

**COMPARATIVE DEMOCRATIZATION**  
**POLSCI 4KC3**  
**Fall 2021 / Term 1**

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**Contents**

Course Description.....	3
Course Objectives.....	3
Required Materials and Texts .....	3
Class Format.....	3
Course Evaluation – Overview.....	3
Course Evaluation – Details.....	4
Discussion Posts, Participation, and Attendance (30%).....	4
Presentation (30%), due on your selected week .....	4
Analytical Book Review (40%), due December 14.....	5
Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings .....	5
Week 1 (SEP 7) What is democracy?.....	5
Week 2 (SEP 14) What is an authoritarian regime? .....	6
Week 3 (SEP 21) How do you measure democracy?.....	6
Week 4 (SEP 28) Political Economy of Democratization: Modernization.....	6
Week 5 (OCT 5) Political Economy of Democratization: Inequality .....	7
Week 6 (OCT 12) Mid-term recess, NO CLASS.....	7
Week 7 (OCT 19) Social Origins: Class.....	7
Week 8 (OCT 26) Social Origins: Political Culture.....	7
Week 9 (NOV 2) Diffusion .....	8
Week 10 (NOV 9) Promotion and Intervention .....	8
Week 11 (NOV 16) Elite Bargaining .....	9
Week 12 (NOV 23) Protest and Revolution .....	9
Week 13 (NOV 30) Consolidation.....	9
Week 14 (DEC 7) Backsliding .....	10
Course Policies .....	10

Submission of Assignments.....	10
Grades.....	10
Late Assignments.....	11
Absences, Missed Work, Illness.....	11
Courses with an On-Line Element.....	11
Online Proctoring.....	11
Authenticity / Plagiarism Detection.....	11
Copyright and Recording.....	12
Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO) .....	12
Academic Integrity Statement.....	12
Conduct Expectations.....	13
Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities.....	13
Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy.....	13
Course Modification.....	13
Extreme Circumstances.....	14

## **Course Description**

This seminar examines one of the oldest and most important questions in comparative politics: what explains variation in political regimes across time and space? The principal goal is to understand and engage with the main theories of democratization. Our focus is on the concept of democracy, the process of democratization, and the (political) aftermath of transition. At a time when democracy is in retreat across the globe these ideas are more relevant than ever.

Aside from learning about democratization, a key objective of this course is to prepare you to engage critically with big debates. When confronted with an interesting question, you will be able to think through the questions' assumptions, identify the sort of evidence needed to answer it, and put forth a carefully reasoned answer. This important skill will be useful to you in settings beyond this course.

## **Course Objectives**

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Define democracy, autocracy, and democratization,
- List different pathways from autocracy to democracy,
- Explain the persistence of autocracy and democracy,
- Reflect on the factors that might lead to an erosion of democratic rule.

## **Required Materials and Texts**

All materials will be available on Avenue to Learn.

## **Class Format**

Subject to any university-wide modifications, this course will be delivered entirely in-person and your presence is mandatory. The class will run as a seminar. This means that we will work through the readings together, making sense of their analytical points, tensions, and insights. Each week a team of students will be responsible for kicking off our discussion by providing a summary of the readings and some discussion questions. Doing the readings, therefore, is essential to the seminar's success.

## **Course Evaluation – Overview**

1. Discussion Posts, Participation and Attendance (30%)
2. Presentation (30%)
3. Analytical Book Review– (40%)

## **Course Evaluation – Details**

### **Discussion Posts, Participation, and Attendance (30%)**

A seminar's success hinges on participation. To be an effective participant you must give yourself time to understand the readings. This entails two complementary activities: literally reading the texts (often several times) *and* reflecting on their insights in relation to each other. Sometimes, the arguments will be difficult to understand fully. That's OK. The point of a seminar is to puzzle through these texts *together*, but this will prove difficult if you haven't tried to do this at home first.

Speaking and contributing during seminar is key to furthering everyone's understanding of the readings. Some people are nervous speaking up in class. To this end, we will all work to create an environment that makes it comfortable for everyone to share their thoughts. To facilitate engagement, I require each of you to post a comment or question related to the readings on Avenue to Learn prior to each meeting. I may ask you to elaborate on your point or question in class.

