Course Description and Objectives

The literature on democratization of political regimes has grown exponentially over the past quarter-century. 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 over 130 today (depending on whose definition of “democratic” we use). Yet we still have not reached consensus on the causes of democracy’s onset, durability, or reversal, and a great deal of disagreement persists among scholars concerning the best way to define democracy. Moreover, in recent years a significant number of countries have come to be governed by hybrid regimes and new forms of authoritarianism, leading scholars to question the initial theoretical paradigm of democratization that assumed full-fledged democracies as the outcome.

This is a theory- and reading-intensive course intended to provide political science graduate students (and a select number of fourth-year undergraduates) with a solid background in the study of democratization.

The learning objectives for this course are that students will:

1. Acquire a deeper and broader understanding of the key debates and concepts in the growing field of democratization;
2. Hone their skills to understand and critically engage with comparative politics literature on democracy, democratization, and authoritarianism, including texts using a range of methodological approaches;
3. Create a foundation from which to build their own original theoretical arguments and research projects involving the politics of democratic and authoritarian regimes; and
4. (where relevant, for PhD students) significantly strengthen their preparation to write in the democratization subfield in the Comparative Politics comprehensive exam.

As such, with the partial exception of the final paper for the class, the assignments for this course will consist primarily of critical “think pieces” concerning literature on the reading list, rather than intensive investigations of particular case studies in which you are especially interested. Nonetheless, I encourage you to bring any case knowledge you possess into the class discussions
and papers, and to use it in making arguments about the democratization literature. Indeed, I will require that you always ground your written arguments in some empirical examples (even if you are not a specialist on specific cases).

In this course, we begin by considering some controversies in defining democracy and the prominent theoretical schools of thought in explaining the emergence of democratic regimes. We will then move to examine specific factors complicating democratization processes: post-conflict situations, economic crises, natural resource dependence, civil society, and informal institutions. Next, we spend a few weeks examining sources of reversal from democracy and contemporary authoritarian resilience, followed by two weeks on international democracy and autocracy promotion. We end the course with a critical reflection on what we know about democratization and where the future seems to lead us.

Because of the time limits of the course, we will restrict ourselves to certain topics. Like the comparative democratization literature more widely in our discipline, the course focuses largely on transitions towards and away from democratic rule in countries that have relatively recently been ruled by authoritarian regimes, rather than the problems of insufficient democratic practices in countries that long ago established democratic regimes (although, in the current context of rising populism, nationalism, and challenges to democratic institutions in longstanding democracies, we will draw comparisons at times). We will discuss many cases of arrested or backsliding democratization among these “new democracies” – indeed, this is one of the most discussed topics in the literature at present. While I attempt to bring examples from as many diverse areas of the world as possible in our seminars, the examples I raise will often be drawn from the experiences of the countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, which is my area of regional expertise. I welcome you to participate in class discussion and to raise interesting examples or counter-examples from any countries with which you may be familiar.

One glaring omission in this year’s course is any concentrated focus on formal democratic institutional design, simply due to an excessively limited number of class sessions this term. However, questions related to the roles of formal institutions will undoubtedly come up frequently in discussion, and I have listed a large number of suggested readings on institutional design and effects in the “recommended readings” for Week 3. I also encourage students to take other courses in the department that do include significant material on democratic institutions; we have several that do.

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.

**Course Assignments and Evaluation**

1) **Weekly online reading responses** (due each week on Canvas by beginning of class) (10 percent):

   - 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 some of the readings for the week. These responses will demonstrate to me that you have prepared for our discussion 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. As long as you submit your comment on time and mention all of the required readings, you will receive full credit for that week; if you do not, you will not receive credit. You are not expected to submit a response on the week in which you present and submit a critical response paper on the readings, and you are permitted to skip one additional week of the term without notice or penalty.

- The discussion board is located on UBC’s Canvas online learning platform: go to https://canvas.ubc.ca and log in with your UBC CWL. You should find the Poli 516A course site there and find the discussion board forum for the particular week we are discussing.

2) **Short critical reading paper** (5-7 pages, double-spaced) (15 percent).

- The paper is to be based on your reading and analysis of the required readings for a particular week on the syllabus (Weeks 2-10). This paper is meant to be a critical response to the body of readings for the week – not merely summarizing, but considering the merits and flaws of the readings and establishing how they relate to one another. There should be only very minimal summary of the readings in your paper: only as much as necessary to make your points in response. If you have relevant knowledge and experience on a certain region of the world, please do put it to work in assessing how accurate the authors’ arguments are, and/ or how they apply to regions beyond the author’s purview.

