

POLS 490/590: The Challenges of Democratization

Dr. Brandon Kendhammer
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Place: 205 Bentley Hall

Time: 3:10-5:00 PM (with one/two additional meetings for movies)

My Office: 215 Bentley Annex

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 1:30-4:00 PM and by appointment

If, as contributions to a recent book [Larry Diamond and Marc Platter, eds (2008), *How People View Democracy*] suggest, demand for democracy across the globe is quite high, why do so many countries fail to become democratic? How can we explain, for example, why one country becomes a stable democracy, a second remains mired in authoritarian rule, and a third exists in a shadowy realm of “hybrid” or “semi” democracy? The difficulties of getting to “real” (inclusive) democracy from any starting point—be it the American Revolution, the end of colonialism, or the aftermath of an invasion—are poorly understood by citizens and decision-makers alike. Democracy is a long-term project that is rarely, if ever, complete.

This course will challenge what you know and have heard about democracy in three ways.

- 1) We will focus on the difficulty (and the importance) of defining democracy **in practice**, and address the stakes attached to what kinds of regimes we are willing to name as “democratic.”
- 2) We will look at the existing theories and frameworks social scientists have developed to explain movement towards and away from democracy, with an emphasis on understanding their consequences for the world’s remaining autocratic states and its unstable democracies.
- 3) We will delve into specific cases where the long, uncertain, and indirect process of democratization can be observed and demonstrated in detail.

This course’s ultimate goal is to encourage you all to consider what the ramifications of the challenges of democratization will be for your own careers, whatever they may be. Few of you (if any) will become professional political scientists, but many of you will live abroad in non-democracies, serve in the Peace Corps, work with NGOs and non-profits with an international focus, join the foreign service, or work in government. Understanding the complexities involved in determining the timing and success of creating democracy, and the advantages and limitations of (internal and external) intervention in “crafting democracy” will hopefully help you to understand and communicate what you see in your careers and personal lives, and help you to make better choices as you labor to effect change in the world.

Course Format

This is a very small course. As such, I expect that we will be able to develop a community of scholarship in which we share, discuss, and critique ideas with relatively little attention to normal teacher-student hierarchies. While I am an “expert” on democratization, the state of social scientific knowledge on this topic is quite limited, as you will quickly discover. I do not have “Truth” (with a capital “T”) to disseminate on the topics we’ll be exploring together, and much of the intellectual work to be done in this class involves each of you parsing the various arguments

and bits of evidence we'll encounter into a (relatively) coherent narrative of why democracy emerges and endures that makes sense for you. I will occasionally lecture on a particular topic (usually to provide background or explanation not available in our readings), but what I or any of the authors we will be reading have to say about democracy is by no means definitive.

All of this means that I have very high expectations for your participation during our time together. This kind of class can only work if you all come prepared by completing the reading assignments in a timely manner—one that allows you time to think about them, to come up with questions, arguments, and points of possible disagreement. Along those lines, I will provide you with a number of opportunities designed to reward you for your preparation. This kind of class also depends on your active participation in discussion, as an inquisitive and critical (but also civil) member of our community. If you do not believe that you can commit to completing the readings on time, to preparing for class discussions based on those readings, and to speaking up when necessary, then this class may not be appropriate for you. I believe that this goes without saying, but students are expected to be civil as we discuss what can sometimes be heated political issues. If you cannot behave accordingly, I will insist that you leave.

Books and other Readings

Required Books

- 1) Chinua Achebe (1966), *A Man of the People*, Anchor Books
- 2) Larry Diamond (2009), *The Spirit of Democracy: The Struggle to Build Free Societies Throughout the World*, Times Books
- 3) Sean Wilentz (2008), *The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln (Abridged College Edition)*, W.W. Norton
- 4) Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter (1986), *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions About Uncertain Democracies*, The Johns Hopkins University Press
- 5) Bruce Gilley (2004), *China's Democratic Future: How it Will Happen and Where it Will Lead*, Columbia University Press

I have placed all the required texts at the various local booksellers, but many will likely be available for substantial discounts online (my own well-loved copy of Wilentz text was purchased for less than a dollar on Amazon.com). Equally, note that when I say there are “required” texts, I mean only that I have assigned you to read them in their entirety, not that you must purchase them. You are encouraged to share copies, form anarcho-syndicalist book-trading collectives, or do anything else necessary to make sure you have the texts to read and study from.

For the articles and other readings, I will make them available through Blackboard.

Evaluation

The following activities will compose your grade in this course (by weight, subject to change):

- Participation and Attendance (20%)
- “Prep” Exercises (on the Course Blog) (30%)
- Independent research paper [4,000-5,000 words] * (50%)

* For graduate students, I will expect 6,000-7,000 words.