How to get full credit for discussion posts, participation, and attendance:

- I will grade discussion posts on a pass/fail basis. Good discussion questions should not be yes/no questions, nor should they be questions of fact. Good discussion questions will prompt us to probe connections between ideas, readings, or cases. The target word count should be between 50-150 words -- no more please! If your post does not meet these standards, I will treat it as if you did not post. See third bullet point below.
- You may miss two classes without losing points. Thereafter, I will deduct 5 points per class missed to a maximum of 30 points off.
- Similarly, you may miss 2 posts without losing points. Thereafter, I will deduct 2.5 points per post missed to a maximum of 30 points off.

### **Presentation (30%), due on your selected week**

A team of students will be responsible for leading one class discussion during weeks 4-13 (there are 10 eligible weeks). These teams will be composed of two to three members that will sign up to do their presentation in the second week of class. The presenters' task is to kick off our discussion of the texts. The presentation should begin by summarizing the readings, move on to draw connections and insights from across them, and conclude with a set of questions for debate. An excellent way to kick off a conversation is to take a position on some issue (so that others may argue with you!). To give an example, you might throw out the question: "Can you effectively measure democracy?" And then consider what each of the authors that week might say about this question. If you throw out a question, be prepared to weigh in on it—sometimes this is necessary to get the ball rolling. The presentation will take place at the beginning of class and should be about 10-15 minutes in length. In terms of time management, a

good split should be roughly 50% summary, 50% analysis/making connections. Team members will receive 1 grade for all students.

24 hours before class, the presenters will post a 1-page outline of all the readings alongside 3 discussion questions on Avenue to Learn. This document will guide the presentation. I will be responsible for doing this for the first three weeks which should provide you with a template for this work.

### **Analytical Book Review (40%), due December 14**

Instead of a final exam I require you to write a 2000-word analytical book review of a book in the field of Democratization. (I will circulate a list of pre-authorized books on our second class meeting.) The book review is not merely a summary of the book you have chosen, and less than a third of the review should be spent summarizing the book. Rather, the analytical book review is a carefully reasoned piece that highlights connections between the book and the literature we have discussed in class. Some of the questions you might answer include:

- How does this book claim to be important, and do you agree?
- In what ways does the book build on previous work? In what ways does it challenge existing understandings?
- Does the book make a convincing, original argument? How do you know?
- Do you think the argument would travel well to other contexts (in space and time)? Why, or why not?

The purpose of this assignment is to get you to demonstrate your handle of the democratization literature and to convey it effectively in a written format.

#### Important dates:

- You must pick a book by September 21 (5%)
- You will submit a 2-page outline of your paper on November 16 (10%)
- The final product is due December 7 (25%)

### **Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings**

#### **Week 1 (SEP 7) What is democracy?**

Readings:

- Gerardo L. Munck, "What Is Democracy? A Reconceptualization of the Quality of Democracy," *Democratization* 23, no. 1 (January 2, 2016): 1–26, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2014.918104>.
- Joseph Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy* (Simon and Schuster, 2012). Pages 240-273 starting with *A Mental Experiment*.

- Robert A. Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (Yale University Press, 2008). Chapter 1: Democratization and Public Opposition.

Guiding Questions: What is democracy: An ideal? A set of institutions? A set of social or cultural practices?

## **Week 2 (SEP 14) What is an authoritarian regime?**

Readings:

- Juan José Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000). Pages 49-63
- Stephen H. Haber, "Authoritarian Government," in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Economy*, ed. Donald A. Wittman and Barry R. Weingast, 2008.
- Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, "Elections Without Democracy: The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism," *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 2 (2002): 51–65.

Guiding Questions: How do authoritarian governments differ from each other?

## **Week 3 (SEP 21) How do you measure democracy?**

Readings:

- David Collier and Steven Levitsky, "Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research," *World Politics* 49, no. 3 (1997): 430–51.
- Shawn Treier and Simon Jackman, "Democracy as a Latent Variable," *American Journal of Political Science* 52, no. 1 (2008): 201–17.
- Pamela Paxton, "Women's Suffrage in the Measurement of Democracy: Problems of Operationalization," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 35, no. 3 (September 1, 2000): 92–111, <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02699767>.

