organization; and
- 40 percent for quality of critique (logic of argument, evidence brought to bear, signs of serious thought and attention to the readings).

I sincerely welcome you to come to my office and discuss the assignment with me if you have any questions or doubts about how to go about it. Please come to my office hours or set up an appointment with me.