Democracy, Authoritarianism, and Totalitarianism

Political Science 4350/8356
University of Nebraska Omaha
Fall 2016

Tuesday & Thursday 8:30-9:45 am
Arts and Sciences Hall 378

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Course Description
The Third Wave of democratization brought an end to more than 60 authoritarian regimes throughout the world. Authoritarian government experienced wholesale decline as political liberalization took hold in one state after another. From the end of military dictatorships in Southern Europe and Latin America in the 1970s and 1980s to the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe in the 1990s, democracy has been on the rise since the late 20th century. Yet, looking at countries like Egypt, Iran, China, Cuba, North Korea, and other non-democracies, it is clear that other regime types persist. And, many more states have developed systems with democratic characteristics, yet they are far from being liberal democracies. These hybrid systems—often known by such terms as electoral authoritarianism, competitive authoritarianism, illiberal democracy, “low-intensity” democracy, delegative democracy, tutelary or protected democracy—raise new questions about the quality and sustainability of democracy. The seeming international triumph of democratic ideals in the Third Wave of democratization was neither absolute nor unidirectional. Past “waves” of democratization have been reversed. Democracies, particularly new ones, risk slipping into quasi-democratic practices or experiencing outright authoritarian reversal. The much-vaunted Arab Spring demonstrated very recently the challenges to political liberalization. In 2011, historic protests in Egypt brought an end to the 30-year rule of former General Hosni Mubarak and ushered in great hopes for political change. On July 3, 2013, the Egyptian military put an end to the country’s short-lived democratic experiment.

This course covers the three main “ideal types” of domestic political regimes—democracy, authoritarianism, and totalitarianism—as well as transitions to and from democracy. We will discuss these regime types both in the abstract and how they operate in the real world. The emphasis will be on these regimes and regime transitions in practice. You will be exposed to causal arguments about the development of different systems, with a particular emphasis on existing theories of democratization.
**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.

**Course Materials**


Individual class readings are available on the UNO online system, Blackboard.

**Evaluation**: Your course grade will be based on the following:

- Attendance and Participation: 15%
- Midterm exam: 20%
- Final exam: 20%
- Short writing assignment: 10%
- Research paper: 35% (including proposal)

**Attendance and Participation (15%)**

The course will require active student participation. Students are expected to do the assigned readings and to come to class prepared to share your questions, comments, and ideas. Plan to ask and answer questions, clarify readings, to discuss course material, and to participate in activities. The classroom offers you a forum to engage with your peers and to learn from each other. I expect everyone to promote an active learning environment by supporting each other intellectually, asking questions, and by being an aggressive learner.

A few basic ground rules:

- **Always be present, physically and mentally (put your phone away…)**
- Treat everyone in the class with patience and respect
- Be curious and ask questions of your classmates, of our readings, and of me
- When you speak, remember that you are in dialogue with the entire class. Speak to and listen to all of your classmates
- You are responsible for your own learning and accountable for your own work—you are ultimately in charge of your own educational experience

**Midterm Exam and Final Exam (20% each; 40% total)**

The in-class midterm and final exams will consist of a variety of essay questions. Mastery of both the lecture material and the assigned readings will be necessary for the exams. *Do not miss exams. If an emergency arises and you cannot make it, please contact me beforehand to request a makeup exam. The ability to make up work missed will be at the discretion of the instructor. Make up exams will be more challenging in format and content than the in-class exams. Un-excused absences from exams will result in a grade of “zero” for that exam.*
Writing Assignments (Research paper 35%; Short writing assignment 10%)

Research Paper Assignment
During the semester, you will write a research paper regarding the regime type of one country in the world—a non-democracy or transitioning democracy. In 15-18 pages (double-spaced, 1-inch margins and 12 pt. Times New Roman font), you will respond to one of the three prompts below.

(1) Choose a non-democratic country anywhere in the world. Describe the elements of the political system that make this country a non-democracy, and provide a brief explanation for how they got that way. Then, employing the various causal factors and theoretical arguments that we examine this semester, assess the prospects for democratization occurring in this country in the near term (next three to five years) and medium term (next 10 to 20 years). Of the various factors you examine, which ones should scholars be paying especially close attention to in this case, and why?

(2) Choose a country anywhere in the world that has democratized in the last 10 to 15 years that you find to be a consolidated democracy. Paying particular attention to the transition from established to consolidated democracy, explain the democratization process in this country, employing the various causal factors and theoretical arguments that we examine this semester. Given its relative infancy, why are you so confident that this democracy is already consolidated? What lessons can we draw from this case about democratic consolidation in other cases?