- At the start of the term, you will sign up for a week in which to submit a paper (the same week as your presentation; see below); papers are due to me in hard copy at the start of class that week.

3) **Seminar presentation and leading discussion** on the readings for one week (15 percent).

- On the week in which you write a short paper, you will be responsible for making a brief presentation on the readings at the beginning of the week’s seminar. This presentation should be 20-30 minutes in length and highlight key themes and debates among the readings, criticisms that you had of them, and questions that you wish the class to discuss during the seminar. You will typically be presenting with at least one other classmate, and should coordinate with that person to ensure adequate coverage of the reading topics without significant duplication (each presenter may have 20 minutes to present). Then, during the course of the seminar that week, I will expect you to participate very actively to help guide and generate discussion. I will undoubtedly also have my own topics I wish to raise for discussion, but you will play a large role in shaping the week’s discussion.
You will be asked to sign up for your presentation during the first day of class on September 10.

4) **Term Paper and Proposal** (Proposal 5 percent (pass/fail), due October 5; Paper 35 percent, due December 10). These assignments may be submitted to me via email. Please feel free to hand them in earlier!

- In this paper, you may carry out either an original empirical research analysis on a topic engaging with the democratization literature, or a critical literature review of a specified area of the democratization literature. Ideally, try to choose a paper topic that will help you with your own longer-term research agenda (MA thesis, PhD dissertation proposal… hint hint!).

- For an original research paper, the key will be to make the task feasible to complete as a course paper, for which you will likely have limited time available. You are welcome to use any social science methods (qualitative case study/ies, statistical analysis, or others), but you will need to define the scope narrowly enough to be able to complete it during the term. This may be, for instance, a small element of a topic you are considering for your PhD thesis, or a trial version of what you will hone for your MA thesis.

- For a critical literature review, you may choose a key debate, conceptual definition, or the “state of the field” in some substantive area. The paper should survey the literature in this area and forward an argument about gaps, puzzles, shortcomings, progress in theoretical understanding or lack thereof in the literature. 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 proposal** should consist of a 3-page (double-spaced) outline of your proposed question/puzzle and description of how you will go about your analysis (including draft titles of sections of the paper). Identify sources of data and/or proposed case studies, and methods to be used. In addition (beyond the 3 pages), you should include a preliminary reference list of literature you plan to cite. **Due to me via email by midnight on Friday, October 5.**

- **The paper** should be 20-25 pages (double-spaced, plus references) long, and is due via email by midnight on Monday, December 10.

5) **Class Participation** (20 percent):

- Your class participation mark will be based on attendance and the quality of your in-class contributions to discussion. The success of a seminar course depends fundamentally on active and thoughtful participation by all students. Hence, there is a heavy weight placed on this aspect of your work in the course. I wish to make clear that I do not consider quantity of speaking, but instead the quality of comments. Also, I know that some people initially might have difficulty speaking out in class, but hopefully you will gradually overcome this fear.

- I will send each student an email message halfway through the term to give them a sense of how they are doing with participation and how they may try to improve if necessary.
Summary of Key Due Dates

Mondays, start of class  Deadline for short papers (hard copy) for students presenting; Deadline for weekly comments on readings on Canvas

October 5, midnight  Deadline for term paper proposals, via email

December 10, midnight  Deadline for full term paper, via email

Policy on Late Assignments

Unless you have a medical note or a serious family emergency, there will be an automatic 3% grade penalty per day for late papers. If you do hand in your paper late, you must make specific arrangements with me. The political science department office will no longer date-stamp papers that students hand in to professors’ mailboxes; therefore, if you hand your late paper into my mailbox, 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, regardless of how that corresponds with your actual submission date. Please do not submit papers under my office door for the same reason.

Acknowledgement

UBC’s Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Musqueam people. The land it is situated on has always been a place of learning for the Musqueam people, who for millennia have passed on in their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site.

General Academic Policies

Read the university calendar so that you are aware of no-penalty drop dates, requirements for medical authorization (to defer an exam, for example) and other procedures that may affect you.

Religious holidays – UBC permits students who are scheduled to attend classes or write examinations on holy days of their religions to notify their instructor in advance of these days and their wish to observe them by absenting themselves from class or examination. Instructors provide opportunity for students to make up work or examinations missed without penalty. (Policy # 65.)

Accommodating disabilities – UBC is committed to the academic success of students with disabilities. UBC’s policy on Academic Accommodations for students with disabilities aims to remove barriers and provide equal access to University services, ensure fair and consistent treatment of all students, and to create a welcoming environment. Students with a disability should first meet with an Access and Diversity advisor to determine what accommodations/services you are eligible for.

