Course Description

This seminar explores research that builds and tests theories of democratization and the endurance of democracy. We start with some classic readings on the nature and value of democracy, then consider key contributions in the second half of the twentieth century and in the twenty-first century, and end with some new areas of research. We will discuss research that offers economic, cultural, political and international explanations of democratization and the endurance of democracy. And we will identify different schools of research: modernization theory and three alternatives to modernization theory (power structure theory, political institutional theory, and political economy theory).

Requirements

i) Five analytical essays (each essay is worth 10% of the final grade). These short essays (5 to 7 double-spaced pages) on the readings for one week will be due, at the latest, by Wednesday at 4 p.m. in my mailbox in VKC 330. Under no conditions can papers used in other classes be used for this class.

ii) Class participation (25% of the final grade) on the basis of the required readings, each and every week.

iii) A take-home final exam (25% of the final grade). As a final assignment, students will be asked to write, as a sort of take-home exam, a roughly 10 page, double-spaced, paper, on a question to be assigned.

Readings

I have posted the readings for which I have electronic copies on the USC Blackboard, under course "Readings." The readings are in folders organized by the number of each meeting.

When doing the readings, it makes sense to read them in the order they are presented in this syllabus. For each week, I have made a few notes of issues that we will discuss. Also, the full text of each reading is frequently not required; therefore, look at the notes next to the reading in this syllabus to see what pages you should read.
Topic Outline and Reading Assignments

Meeting 1: Introduction (August 22)
No readings. We will start with some stylized facts about the history of democracy, and then discuss the contents and requirements of the course, and how to approach the readings and prepare analytical essays.


Meeting 2 (August 29): APSA convention, No class

The Nature and Value of Democracy

Meeting 3: The Concept of Democracy: What is Democracy? (September 5)

Schumpeter, Joseph. 1942. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy.* New York: Harper. [Read only pages 240-73, starting with the section on “A Mental Experiment” and ending where the section on “The Principle Applied” begins.]

Meeting 4: The Value and Limits of Democracy: Why Democracy? (September 12)
Intrinsic and instrumental value. Arguments for and against democracy. The limits of democracy or what we should not expect from democracy. Democracy as a mechanism for processing conflicts peaceful.

Femia, Joseph V. 2001. *Against the Masses. Varieties of Anti-Democratic Thought since the French Revolution.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. [Read Chapters 1 through 4; skip the conclusion.]
The Origins and Stability of Democracy I.
Setting the Terms of the Debate

Meeting 5: Modernization Theory I: Economic Development and Mass Culture (September 19)

Distinction between modernization theory and modernization as a process. The metatheory of modernization theory: societal reductionism and unilinear development. The West as the model for the rest. The Lipset hypothesis. The Almond and Verba hypothesis. The cultural roots of preferences for democracy. The role of authoritarian incumbents. The distinction between the origins and stability of democracy.

Almond, Gabriel and Sidney Verba. 1963. The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press. [Read only Chapter 1 (from page 1 to the top of page 35) and Chapter 13.]

Meeting 6: Power Structure Theory: Class, State and the State System (September 26)

The critique of modernization theory. Modes of economic development rather than one path. Political and international factors as opposed to only societal factors. A focus on power relations more than on preferences for democracy. Moore, and Huber, Rueschemeyer and Stephens, on the impact of capitalism and classes. Tilly on the impact of state formation and external factors. Mazzuca’s synthesis.

Meeting 7: Political Institutional Theory I: Political Actors and Strategic Choices (October 3)

The critique of modernization theory. The rejection of societal prerequisites; the problem of national unity as an exception. Beyond correlates to mechanisms. A focus on political actors and processes. Politically-based preferences for regimes. Politicism and voluntarism. The distinction between the origins and stability of democracy.


Meeting 8: Political Institutional Theory II: Elites, Institutions, Culture and the State (October 10)

The critique of modernization theory. More on societal prerequisites. A focus on elites and institutions. The old regime and its impact. The “management” of problems related to the state and nationalism (compare to Rustow 1970).


The Origins and Stability of Democracy II. Revisiting, and Building on, the Classics

Meeting 9: Modernization Theory II: Economic Development (October 17)

What is the key innovation in the tests by Przeworski and Limongi, Boix and Stokes, and Acemoglu et al.? What kind of test does Broderstad perform? What conclusions does Munck draw about modernization theory?


Munck, Gerardo L. 2018. “Modernization Theory as a Case of Failed Knowledge Production.” Comparative Democratization (APSA-CD) 16(3).
Meeting 10: Political Economy Theory I: Economic Inequality and Redistribution (October 24)

Distributive conflict models. The median voter model. A focus on preferences based on economic outcomes under democracy. A unified theory of the origins and stability of democracy. The differences between Boix, and Acemoglu and Robinson. The results of tests (Houle, and Acemoglu et al.). The amendments by Acemoglu et al.

Boix, Carles. 2003. Democracy and Redistribution. New York: Cambridge University Press. [Read only pages 1-16 of the “Introduction,” and focus on the argument about economic equality and capital mobility.]

Acemoglu, Daron and James A. Robinson. 2006 Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy. New York: Cambridge University Press. [Read only Chapter 2, “Our Argument,” and sections 6 and 7 of Chapter 3 (to see how these authors locate their work in the context of the broader literature).]


Meeting 11: Political Economy Theory II: Natural Resources and Rentier States (October 31)

Ross’s arguments and tests. The idea of a rentier state. Ross on modernization theory and on mechanisms. Dunning’s introduction of distributive conflict. The results of tests (Haber and Menaldo, and Ahmadov).


Meeting 12: Political Institutional Theory III: Elites, Non-democratic Institutions, and International Factors (November 7)

A return to political-institutional theory. The test of distributive conflict models, with a new kind of data. Explanation of the origins of democracy: the impact of non-democratic regimes on paths to democracy (compare to Linz and Stepan 1996). Explanation of the stability of democracy.


New Areas of Research

Meeting 13: Expanding Democracy: The State and Democracy (November 14)

Conceptual matters again: expanding the dependent variable, from democracy to high-quality democracy and high-capacity democracy. Explanatory matters: prerequisites again? What are the new questions for research?


Munck, Gerardo L. 2016. “What is Democracy? A Reconceptualization of the Quality of Democracy.” Democratization 23(1): 1-26. [Focus on the debates regarding how far does the concept of democracy extend beyond the access to government offices and what specific attributes should be included in the concept of democracy.]


Meeting 14: Wednesday, November 21: Thanksgiving Week, No class
Meeting 15: Protecting Democracy: Post-Cold War Patterns and the Erosion of Democracy (November 28)

The debate about patterns in the state of democracy since the end of the Cold War. Is there a “democratic recession”? (Foa and Mounk, and Abramowitz and Repucci vs. Treisman). Thinking about democratic backsliding or erosion. Are “old” theories of the breakdown of democracy useful? What are the new questions for research?

A Comprehensive Bibliography

Classic and Recent Works on the Concept of Democracy


Classic and Recent Works on the Explanation of Democracy


**Overviews and Critical Assessments**


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.