Guiding Questions: What are the principles underlying a "minimalist" theory of democracy? How can we distinguish democracy from non-democracy?

**Notes:** Your book selection for the analytical book review is due.

## **Week 4 (SEP 28) Political Economy of Democratization: Modernization**

Readings:

- Seymour Martin Lipset, "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy," *The American Political Science Review* 53, no. 1 (1959): 69–105, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1951731>.
- Adam Przeworski and Fernando Limongi, "Modernization: Theories and Facts," *World Politics* 49, no. 2 (1997): 155–83.

- Carles Boix and Susan C. Stokes, “Endogenous Democratization,” *World Politics* 55, no. 4 (2003): 517–49.

Guiding Questions: What is the precise hypothesis of modernization theory?  
What is the connection between economic development and political change?

### **Week 5 (OCT 5) Political Economy of Democratization: Inequality**

Readings:

- Carles Boix, *Democracy and Redistribution* (New York City: Cambridge University Press, 2003). Chapter 1: A Theory of Political Transitions.
- Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (New York City: Cambridge University Press, 2006). Chapter 2: Our Argument.
- Ben Ansell and David Samuels, “Inequality and Democratization: A Contractarian Approach,” *Comparative Political Studies* 43, no. 12 (December 1, 2010): 1543–74, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414010376915>.

Guiding Questions: Who are the main actors in explanations rooted in political economy?

### **Week 6 (OCT 12) Mid-term recess, NO CLASS**

### **Week 7 (OCT 19) Social Origins: Class**

Readings:

- Theda Skocpol, “A Critical Review of Barrington Moore’s Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy,” *Politics & Society* 4, no. 1 (1973): 1–34, <https://doi.org/10.1177/003232927300400101>.
- Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1993). Chapter 2: Why?
- Maya Tudor, “Explaining Democracy’s Origins: Lessons from South Asia,” *Comparative Politics* 45, no. 3 (April 1, 2013): 253–72, <https://doi.org/10.5129/001041512X13815255434816>.

Guiding Questions: Under what conditions is democracy an “elite” project or a “mass” project?

### **Week 8 (OCT 26) Social Origins: Political Culture**

Readings:

- Robert D. Putnam, Robert Leonardi, and Raffaella Y. Nanetti, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton University Press, 1994). Chapter 4: Explaining Institutional Performance.
- Alison Brysk, "Democratizing Civil Society in Latin America," *Journal of Democracy* 11, no. 3 (2000): 151–65, <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2000.0049>.
- Bellin, Eva (2012). Reconsidering the Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Lessons from the Arab Spring. *Comparative Politics*, 44(2), 127-149.

Guiding Questions: Does social capital explain the appearance of democracy or its survival?

## Week 9 (NOV 2) Diffusion

Readings:

- Daniel Brinks and Michael Coppedge, "Diffusion Is No Illusion: Neighbor Emulation in the Third Wave of Democracy," *Comparative Political Studies* 39, no. 4 (May 1, 2006): 463–89, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414005276666>.
- Valerie J. Bunce and Sharon L. Wolchik, "International Diffusion and Postcommunist Electoral Revolutions," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Democratic Revolutions in Post-Communist States, 39, no. 3 (September 1, 2006): 283–304, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.postcomstud.2006.06.001>.
- Kristian Skrede Gleditsch and Michael D. Ward, "Diffusion and the International Context of Democratization," *International Organization* 60, no. 4 (October 2006): 911–33, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818306060309>.

Guiding Questions: What is diffusion? Through what mechanism does diffusion work? How do we know that diffusion matters?

## Week 10 (NOV 9) Promotion and Intervention

Readings:

- Thomas Carothers, "The Backlash Against Democracy Promotion," *Foreign Affairs*, 2006.
- Jeffrey Pickering and Mark Peceny, "Forging Democracy at Gunpoint," *International Studies Quarterly* 50, no. 3 (2006): 539–59.
- Jon C. Pevehouse, "Democracy from the Outside-In? International Organizations and Democratization," *International Organization* 56, no. 3 (2002): 515–49.