Academic Integrity and Responsibility

Academic communities depend on their members’ honesty and integrity in representing the sources of reasoning, claims, and wordings that appear in their work. Like any other member of
the academic community, you will be held responsible for the accurate representation of your sources: the means by which you produced the work you are submitting. If you are found to have misrepresented your sources and to have submitted others’ work as your own, penalties may follow. Your case may be forwarded to the Head of the department, who may decide that you should receive zero for the assignment. The Head will report your case to the Dean’s Office, where the report will remain on file. The Head may decide, in consultation with your instructor, that a greater penalty is called for, and will forward your case to the Dean’s Office. After an interview in the Dean’s Office, your case may be forwarded to the President’s Advisory Committee on Academic Misconduct. Following a hearing in which you will be asked to account for your actions, the President may apply penalties including zero for the assignment; zero for the course; suspension from the university for a period ranging from 4 to 24 months; a notation on your permanent record. The penalty may be a combination of these.

Like any academic author submitting work for review and evaluation, you are guaranteeing that the work you submit for this course has not already been submitted for credit in another course. Your submitting work from another course, without your instructor’s prior agreement, may result in penalties such as those applied to the misrepresentation of sources.

In order to avoid both intentional and unintentional instances of plagiarism, you must be sure to cite both direct quotes and paraphrased ideas that you appropriate from other authors. It is a good idea to familiarize yourself with academic integrity expectations through UBC’s website on academic integrity at: http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/guide-to-academic-integrity/.

**Illness, Absence and Late Assignment Penalties**

If you experience medical, emotional, or personal problems that affect your attendance or academic performance, please notify Arts Academic Advising. If you are registered with Access and Diversity, you should notify your instructor at least two weeks before examination dates.

Unless you have discussed your inability to meet an assignment deadline in advance, or are able to document a medical or family emergency, there will be an automatic 3% grade penalty per business day for late papers. Overcommitment and burdensome workloads will not be accepted as excuses to avoid penalties for late assignments, since you are informed about the schedule of assignments and exams for your courses at the beginning of the term and have the entire term to budget your time for different assignments.

**Reach out and ask for help if you need it**

University students encounter setbacks from time to time that can impact academic performance. If you run into difficulties and need assistance, I encourage you to contact me by email or by dropping by my office. I will do my best to support your success during the term. This includes identifying concerns I may have about your academic progress or wellbeing through Early Alert. With Early Alert, faculty members can connect you with advisors who offer students support and assistance getting back on track to success. Only specialized UBC advisors are able to access any concerns I may identify, and Early Alert does not affect your academic record. For more information about Early Alert, visit earlyalert.ubc.ca. For information about addressing mental or physical health concerns, including seeing a UBC counselor or doctor, visit students.ubc.ca/livewell.
Respectful University Environment

UBC recognizes that “the best possible environment for working, learning and living is one in which respect, civility, diversity, opportunity and inclusion are valued.” The full UBC Statement on Respectful Environment for Students, Faculty and Staff can be found at http://www.hr.ubc.ca/respectful-environment/files/UBC-Statement-on-Respectful-Environment-2014.pdf. Students should read this statement carefully and take note of both the protections and the responsibilities that it outlines for all members of the UBC community. Students should also review the Student Code of Conduct, at: http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,750,0

This course values frank discussion, healthy debate, and the free and respectful exchange of ideas. Students are welcome to voice and defend their views, which may differ from those of other students or of the instructor. However, disrespectful behavior, including bullying and harassment, will not be tolerated. The instructor and teaching assistant will be professional and respectful in all their exchanges with students, and students will exercise similar professionalism and respect in their interactions with each other, with the teaching assistant, and with the instructor.

If you have any concerns about the class environment, please raise them with the instructor. You also have the options of contacting the Head of the Political Science Department, UBC’s Equity and Inclusion Office (http://equity.ubc.ca), or the UBC Ombudsperson for Students (http://ombudsoffice.ubc.ca/contactus/).