(3) Choose a country anywhere in the world that has democratized in the last 10 to 15 years that you find not to be a consolidated democracy. Explain the democratization process in this country, employing the various causal factors and theoretical arguments about them that we examine this semester. Why is this democracy not yet consolidated? What are the prospects for consolidation in the near term (next three to five years) and medium term (next 10 years)? Why? What lessons can we draw from this case of non-consolidation about the process of democratic consolidation in other cases?

The paper-writing process will begin with choosing a question and country to investigate by Thursday, September 15. The next class meeting, Tuesday, September 20, will be a class research session at the Criss Library where we will talk more about sources, citations, and research. You will have time to search for and retrieve research materials. As you read broadly and prepare your research proposal, you will begin to formulate more specific preliminary ideas responding to the questions posed in the research prompts. You will submit your research proposal on Thursday, October 6. The proposal is a two-page (double-spaced, 1-inch margins and 12 pt. Times New Roman font) essay presenting your initial research and preliminary response to your selected essay prompt. You will also provide a preliminary reference list of sources (at least one from the syllabus and three outside scholarly sources). I will approve the proposal and/or ask you to revise before proceeding with the paper.

The final draft of the paper is due on the last class day, Thursday, December 8. Further details about the paper will be distributed in class.
**Short Writing Assignment**

You will also have one short writing assignment during the semester. For this assignment, you will write a letter to your (Nebraska or home-state) US Congressional Representative or write to either of your US senators about an aspect of United States policy toward democracy-promotion abroad (a country of your choosing). Such letters are an effective way to get the attention of a member of Congress (or at least the member’s staff) and something you should do more often than you likely do. The letter must critique US efforts (or lack of such efforts) at facilitating democracy in a particular country. What, specifically, should the US government be doing differently, and why? The letter must be single-spaced and no more than two pages. The letter must be in an acceptable business-letter format and include the date, the address of the person to whom you are writing, and your contact information. The letter will be due in class on Tuesday, November 1. Further details about the letter will be distributed in class.

**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](http://www.unomaha.edu/writingcenter) or visit them at their main location in Arts and Sciences Hall, Room 150. I strongly encourage you to meet with the Writing Center both early in the semester as you formulate your ideas, organize, and write your papers for this class.

**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 Omaha policies on academic integrity, please see: [http://www.unomaha.edu/student-life/achievement/student-conduct-and-community-standards/policies/academic-integrity.php](http://www.unomaha.edu/student-life/achievement/student-conduct-and-community-standards/policies/academic-integrity.php)

**Special Accommodations**

Accommodations are provided for students who are registered with Disability Services and make their requests sufficiently in advance. For more information, contact Disability Services (MBSC 111, Phone: 402-554-2872, TTY: 402-554-3799) or go to the website: [www.unomaha.edu/disability](http://www.unomaha.edu/disability).

**Late Policy**

On daily/weekly assignments, no late work will be accepted. For the paper assignment, late papers will be penalized by two-thirds of a letter grade per day late. For example, an “A+” paper one day late would receive a grade of “A-.”
Schedule of Class Meetings

Part I. Regime Types

Week One
Tuesday, August 23: Introduction to the course

Thursday, August 25: Totalitarianism: In Theory
  • *Paul Brooker, Non-Democratic Regimes: Theory, Government and Politics, Introduction and Chapter 1 (pp. 13-24 only)
  • Barrington Moore, Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World (1966), Chapter 8 (“Revolution from Above and Fascism”)

Recommendations for Further Reading
  • George Orwell, Animal Farm (1945)
  • Carl Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski. Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy (1956), Chapters 1 and 27
  • Juan Linz, Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes (2000), Chapter 2 (available on Google Books)

Question: Among the various features of the totalitarian ideal type, is there one that is particularly defining of a totalitarian regime? Which one?

Week Two
Tuesday, August 30: Totalitarianism: In Practice
  • *Paul Brooker, Non-Democratic Regimes: Theory, Government and Politics, pp. 128-158
  • Walter Laqueur, Fascism: Past, Present, Future (1996), Chapter 1

Recommendations for Further Reading

Thursday, September 1: Authoritarianism: In Theory
  • *Paul Brooker, Non-Democratic Regimes: Theory, Government and Politics, Chapter 1 (pp. 25-40 only) and Chapter 9
  • Juan Linz, Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes (2000), Chapter 4 (pp. 159-184 only)
Recommendations for Further Reading

- Juan Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes* (2000), Chapter 4

Question: Despite our thinking that democracy is “best,” authoritarian systems often enjoy public support. Why have some authoritarian systems been popular?

Week Three (Sept. 6 & 8): Authoritarianism (and Semi-authoritarianism) in Practice

- *Paul Brooker, Non-Democratic Regimes: Theory, Government and Politics*, Chapters 3-6

Recommendations for Further Reading

- Andreas Schedler, ed. *Electoral Authoritarianism* (2006), Chapters 1 and 4-6

Question: Who are the most important political actors in an authoritarian system? Why?