I do not (except under exceptional and usually illness-related circumstances) accept late work. You have the schedule of the various due dates now. Please plan accordingly. This is a class that some students will find can “sneak up” on them, because the nature of the work is independent and the final due date is late in the term. If you wait until the last week to research and write your paper, you’ll be miserable and you’ll likely receive a mediocre grade. Do yourself a favor and be proactive (and consider meeting with me if you’re confused about how to do the necessary research or writing).

Participation and Attendance

My policy here is simple. If you attend class regularly and participate actively in discussion, you will receive full credit. If you skip class and/or are disengaged from our discussions, you will not. Anyone who misses more than 4 class sessions will be eligible for no more than half-credit for this category; anyone who misses more than 6 class sessions will automatically fail this course. Grading “participation” is inevitably a more subjective process, but I reserve the right to adjust your grade in this category up or down based on my notes on your level of participation during class time. One or two “bad” days in which you participate minimally will not hurt your grade, but 5 or 6 will.

I require that you complete your reading assignments in advance of class, and that you **BRING YOUR READING ASSIGNMENT TO CLASS**. We will often be having discussions or engaging in group work that will necessitate having a copy of the reading assignment on hand. If you do not have it with you (accessible electronic copies are fine), you may be asked to leave.

Research Paper (and Deadlines)

The research paper for this class will be on a topic of your choice, chosen in consultation with me. A typical paper will focus on the past successes and failures and future prospects for democracy in a single country, but I’m open to other ideas. The quarter system doesn’t leave much time to complete a big project, so it is crucial that you begin early. You will need to schedule a meeting with me (preferably, but not necessarily, during my office hours) during the next 2 weeks to discuss your ideas and to pin down a final topic.

In order to get you as much feedback as possible (and to keep you on track) the paper will be due in stages (with a 5% penalty on the final grade for each deadline you miss). An initial, one-page summary of your proposed research, along with a separate page containing at least 10 prospective academic sources, is due on Tuesday, January 25 in class. **The first complete draft is due Thursday, February 24, and the final draft is due at the final exam time, which is Wednesday, March 16 at 12:20 PM.**

A small portion of your overall paper grade (5%) will be based on your scheduling and completing a post-first draft meeting with me (between Wednesday, March 2 and Friday, March 4). At both times, we will discuss how you can best address the comments and suggestions you have received to improve your paper.

“Prep” Exercises

The short “prep” exercises are a way for you to organize your thoughts on paper in preparation for an active discussion on the week’s reading. I will expect you to complete 12 of 17 possible exercises with a grade of “satisfactory” (which exercises you complete is at your discretion). Each exercise, which you will post to our class blog (instructions to follow), will be due no later than 9 AM on the day of class associated with each exercise; because the point of the exercises is to prepare you to participate in that particular class session, **NO LATE EXERCISES**

WILL BE ACCEPTED UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES. I will be looking at these assignments before class, so as to get a sense of what you have understood and found important in the readings. I encourage you all to do the same.

The questions themselves (which will typically ask you to answer some question or explain some concept based upon your reflections on our reading assignments) are to be answered in **no more** than 300 words (a bit more than a page, double-spaced, in Microsoft Word). They will be graded on a very simple scale—if you fully complete the exercise, you receive full credit. If you do not, you receive no credit. Below is my grading rubric:

PREP EXERSISE RUBRIC		
	UNSATISFACTORY (ANY OF THE FOLLOWING)	SATISFACTORY (ALL OF THE FOLLOWING)
Completeness	Does not answer all the questions or include all the elements requested in the assignment and/or is not posted to the blog (in a new post) by 9 AM on the due date	Answers all the questions and includes all the elements requested in the assignment and is posted to the blog (in a new post) by 9 AM on the due date
Focus	Does not explicitly and directly answer each of the questions.	Explicitly and directly answers each of the questions.
Effort	Written carelessly, or evidencing only a superficial attempt to engage with the materials or complete the task.	Demonstrates an effort to engage with the reading materials and/or complete the assigned task.
Word Count	Is not under 300 words, and/or fails to append a word count at the end of the blog post, i.e. (20 words).	Is under 400 words, and appends a word count (9 words).

As noted above, you must complete 12 of a possible 17 exercises with a grade of “satisfactory” to receive full (100%) for this portion of your grade. If you should complete fewer than 12, your grade will be calculated on a sliding scale:

- 12=100%
- 11=90%
- 10=80%
- 9=70%
- 8=60%
- 7 and Below=0%

Course Schedule

Case Study 1: Nigeria—Understanding Why Democracy Is Hard

January 4 (T): An Introduction, and a Brief Discussion

January 6 (R): Nigeria’s Failed Democratic Past

-Chinua Achebe (1966), *A Man of the People*, complete

January 11 (T): Nigeria’s Uncertain Democratic Future

-Larry Diamond (2008), *The Spirit of Democracy: The Struggle to Build Free Societies Throughout the World*, pp. 238-62

-Fareed Zakaria (1997), “The Rise of Illiberal Democracy,” *Foreign Affairs*, 76:6, pp. 22-43