Equity and Harassment

UBC is committed to equity (including but not limited to gender equity) and fostering a safe learning environment for everyone. All peoples should be able to study, work, and learn in a supportive environment that is free from sexual violence, harassment, and discrimination. UBC’s Policy #3 on Discrimination and Harassment defines harassment as: “unwanted and unwelcome attention from a person who knows, or ought to know, that the behaviour is unwelcome. Harassment can range from written or spoken comments to unwanted jokes, gifts, and physical assault, and may be accompanied by threats or promises regarding work or study opportunities and conditions. Harassment can be either a single incident or a series of related incidents.” Such behavior is not acceptable and will not be tolerated at UBC. If you or someone you know has encountered sexual violence or harassment, you can find confidential support and resources at the AMS Sexual Assault Support Centre, (SASC), and the Equity and Inclusion Office. The SASC is an all-genders service that serves the UBC-Vancouver campus community and is committed to creating a safer campus community, free from sexualized violence. Their work is informed by feminism, anti-oppression and recognition of intersectionality. The Equity and Inclusion Office is committed to fostering a community in which human rights are respected and equity and diversity are integral to university life.

Resources are available at:
   Sexual Assault Support Centre, (SASC)
   249M, Student Union Building, UBC
   604-827-5180
Reading Requirements

The attached reading list is separated into two portions: required and recommended readings. You must read the required list each week. This list averages a total of approximately 150 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. PhD students should keep in mind that this list encompasses many of the readings on the general and democratization reading lists for the comparative politics comprehensive exam, so it is worth reading them carefully now to have less to digest later! Some weeks have a heavier reading load, while some have less. If you are interested in pursuing any week’s topics further, I strongly encourage you to look at the recommended readings. Although it is not required, I suggest that you look at some of the recommended readings of interest for your papers and presentation, in order to acquire a better grasp of the topic.

You can find all required readings on the syllabus (and some of the recommended readings) electronically through the UBC Library Online Course Reserves (LOCR) site. Go to 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. You will need to log in with your UBC CWL to access the library readings.
**Week-by-Week Schedule of Topics and Readings:**

**PART I: DEFINING DEMOCRACY AND UNDERSTANDING ITS IMPACT**

**Week 1, September 10: Orientation and Introduction -- What is a “Democratic” Regime? How Far Can/ Should it Extend?**

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


PART II: THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO DEMOCRATIZATION

Week 2, September 17: Structural Approaches to Democratization (Preconditions School)

Required Readings:


**Recommended Readings:**


**Week 3, September 24: Actor-Based Approaches (Transition and Consolidation School)**

**Required Readings:**


Karl, Terry Lynn, “Dilemmas of Democratization in Latin America,” *Comparative Politics* (October 1990): 1-17. (17 pgs)


**Recommended Readings:**


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


Tilly, Charles, Chapter 3 (pp. 51-79) of *Democracy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).


**Recommended readings especially on institutional design debates** (we have skipped this due to time constraints this term!):


Linz, Juan and Arturo Valenzuela, eds., *The Failure of Presidential Democracy*, volume 1: Comparative Perspectives, Ch. 3 by Sartori.


PART III: FACTORS AFFECTING THE SUCCESS OF DEMOCRATIZATION

Week 4, October 1: Difficult Contexts – Economic Crisis, Natural Resource Dependence, and Post-Conflict Situations

Required Readings:


Dunning, Thad, Crude Democracy: Natural Resource Wealth and Political Regimes, Ch. 1, pp. 1-36. (36 pgs)

Recommended Readings:


Gallagher, Mary Elizabeth, “‘Reform and Openness’: Why China’s Economic Reforms have Delayed Democracy,” World Politics 54, no. 3 (April 2002): 338-72.


**LONG PAPER PROPOSALS DUE BY MIDNIGHT, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 5**

**NOTE: NO CLASS ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 8 DUE TO THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**

**Week 5, October 15: Civil Society and Informal Institutions**

**Required Readings:**


Helmke, Gretchen and Steven Levitsky, “Informal Institutions and Comparative Politics: A Research Agenda,” *Perspectives on Politics* 2, no. 4 (December 2004): 725-40. (15 pgs)


Recommended Readings:


**PART IV: SOURCES OF REVERSAL FROM DEMOCRACY**

**Week 6, October 22: Regime Cycles and Fluctuation**

**Required Readings:**

Levitsky, Steven and Lucan Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War* (Cambridge University Press, 2010) (read whole book if possible, but especially Chapters 1, 2, and 8 and some case study chapters).


**Recommended Readings:**


**Week 7, October 29: Authoritarian Resilience and Linkages**

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


**PART V: INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCES ON DEMOCRATIZATION**

**Week 8, November 5: International Democracy Promotion**

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


** NOTE: NO CLASS ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 12 **

DUE TO REMEMBRANCE DAY OBSERVANCE **
Week 9, November 19: International Autocracy Promotion

**Required Readings:**


**PART VI: CONCLUSION**

Week 10, November 26: Summing Up What We Know and Looking to the Future

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


