

Democracy

Political Science 4350/8356
University of Nebraska at Omaha
Fall 2024

Monday & Wednesday 11:30 am-12:45 pm
Roskens Hall 102

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Office Hours: Monday-Thursday, 10-11 am (Arts and Sciences Hall 288C)

What are office hours? Office hours are time that professors set aside to be in their offices—available to meet with you! You may schedule an appointment via email or just drop in any time between 10 am and 11 am Monday through Thursday. You should come to office hours when you have questions or want to talk more about class material. If you miss a day of class, read the materials on Canvas, get notes from a classmate, and come to office hours to get caught up. Finally, using office hours can be a good way to make the most of your experience at UNO by making sure your professors get to know you! One day, you will need letters of recommendation when you apply for jobs or to law school, medical school, business school, or other master's degree programs. The better your professors know you and can remark on your motivation and commitment to your work, the stronger those letters will be and the more weight they will carry with an employer or admissions committee.

Course Description

In the Third Wave of democratization (1974-90s), military dictatorships in Southern Europe and Latin America came to an end, and communism collapsed in Eastern Europe. Democracy was on the rise in the late 20th century. Waves of democratization are followed by erosion of those gains, and the world has experienced many consecutive years of decline in global freedom in more recent years.¹ Today, new democracies face challenges to consolidation, established democracies find their institutions under attack, and old autocracies persist. And, as ever, we confront questions about the quality of democratic practice and sustainability of democratic systems. This course covers democracy as a domestic political regime, transitions to and from democracy, and numerous issues related to the successful practice of democracy.

Prerequisites

This is an upper-level Political Science course. PSCI 2500 (Introduction to Comparative Politics) or junior standing or permission of instructor is required. Graduate: PSCI 2500 or equivalent is recommended.

¹ Gorokhovskaia, Yana and Cathryn Grothe. 2024. Freedom in the World 2024: The Mounting Damage of Flawed Elections and Armed Conflict. Washington, D.C.: Freedom House.

Course Materials

- ❖ Dahl, Robert. 2015. *On Democracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press (2nd edition).
Note: this book is available electronically for free via the UNO Criss Library (<https://www.unomaha.edu/criss-library/>). In the “Find items at Criss Library and beyond” Search Bar on the main page, search for “On Democracy.”

Other class readings are available on the Canvas course site in the Modules for their respective class sessions and/or available through the Criss Library electronic access. Readings are listed below in the Schedule of Class Meetings section.

Evaluation

Attendance and Daily Participation: 25% (including in-class activities, discussions, quizzes, writing assignments, exit slips, questions about readings, etc)

Book Chapter (Reverse) Outlines: 15%

Institutional Design Scenario: 15%

Service Learning Project: 20% (including training, Election Day, and pre- and post-written assignments and discussion)

Final Exam: 25%

Attendance and Daily Participation (25%)

First and foremost, I want you here! The easiest way to do well in this course is to be in class every day. Come to class prepared to ask and answer questions, clarify readings, discuss course material, participate in activities, and share your thoughts and ideas. The classroom offers you a forum to engage with your peers and to learn from each other. After pandemic-induced online and Zoom-based teaching, I am happy to be back in a real-life classroom with all of you, and I want us to make the most of it! I will record attendance using Roll Call on the Canvas course site, but note that the Attendance & Participation Grade is a different, aggregate score, which includes both *attendance and participation*: Not attending class will earn you 0% for the day; Attending class will earn you 75% for the day; Attending *and successfully participating* in the day’s activities will earn you up to 100% for the day. Being late to class will result in points deductions.

A few specific thoughts about success in our class:

- Take notes in class. Read your notes as soon as possible after each class. The sooner you read your notes after class, the more of the material you will retain.
- Take notes when you read so that you will better retain the information in the readings and be prepared to discuss it.
- Treat everyone in the class with patience and common courtesy. When you speak, remember that you are in dialogue with the entire class. Speak to and listen to all of your classmates. Be curious and ask questions.
- You are responsible for your own learning and accountable for your own work—you are ultimately in charge of your own educational experience!

