Dictatorship, Democracy, and Human Rights

Learning Objectives:

For the last two hundred years, democratic forms of government have gradually spread across the globe. However, democratic transitions have generally not been smooth or stable. Moreover, in recent years, some scholars have argued that we are seeing a resurgence of authoritarian regimes. This has raised several puzzles – what are the basic forces that drive democratization? Are some democratic institutions more stable than others? Is democratization inevitable? How can the existing democracies best act to promote democratic transitions in countries that are currently undemocratic?

In this course, we will explore both the dynamics of democratic transitions, and the policy issues surrounding democracy promotion. We will not concentrate on any particular region of the world, but draw examples from Europe, Latin America, Eastern Europe, and Asia. You will gain an understanding of how democracy has grown, spread, and how that spread has been resisted.

The course will begin with an introduction to democratic institutions and the measurement of democracy. We will then spend several weeks on the dynamics of democratic transitions and reversals. The second half of the course will then focus on democracy promotion.

By the end of the course, you should understand the successes and failures, the promises and risks of democratic transitions and democracy assistance.

Lectures:

This will be a hybrid course. In place of simply week after week of lectures, we will vary your menu of listening to include lectures by the instructor, on-line videos of the country’s leading experts on democracy and democracy assistance, and local events at major think-tanks (e.g. the Woodrow Wilson Center, the Atlantic Council, the Carnegie Endowment, etc.) dealing with democratization issues.

Readings:

The following required texts are all available on-line as inexpensive e-books from Amazon.com. In order to reduce the carbon footprint of this class, I strongly encourage students to do all readings on-line and acquire all materials on-line through e-journal or e-book sources. But of course you are free to purchase hard copies if you wish, although this will generally be more expensive.


Paul Collier, Wars, Guns, and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places (Harper Perennial, 2010).
Larry Diamond and Marc Plattner, eds. Democracy in Decline? (Johns Hopkins, 2015)


Pei, Minxin, China’s Crony Capitalism (Cambridge, MA: Harvard U. Press)


Srdja Popovic and Matthew Miller, Blueprint for Revolution: How to use Rice Pudding, Lego Men, and Other Nonviolent Techniques to Galvanize communities, Overthrow Dictators or simply Change the World (Speigel and Grau 2015)

Charles Tilly, Democracy (Cambridge University Press, 2007)

Additional Readings that are journal articles will be available from the Mason library e-journals, or will be sent to you in a zip file the first week of the course.

In addition, if you wish to delve further into the academic literature, you will find most relevant articles in the following journals: Journal of Democracy; Democratization; American Journal of Political Science; American Political Science Review; Comparative Political Studies; World Politics

It is expected that most of you will have some experience of how modern representative democracy works. But if not, you may wish, before the class to review these recommended readings for those with little or no background:

Robert Dahl: Democracy and its Critics (Yale 1991)
Samuel P. Huntington: The Third Wave (U. Oklahoma Press, 1993)

**Weekly Reading Assignments**


**Part I: The Theory and Practice of Democracy**

2. January 31: Democracy as Trust
   Readings: Charles Tilly, Democracy
3. February 7: Social Structure and Social Change 2  
   Readings: North, Wallis and Weingast, *Violence and Social Orders*

4. February 14: Social Structure and Social Change 2  
   Readings: Pippa Norris, *Making Democratic Governance Work*

5. February 21: Theories of Democracy: Economic Development and Culture  
   Readings: Congleton, R. “Economic and Cultural Prerequisites for Democracy”  
   Khan, M. “Markets, States, and Democracy”  
   Welzel and Inglehart, “The Role of Ordinary People in Democratization”  

   Readings: Donald Horowitz, “Electoral Systems: A Primer for Decision-Makers”  
   Collier and Levitsky, “Democracy with Adjectives.”  
   Steven Fish, “Stronger Legislatures, Stronger Democracies”

7. March 7: The Practice of Democracy II – Democratic Transitions  
   Readings: Popovic and Miller, Blueprint for Revolutions  
   Chenoweth and Stephan: *Why Civil Resistance Works*

   MARCH 14th – Spring break, NO CLASS

*1st paper due in class March 22nd.*

**Part II: Comparative Democracy and Dictatorship**

8. March 21: Measuring Democracy  

9. March 28: Democracy in Fragile States  
   Readings: Collier, *Wars, Guns and Votes*

10. April 4: Democracy and Human Rights  
    Readings: Carothers and Brechenmacher, *Closing Space*

11. April 11: Dictatorship in Russia  
    Readings: Myers, *The New Tsar*

12. April 18: Dictatorship in China  
    Readings: Pei, *China’s Crony Capitalism*
13. April 25: Dictatorship in Turkey  
Readings: Articles on Turkey’s Coup and Response, to be assigned

14. May 2: Strategies to Defeat Democracy Assistance  
Readings: Dobson, *The Dictator’s Learning Curve*

**FINAL PAPER DUE MAY 16th**, no later than 5 pm.

**GRADING:** The first paper, discussing definitions of democracy, will count for 25% of your grade. The final paper, based on your research of a case of democratic transition or democratic institutions in a specific country, will count for 50% of your grade. 15% of your grade will depend on your class presentation, and 10% on your participation in class discussions.

**ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT INFORMATION:**

(1) **The Writing Center.**  
GMU’s Writing Center at the Arlington Campus (Original Building, Room 311) offers both online and in-person services to aid you throughout the writing process. At the center, you’ll find everything from discipline-specific writing resources and brainstorming help to more in-depth, one-on-one time with tutors from a range of disciplines and work experiences. Visit [http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/](http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/) to schedule an appointment or to sign up for the Online Writing Lab (OWL) services.

(2) **The SPP Plagiarism Policy.**  
The profession of scholarship and the intellectual life of a university as well as the field of public policy inquiry depend fundamentally on a foundation of trust. Thus any act of plagiarism strikes at the heart of the meaning of the university and the purpose of the School of Public Policy. It constitutes a serious breach of professional ethics and it is unacceptable.

Plagiarism is the use of another’s words or ideas presented as one’s own. It includes, among other things, the use of specific words, ideas, or frameworks that are the product of another’s work. Honesty and thoroughness in citing sources is essential to professional accountability and personal responsibility. Appropriate citation is necessary so that arguments, evidence, and claims can be critically examined.

Plagiarism is wrong because of the injustice it does to the person whose ideas are stolen. But it is also wrong because it constitutes lying to one’s professional colleagues. From a prudential perspective, it is shortsighted and self-defeating, and it can ruin a professional career.
The faculty of the School of Public Policy takes plagiarism seriously and has adopted a zero tolerance policy. Any plagiarized assignment will receive an automatic grade of “F.” This may lead to failure for the course, resulting in dismissal from the University. This dismissal will be noted on the student’s transcript. For foreign students who are on a university-sponsored visa (eg. F-1, J-1 or J-2), dismissal also results in the revocation of their visa.

To help enforce the SPP policy on plagiarism, all written work submitted in partial fulfillment of course or degree requirements must be available in electronic form so that it can be compared with electronic databases, as well as submitted to commercial services to which the School subscribes. Faculty may at any time submit student’s work without prior permission from the student. Individual instructors may require that written work be submitted in electronic as well as printed form. The SPP policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace it or substitute for it. ([http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/handbook/aD.html](http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/handbook/aD.html))

(3) **Academic Accommodation for a Disability**

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the DRC.

(4) **Student Journal: New Voices in Public Policy**

I will consider nominating the very best papers in this course for publication in New Voices in Public Policy. New Voices is a student- and faculty-reviewed journal that shares SPP’s finest student work with the rest of the world.

(5) **Citations for Research Papers**

The purposes of scholarly citations are several:
1) To show the source for a direct quote or fact not commonly known.
2) To give credit for an idea to the author of a work
3) To show the reader that you are familiar with other scholarship on your topic or to indicate where further information or analysis can be found.
4) You may also use endnotes to explain something in the text or comment on the source.

The intention is to give the reader enough information to find the source you are using so that he or she can see if you have quoted it correctly, interpreted it soundly, done justice to the author cited, or do further research on the topic in question themselves.

Format: use the standard *Chicago Manual of Style* format, also known as “Turabian” and also with guidance available on-line at [http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/](http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/)
EXAMPLES for FOOTNOTES or ENDNOTES:

Books:
author, title (place of publication: publisher, date), page number(s).
[Titles of books should be in italics or underlined.]

Example:
   After the first full citation, you may use a shortened version:
e.g. 2. Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, page number(s).

Articles:
author, title, name of journal (volume, number), page number(s).
[Titles of articles should be enclosed in quotation marks, names of journals underlined or in italics.]

Example:
   After first full citation, you may use a shortened version:

Chapters in edited Books:
author of article, title of article, “in” editor of book, title of book (place and date of publication), page numbers.

Example:

Web Site Citations:
In addition to author, title, etc, include the following information:
Who put up the site, full URL, date of access.

Number the notes consecutively for the whole paper, with each note referring to the number in the text with the number in superscript or parentheses. Endnote numbers should be placed at the end of the sentence containing the information being cited. A bibliography of all the sources used in the paper is required

VIDEOS (optional)

Ian Shapiro lectures on democracy I and II
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IjkSYwYfgFo
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z9ouzj3R574

Erica Chenoweth https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EHkzgDOMtYs

Thomas Carothers https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k5efROJQ1Z8