Guiding Questions: Is democratic promotion a moral imperative? What are the limits of democratic promotion?



## Week 11 (NOV 16) Elite Bargaining

### Readings:

- Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies* (JHU Press, 2013). Pages 15-36
- Pauline Jones Luong, *Institutional Change and Political Continuity in Post-Soviet Central Asia: Power, Perceptions, and Pacts*, Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511510199>. Chapter 2: Explaining institutional design in transitional states: beyond structure versus agency.
- Terry Lynn Karl, "Dilemmas of Democratization in Latin America," *Comparative Politics* 23, no. 1 (1990): 1–21, <https://doi.org/10.2307/422302>.

Guiding Questions: In what ways do individuals have real agency over determining outcomes? To what extent can moving to the "micro" level help us theorize broadly about the causes of regime change?

**Notes:** Your analytical book review outline is due.

## Week 12 (NOV 23) Protest and Revolution

### Readings:

- Timur Kuran, "Now Out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989," *World Politics* 44, no. 1 (1991): 7–48.
- Dawn Brancati, *Democracy Protests: Origins, Features, and Significance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781316480960>. Chapter 2: Characteristics of Democratic Protests.
- Elisabeth Jean Wood, *Forging Democracy from Below: Insurgent Transitions in South Africa and El Salvador* (Cambridge University Press, 2000). Chapter 1: From Civil War to Democracy.

Guiding Questions: Assess the utility of the implicit or explicit critiques of the "micro" approach in Kuran.

## Week 13 (NOV 30) Consolidation

### Readings:

- Andreas Schedler, "What Is Democratic Consolidation?," *Journal of Democracy* 9, no. 2 (1998): 91–107, <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.1998.0030>.
- Ashutosh Varshney, "India Defies the Odds: Why Democracy Survives," *Journal of Democracy* 9, no. 3 (1998): 36–50, <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.1998.0053>.

- Şebnem Yardımcı-Geyikçi, “Party Institutionalization and Democratic Consolidation: Turkey and Southern Europe in Comparative Perspective,” *Party Politics* 21, no. 4 (July 1, 2015): 527–38, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068813487110>.

Guiding Questions: On what basis, if any, can we confidently say a democracy is “consolidated?”

## **Week 14 (DEC 7) Backsliding**

Readings:

- Thomas Carothers, “The End of the Transition Paradigm,” *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 1 (2002): 5–21, <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2002.0003>.
- Nancy Bermeo, “On Democratic Backsliding,” *Journal of Democracy* 27, no. 1 (2016): 5–19, <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2016.0012>.
- David Waldner and Ellen Lust, “Unwelcome Change: Coming to Terms with Democratic Backsliding,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 21, no. 1 (2018): 93–113, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-050517-114628>.

Guiding Questions: How different is the process of democratic “backsliding” compared to earlier eras?

**Notes:** Your analytical book review is due.

## **Course Policies**

### **Submission of Assignments**

No hard copies! Turn in everything through Avenue to Lean. If Avenue is down, or in case of any other eventuality, email the paper to me. If I can’t open the file, then you didn’t turn it in.

Important: If you have SAS accommodations, please come talk to me about them by the first week of class.

### **Grades**

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

<b>MARK</b>	<b>GRADE</b>
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+

<b>MARK</b>	<b>GRADE</b>
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

### **Late Assignments**

At your discretion, you may take a 1-week extension on your final paper. You may not take an extension on your presentation or discussion posts. I will otherwise not accept late work.

### **Absences, Missed Work, Illness**

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF): In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”.

### **Courses with an On-Line Element**

Some courses may use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

### **Online Proctoring**

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

### **Authenticity / Plagiarism Detection**

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software. **All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld** (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

### **Copyright and Recording**

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

### **Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)**

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

### **Academic Integrity Statement**

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

### **Conduct Expectations**

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the "Code"). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online**.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students' access to these platforms

### **Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University's [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

### **Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy**

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

### **Course Modification**

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check

his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

**Extreme Circumstances**

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.