Book Chapter (Reverse) Outlines (15%)

We will look at some fundamental elements of politics and society considered necessary for high-quality democracy—rule of law, public goods, social connection, and party competition—and challenges to them, especially as expressed in the contemporary United States. This will include reading the introductory chapters of the following three books and writing outlines of them, to learn substantively about each topic and to practice an important writing skill. You will then select one to read in full, in preparation for the final exam at the end of the semester. Details will be distributed in class.

- Cass Sunstein, *#Republic: Divided Democracy in the Age of Social Media* (2017)
- Heather McGhee, *The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together* (2021)
- Daniel Schlozman and Sam Rosenfeld, *The Hollow Parties: The Many Pasts and Disordered Present of American Party Politics* (2024)

Institutional Design Scenario (15%)

We will look at the design of political institutions in (new) democracies such as presidential/parliamentary systems, district sizes, proportional representation, electoral thresholds, compulsory voting, term limits, and more. In this assignment, you will be given a hypothetical country with a set of political, economic, and social conditions; and, working in groups, you will discuss what the best political institutions would be for the country's democracy and why. Each group will collaborate to decide on institutions, present to the rest of the class describing and justifying their selections, and answer questions from their peers (and professor!) about their proposed institutions.

Service Learning Project (20%)

In this class, you will participate in the democratic process in the United States this fall through a hands-on, experiential service learning project. You will serve as poll workers on Election Day (Nov. 5, 2024) in Douglas County. You must be a registered voter in Douglas County in order to be a poll worker. **Check your current voter registration** with the Nebraska Voter Information Lookup tool here: <https://www.votercheck.necvr.ne.gov/voterview>. To **register to vote** or **update your voter registration** you can do so on the Nebraska Secretary of State site here: <https://www.nebraska.gov/apps-sos-voter-registration/>. See also the Douglas County Election Commission for more information: <https://www.votedouglascounty.com>.

In order to begin the process of preparing us to be poll workers, I will submit the class roster to the Douglas County Election Commission on the first day of class, August 26. We will be asked to complete training (approximately 2.5 hours) in August-September, and you will work at the polls on Election Day in November (approximately 8-10 hours). **This means that you will be busy all day on Election Day, so if you plan to vote in the election, you MUST DO SO AHEAD OF TIME through one of the Douglas County Election Commission's options for early voting:** https://www.votedouglascounty.com/early_voting.aspx.

Also, be advised that new **Nebraska state law requires you to have a photo ID to vote**. See the full list of documents and other details on the Nebraska Secretary of State website here: <https://sos.nebraska.gov/elections/voter-id>.

In addition to the training and Election Day work, you will write short pre-election and post-election papers, reflecting on the experience.

Finally, because this service learning project requires you to be a registered voter in Douglas County, if you are a UNO international student or otherwise cannot be a registered voter here, see me so that I can give you an alternative assignment.

Final Exam (25%)

You will take an in-class final exam period for this class (Wednesday, December 18 from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm). Mastery of both lecture material and readings will be necessary for the exam.

UNO Criss Library

Dr. C.C. and Mabel L. Criss Library (<https://www.unomaha.edu/criss-library/index.php>) serves as the primary source of academic information for the university community through its collections, academic and reference services, innovative and modern technology, exhibit and event programming and modern physical facilities. [Subject specialist librarians](#) have in-depth knowledge of researching within specific disciplines and can give you guidance specifically for your area of study. Dr. Omer Farooq (ofarooq@unomaha.edu) is the Subject Librarian for Political Science. He maintains the Political Science Research Guide (https://libguides.unomaha.edu/political_science), which is a helpful compilation of political science sources, databases, and references. You can schedule a research appointment with Dr. Farooq through the Research Guide page.

UNO Writing Center

The UNO Writing Center offers free one-on-one consultations with trained consultants to all students, faculty, and staff. Their goal is to help writers improve their writing skills and confidence in all types of writing, in all subject areas, and at all stages of the writing process. For more information about their hours and locations or to schedule an appointment, visit their website at www.unomaha.edu/writingcenter or visit them at their main location in Arts and Sciences Hall, Room 150.

Academic Integrity

You must maintain academic integrity at all times. Plagiarism/cheating are serious academic crimes, and I will pursue any infringements seriously and actively. At a minimum, any infringement will result in a grade of zero on the assignment. For more information on University of Nebraska at Omaha policies on academic integrity, please see: <https://www.unomaha.edu/student-life/student-conduct-and-community-standards/policies/academic-integrity.php> and <http://www.unomaha.edu/graduate-studies/student-rights-responsibilities.php>.