Week Four (Sept. 13 & 15): Authoritarianism Gets Personal: Franco, Pinochet, other “Greats”

- Country selection for research paper due in class Thursday, September 15
- Juan Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*, Chapter 3
- “Profile: Hosni Mubarak,” *BBC News*, May 9, 2015

Recommendations for Further Reading


Question: Is there a particular personality trait that “great” authoritarian leaders seem to share? Why does Belarus, a European country, still have such an authoritarian political system?
Week Five
Tuesday, September 20: **Library Research Session (Class will meet in Criss Library today)**

Thursday, September 22: Democracy: Its Many Forms

**Recommendations for Further Reading**

**Question:** How do you define democracy? Given your definition, how easy would it be to measure the concept of democracy in various cases around the world?

Week Six (Sept. 27 & 29): Democracy: Its Consequences

**Recommendations for Further Reading**

**Question:** Does democracy really make peace more likely?

**II: Regime Transitions: Democratization**

Week Seven (Oct. 4 & 6): The Stages of Democratization
- **Research proposal for research paper due in class Thursday, October 6**

**Question:** How do we know when a democracy is “consolidated?”
Week Eight
Tuesday, October 11: In-class review session

Thursday, October 13: **Midterm Exam** (covering weeks 1-8)

Week Nine
Tuesday, October 18: Fall Break (NO CLASSES)

Thursday, October 20: Causal Factors I: “External Structure” and “External Agency”

**Recommendations for Further Reading**

**Question:** What role is there for structure and agency in political outcomes such as democratization?

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

**Recommendations for Further Reading**

**Question:** Is successful U.S. “democracy promotion” abroad possible? Is the new trend toward “democracy support” in foreign aid decisions a good idea?
Week Eleven (Nov. 1 & 3): Causal Factors II: “Internal Structure”

- **Short writing assignment due in class Tuesday, November 1**
- *Robert Dahl, On Democracy, Chapter 12 (pp. 149-163 only)

**Recommendations for Further Reading**


**Question:** Can democracy develop without a middle class? Can it survive severe economic inequality?

**Question:** Does democracy help solve, or does it instead reinforce, sharp divisions in society?

**Question:** Is “civil society” a crucial component of consolidated democracy, or is it too conceptually indistinct to be useful?

Week Twelve

Tuesday, November 8: Election Day (U.S.)

Thursday, November 10: Causal Factors III: “Internal Agency”

- Democratic Transitions: Conversations with World Leaders (2015), Chapter 3 (Ghana) & Chapter 7 (Poland)

**Recommendations for Further Reading**


**Question:** If democracy is the result of specific actions of individuals, how can we ever develop theories that predict its occurrence and prospects for survival?
Week Thirteen (Nov. 15 & 17): When Agents Create Structures: Institutional Design

- **Tuesday, November 15: Guest lecture: Dr. Ramazan Kilinc**
- *Robert Dahl, On Democracy, Chapters 8-9 (and review Chapters 10-11)
- 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](http://www.idea.int/vt/compulsory_voting.cfm)

**Recommendations for Further Reading**


**Question:** In what circumstances is a parliamentary system better for stability than a presidential one? In what circumstances is it worse for stability?

**Question:** In a democratic country with a highly educated population, are political parties really necessary?

Week Fourteen

Tuesday, November 22: Economic Reform, Market Economics, and Democratization

- *Robert Dahl, On Democracy, Chapters 13-14

**Recommendations for Further Reading**


**Question:** How can democracies with market economies deal with the problem of economic inequality leading to political inequality? Should they even try?

**Question:** Should countries facing both economic liberalization and democratization do both at the same time, or one before the other? If the latter, which one should they attempt first?

Thursday, November 24: Thanksgiving holiday (NO CLASSES)
Part III: Regime Transitions: Democratic Breakdown

Week Fifteen (Nov. 29 & Dec. 1): Why Democracies Collapse

- *Paul Brooker, Non-Democratic Regimes: Theory, Government and Politics, Chapter 3 (review)
- “Why is Thailand under military rule,” BBC News, November 9, 2015

Recommendations for Further Reading

- Arturo Valenzuela, The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Chile (1978)
- Edward Luttwak, Coup d’etat: A Practical Handbook (1979), pp. 9-56

Week Sixteen (Dec. 6 & 8): The Future of Democracy and Authoritarianism?

- *Paul Brooker, Non-Democratic Regimes: Theory, Government and Politics, Chapter 10 (and review Chapter 9)
- *Robert Dahl, On Democracy, Chapters 2, 3, and 15
- Final draft of research paper due in class Thursday, December 8

Recommendations for Further Reading


In-class final exam on Tuesday, December 13 at 9:30 am