Political Science 469:
Critical Issues in Comparative Politics:
Democracy Around the World
Spring 2018

When: M & W 2:00-3:20 pm
Where: VKC 210
Office Hours: M 3:30-4:50 p.m.
or by appointment

Professor Gerardo Munck
E-Mail: munck@usc.edu
Office: VKC 326A

1. Course Description
Democracy is widely seen as the most legitimate form of government. But until recently most governments were not democratic. And even though today we live in a democratic age, democracy is challenged by many groups and countries, and citizens in many countries live under authoritarian rule. Understanding democracy is critical to an understanding of politics around the world.

To learn about the changing fortunes of democracy and the challenges it currently faces, this course considers democracy from a historical and comparative perspective. The first half of the course focuses on the concept and the history of democracy. It considers some classic works and current debates on the meaning of democracy, offers an overview of waves of democratization in world history, and addresses the following questions: What is democracy? Has the meaning of democracy changed over the centuries? Is there currently one accepted definition of democracy? What countries have been and are democracies? What factors explain whether a country becomes a democracy? Have the global limits of democratization been reached?

The second half focuses on efforts by the international community to promote democracy, a trend in world politics that has gathered momentum since the end of the Cold War. This part of the course considers four democracy promotion programs in some detail, and addresses the following questions: Who are the democracy promoters? What is being done to promote democracy internationally? In what ways do programs to promote democracy differ? Are democracy promotion programs effective?

2. Learning Objectives
The objectives of the course are: (1) to understand some basic concepts used in the study of politics and to clarify their normative content; (2) to learn about broad trends in world politics; (3) to understand various practical ongoing initiatives, carried out by regional organizations, governments and NGOs, to promote democracy across international borders; and (4) to learn how quantitative data are used in programs to promote democracy.
3. Requirements

i) Five (5) quizzes (20% of the final grade). With regard to the quizzes, I have included provisional dates in the syllabus, but these may change slightly. The exact dates will be announced in class. We will do six quizzes and I will drop the lowest one; thus, the grade for your quizzes is based on your five best quizzes.

ii) An in-class mid-term (40%), and an in-class final exam (40%). These will be essay type exams, and you will have a choice of questions from which to pick. The final exam is not cumulative and hence covers only the materials we discuss after the midterm. We will discuss the kind of questions that you can expect on these exams in class.

4. Readings and Class Power Points

All the readings are accessible through the Blackboard, under “Readings.” Below you will see which reading we will discuss, and you are responsible for reading, in each meeting of the class.

The full text of each reading is not required; therefore, look at the notes next to the reading in this syllabus to see what pages you should read. In some cases, I also highlight what issues you should focus on in the readings.

I will be introducing additional information, especially on recent developments, in class. The power points of each class will be uploaded to the Blackboard after each class—you will find them under “Power Points”—and you are responsible for mastering the information in these power points that go beyond the readings.
Course Outline, Readings and Assignments

Introduction

Meeting # 1 (1/8): An Overview of the Course

Meeting # 2 (1/10): A Class Discussion about the Meaning of Democracy

Meeting # 3 (1/15): Martin Luther King’s Birthday: No class.

I. What is Modern Democracy?

Meeting # 4 (1/17): Background to the Debate about Modern Democracy


James Mill, “Government,” Supplement to the Encyclopedia Britannica (London: J. Innes, 1825 [1820]). Read pages 1-8 (Sections I, II and III) and pages 16-17 (Section VI).

Meeting # 5 (1/22): The Election of Government Office Holders: Schumpeter

Schumpeter, Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy (New York: Routledge, 2003; originally published in 1942). Read from the start of the section on “A Mental Experiment” and end where the section on “The Principle Applied” starts (pp. 240-73).

Meeting # 6 (1/24): Beyond Elections I: Dahl


Meeting # 7 (1/29): Beyond Elections II: The Quality of Democracy


- Quiz # 1 (1/29)
II. What Countries Have Been and Are Democracies? And Why?