Accessibility Services Center

Accommodations are provided for students who are registered with the Accessibility Services Center (ASC) and make their requests sufficiently in advance. For more information, contact ASC (Location: 104 H&K, Phone: 402-554-2872, Email: unoaccessibility@unomaha.edu) or go to the website: <https://www.unomaha.edu/student-life/accessibility/index.php>.

Late Policy

On daily/weekly assignments, no late work will be accepted. For paper assignments, late papers will be penalized by 5% per day late. For example, a paper that earns an 85% but is one day late would receive a grade of 80%.

Schedule of Class Meetings

Part I: Democracy and Its Alternatives

Week One

Monday, August 26: Introduction to the course

Wednesday, August 28: What is democracy?

- ❖ Dahl: Preface, Note on the Text, and chapters 1-3

Additional graduate reading

- Philippe Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl, "What Democracy is... and is Not," *Journal of Democracy* 2(3): 75-88 (1991)
- Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, "Elections without Democracy: The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism," *Journal of Democracy* 13(2): 51-65 (2002)

Week Two

Monday, September 2: Labor Day (UNO Holiday; No class)

Wednesday, September 4: Democracy: Its many forms

- ❖ Dahl, chapters 4, 8-11; Appendices C & D

Additional graduate reading

- David Collier and Steven Levitsky, "Democracy with Adjectives," *World Politics* 49(3): 430-451 (1997)

Week Three

Monday, September 9: Democracy: Its Consequences

- Dahl, chapters 5-7

Additional graduate reading

- James Ray, "The Democratic Path to Peace," *Journal of Democracy* 8(2): 49-64 (1997)

Wednesday, September 11: Workplace democracy (Guest talk from Jim Begley, Director of the UNO William Brennan Institute for Labor Studies)

Part II: Change and Challenge

Week Four

Monday, September 16: “Early” democratization

- Roger D. Congleton, *Perfecting Parliament*: preface (ix-x) and chapter one, “On the Origins of Western Democracy” (pp. 1-18 up to “Acknowledgments”)
- Stephen Tuck, “Democratization and the Disfranchisement of African Americans in the US South during the Late 19th Century,” *Democratization* 14(4): 580-602 (2007)

Wednesday, September 18: The “Third Wave” of democratization

- Dahl, chapter 12
- Lawrence Whitehead, ed. *The International Dimensions of Democratization: Europe and the Americas* (2001): chapter 11 (Powell, “International Aspects of Democratization: The Case of Spain”)

Additional graduate reading

- William Galston, “Civil Society and the ‘Art of Association,’” *Journal of Democracy*, 11(1): 64-70 (2000)

Week Five

Monday, September 23: Democratization and war

- Jack Snyder, *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict* (2000), Chapter six (“Nationalism and Democracy in the Developing World”)

Additional graduate reading

- “Why is America So Bad at Promoting Democracy in Other Countries?” *Foreign Policy* (2015)

Wednesday, September 25: Political Science Dept. Pizza and Politics: “2024, The ‘Year of Elections’” (Class Location TBA)

Week Six

Monday, September 30: Democratic consolidation, part one

- Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, “Toward Consolidated Democracies,” *Journal of Democracy*, 7(2): 14-33 (1996)

Additional graduate reading

- Guillermo O’Donnell, “Illusions about Consolidation,” *Journal of Democracy*, 7(2): 34-51 (1996)

Wednesday, October 2: Democratic consolidation, part two

- Aurel Croissant, David Kuehn, and David Pion-Berlin, eds. *Research Handbook on Civil-Military Relations* (2024): chapter 28 (Kristina Mani, “Democratic resilience and the military in new democracies”)

Additional graduate reading

- Teri L. Caraway, Maria Lorena Cook, and Stephen Crowley, eds. *Working Through the Past: Labor and Authoritarian Legacies in Comparative Perspective* (2015): “Introduction: Labor and Authoritarian Legacies”

Week Seven

Monday, October 7: Constitutional liberalism

- Rahul Mukherji, “How to Stop India’s Authoritarian Slide,” *Journal of Democracy* 35(1): 19-29 (2024)
- Milan Vaishnav, “The Rise of India’s Second Republic,” *Journal of Democracy* 35(3): 38-56 (2024)