Course Concept 1: Defining Democracy

January 13 (R): Democratic History and Definitions

-Robert Dahl (2000), *On Democracy*, pp. 7-61

-Samuel Huntington (1991), *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 1-13

January 18 (T): Contemporary Terms, Contemporary Democracy

-Frederic Schaffer (1998), *Democracy in Translation: Understanding Politics in an Unfamiliar Culture*, pp. 1-20

-Amartya Sen (1999), “Democracy as a Universal Value,” *Journal of Democracy*, 10:3, pp. 3-17

-Larry Diamond (2008), *The Spirit of Democracy: The Struggle to Build Free Societies Throughout the World*, pp. 17-55

Course Concept 2a: Getting to Democracy (I)—Economic and Cultural “Preconditions”

January 20 (R): Are there Democratic “Preconditions?” (I)—Modernization and Economic Arguments

-Seymour Martin Lipset (1959), “Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy,” *American Political Science Review* 53, pp. 69–105

-Adam Przeworski and Fernando Limongi, “Modernization: Theories and Facts,” *World Politics* 49:2 (January 1997): 155-83

January 25 (T): Are there Democratic “Preconditions?” (II)— Modernization Cultural Determinism

-Larry Diamond (2008), *The Spirit of Democracy: The Struggle to Build Free Societies*

Throughout the World, pp. 88-105

-Christian Welzel and Ronald Inglehart (2008), “The Role of Ordinary People in Democracy,” *Journal of Democracy*, pp. 126-40

-Robert Putnam (1993) “What Makes Democracy Work?” *National Civic Review*, pp. 101-107

- Margaret Levi (1996) “Social and Unsocial Capital,” *Politics & Society* 24:1, pp. 45-55

Course Concept 2b: Getting to Democracy (I)—The Role of Structure

January 27 (R): The Class Structure of Society and Democratization

-Barrington Moore, jr. (1966), *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, pp. 3-39, 413-32

Case Study 2: American Democratization in the 18th and 19th Centuries—Democratization as a Slow, Uneven Process

February 1 (T): The Long Path to American Democracy (I)—The Founding Fathers and the Early Crises of American Democracy

-Sean Wilentz (2005[9]), *The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln* (Abridged College Edition), pp. 3-71; 93-149

February 3 (R): The Long Path to American Democracy (II): Expanding and Contracting Democracy

-Sean Wilentz (2005[9]), *The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln* (Abridged College Edition), pp. 151-267

February 8 (T): The Long Path to American Democracy (III): Expanding and Contracting Democracy (continued)

-Alexander Keyssar (2000), *The Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the United States*, pp. 1-76

--Sean Wilentz (2005[9]), *The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln* (Abridged College Edition), pp. 271-305

Film: Martin Scorsese, *The Gangs of New York* (Meeting Time TBA)

February 10 (R): Explaining the Failures of American Democracy Before the Civil War

-Sean Wilentz (2005[9]), *The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln* (Abridged College Edition), pp. 306-457

February 15 (T): Fraud and Electoral Malfeasance: How To Rig an Election, American-Style

-Tracy Campbell (2003), “Machine Politics, Police Corruption, and the Persistence of Vote Fraud: The Case of the Louisville, Kentucky, Election of 1905,” *Journal of Policy History* 15, pp. 269-300

-Genevieve B. Gist (1961), "Progressive Reform in a Rural Community: The Adams County Vote-Fraud Case," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 48:1, pp. 60-78

Course Concept 3: Getting to Democracy (II)—The "Transition" Approach

February 22 (T): The "Transition" Paradigm

-Guillermo O'Donnell and Phillippe Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Transitions*, entire book (Don't worry, only about 70 pages!)

Case Study 3: China's Democratic Prospects

February 24 (R): China's Halting Path to Democracy? (I)

- Bruce Gilley (2004), *China's Democratic Future: How it Will Happen and Where it Will Lead*, pp. 3-136

March 1 (T): China's Halting Path to Democracy? (II)

- Bruce Gilley (2004), *China's Democratic Future: How it Will Happen and Where it Will Lead*, pp. 137-251

March 3 (R): Mixed Views on China's Democratic Potential

-Henry S. Rowen (2007), "When Will the Chinese People be Free?" *Journal of Democracy*, and responses by Minxin Pei and Dali Yang

Course Concept 4: "Democracy with Adjectives"—Authoritarian Persistence in an Age of Democracy

March 8 (T): How and Why Do Dictatorships Succeed?

Jason Brownlee (2007), *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization*, pp. 16-43; 122-56

March 10 (R): Promoting Democracy from Abroad

-Larry Diamond (2008), *The Spirit of Democracy: The Struggle to Build Free Societies Throughout the World*, pp. 106-52; 314-44

Wednesday, March 16 at 12:20 PM: Final Papers Due