Meeting # 8 (1/31): The Invention of Representative Democracy


Meeting # 9 (2/5): The Spread of Representative Democracy Through 1989 I. Waves of Democratization I


Meeting # 10 (2/7): The Spread of Representative Democracy Through 1989 I. Waves of Democratization II


Meeting # 11 (2/12): The Spread of Representative Democracy Through 1989 II: The Collapse of Communism


- Quiz # 2 (2/12)

Meeting # 12 (2/14): Doubts About Democracy After 1989


Meeting # 13 (2/19): Presidents’ Day: No Class


Voskressenski, “General Settings, Regional and National Factors, and the Concept of Non-Western Democracy,” pp. 184-211, in Przeworski (ed.), Democracy in a Russian Mirror (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015). Focus on the idea that a Western style democracy may not be suited to some non-Western countries.

Meeting # 15 (2/26): The Record of Democracy After 1989


- Quiz # 3 (2/26)

Meeting # 16 (2/28): Mid-term Exam
III. What is Being Done to Promote Democracy?

Meeting # 17 (3/5): The Who and When of Democracy Promotion


Meeting # 18 (3/7). The Why, What and How of Democracy Promotion


*** Spring Recess: March 12-16 ***

Meeting # 19 (3/19): More on the What and How of Democracy Promotion


Meeting # 20 (3/21): Monitoring and Evaluation in Democracy Promotion


- Quiz # 4 (3/21)

Meetings # 21, 22 & 23 (3/26, 3/28, 4/2): Election Monitoring

European Union, Handbook for EU Election Observation (Luxembourg: Publication of the European Union, 2016). Read only Sections 1 through 3 (pages 15-38) and skim Section 4 (pages 39-12) so as to gain a sense of what aspects of elections observers evaluate and what standards they use in these evaluations.

Meeting # 24 (4/4): International IDEA’s Democracy Assessments


- Quiz # 5 (4/4)

Meetings # 25 & 26 (4/9, 4/11): The U.S. MCA Foreign Assistance Program


For the specifics of the MCA, go to the MCA website section on “Who We Fund” — www.mcc.gov/who-we-fund —. First look at the general overview of the process and then look at the following three documents at the bottom of the page:


ii) Guide to the MCC Indicators for Fiscal Year 2018.

iii) Report on Countries that are Candidates for Millennium Challenge Compact Eligibility for Fiscal Year 2018 and Countries that would be Candidates but for Legal Prohibitions.

Finally, to gain a sense of how data are used to develop scorecards, click, at the top left, on “Country Scorecards” and look at two country scorecards.

Meetings # 27 & 28 (4/16, 4/18): The Open Government Partnership (OGP)


For the specifics of the OGP, go to the OGP website — https://www.opengovpartnership.org/about/about-ogp — and look at the following documents:

- i) Open Government Declaration.
- ii) How to Join, which is under “How It Works.”
- iii) Eligibility Criteria, which is under “How It Works.”
- iv) Requirements, which you can find at: https://www.opengovpartnership.org/requirements

Finally, under “How It Works,” look under Independent Reporting Mechanism, and within this section of the site, scroll down, and browse a couple of Reports to gain a sense of what is involved in an Action Plan. Also, read and find a couple of commitments you find interesting and come to class prepared to discuss these commitments.

- Quiz # 6 (4/23)
IV. Conclusions


We will review all the topics covered since the midterm.

*** Final Exam: Monday, May 7, 2:00-4:00 p.m ***
Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Section 11, Behavior Violating University Standards https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the Office of Equity and Diversity http://equity.usc.edu/ or to the Department of Public Safety http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us. This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. The Center for Women and Men http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/ provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage sarc@usc.edu describes reporting options and other resources.

Support Systems

A number of USC’s schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the American Language Institute http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. The Office of Disability Services and Programs http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, USC Emergency Information http://emergency.usc.edu/will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.