Wednesday, October 9: Public goods, the state, and social inclusion

- Heather McGhee, *The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together* (2021)

Week Eight

Monday, October 14: Political parties in democracy

- Daniel Schlozman and Sam Rosenfeld, *The Hollow Parties: The Many Pasts and Disordered Present of American Party Politics* (2024)

Additional graduate reading

- Seymour Martin Lipset, “The Indispensability of Political Parties,” *Journal of Democracy*, 11(1): 48-55 (2000)

Wednesday, October 16: Media, social media, and democracy

- Cass Sunstein, *#Republic: Divided Democracy in the Age of Social Media* (2017)

Week Nine

Monday, October 21: Fall break (UNO Holiday; No class)

Part III: Institutional Design

Wednesday, October 23: Institutional design in (new) democracies: presidential vs. parliamentary systems... and other rules of the game

- ❖ Dahl, Appendices A & B; review chapters 8-11
- Juan Linz, “The Perils of Presidentialism,” *Journal of Democracy* (1990)
- Donald Horowitz, “Comparing Democratic Systems,” in Diamond and Plattner, eds., *The Global Resurgence of Democracy* (1996)
- Ben Reilly, “Electoral Systems for Divided Societies,” *Journal of Democracy* 13(2): 156-170 (2002)
- Adrienne LeBas, “Term Limits and Beyond: Africa’s Democratic Hurdles,” *Current History* (May 2016)
- “Compulsory Voting,” International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance: http://www.idea.int/vt/compulsory_voting.cfm

- Best Electoral System Test, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance: <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/tools/best-electoral-system-test>

Additional graduate reading

- William Reisinger, “Choices Facing the Builders of Liberal Democracy,” in Robert Grey, ed., *Democratic Theory and Post-Communist Change* (1997), 24-44

Week Ten (Monday, Oct. 29 & Wednesday, Oct. 31)

- **Institutional design scenarios**

Week Eleven

Monday, November 4: Final Service Learning project preparation (U.S. Election Day tomorrow)

- **Pre-election paper due**

Wednesday, November 6: Service Learning project debrief

- **Post-election reflection paper due**

Part IV: Selected Topics and Recent Developments

Week Twelve

Monday, November 11: Democracy and market-capitalism

- ❖ Dahl, chapters 13-14

Additional graduate reading

- Valerie Bunce, “Democratization and Economic Reform,” *Annual Review of Political Science*, vol. 4 (2001): 43-65

Wednesday, November 13: Democracy and economic inequality

- ❖ Dahl, chapter 17

Additional graduate reading

- Terry Lynn Karl, “Economic Inequality and Democratic Instability,” *Journal of Democracy*, 11(1): 149-156 (2000)

Week Thirteen

Monday, November 18: Delegative democracy

- Santiago Anria, “More Inclusion, Less Liberalism in Bolivia,” *Journal of Democracy* 27(3): 99-108 (2016)

Additional graduate reading

- Guillermo O’Donnell, “Delegative Democracy,” *Journal of Democracy* 5(1): 55-69 (1994)

Wednesday, November 20: Violence and democracy

- Michael Wahman, “How Strategic Violence Distorts African Elections,” *Journal of Democracy* 35(2): 108-121 (2024)

- Yanilda María González, “‘What citizens can see of the state’: Police and the construction of democratic citizenship in Latin America,” *Theoretical Criminology* 21(4): 494-511 (2017)

Week Fourteen

Monday, November 25: Democratic backsliding

- Roberto Stefan Foa and Yascha Mounk, “The Democratic Disconnect,” *Journal of Democracy*, 27(3): 5-17 (2016)
- Thomas Carothers and Brendan Hartnett, “Misunderstanding Democratic Backsliding,” *Journal of Democracy*, 35(3): 24-37 (2024)

Wednesday, November 27: Thanksgiving (UNO Holiday; No class)

Week Fifteen

Monday, December 2: (More) observations from the “Year of Elections”

Wednesday, December 4: Summary and Conclusions

- ❖ Dahl, chapters 15-16

Week Sixteen

UNO “Prep Week” (No class)

Final Exam on Wednesday, December 18 from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm